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The impact using digital technology has on rural development:

Observations & Questions

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RÉGIONS DE FRANCE

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As part of its missions, France's National Rural Network (NRN) has identified the need to work on the digital transition in rural areas, and particularly on the impact using digital technology has on local development. We spoke to 16 specialists and experts so as to draw up an initial set of questions and issues with a bearing on this subject. This paper summarises their contributions under the main themes, ideas, observations and avenues for further thinking.
The text boxes, as well as the polls at the end of the paper, report back on the debates that were held on these questions during the seminar that the NRN organised in Rennes on 17 November 2017.

Digital technology is reshaping society

Say what you will, digital technology is becoming a part of life in local areas. It is changing society and sparking innovation. The experiences described by the specialists we called on are a testament to this.

Digital technology advances knowledge

• It makes it easier to share open-source content: take the Atelier paysan for example, which offers training in the self-development of agricultural working tools and provides free equipment via a web platform.

• It fosters knowledge and skills transfer to enable consumers to make better, more "frugal" choices and workers to gain more independence: IndieCamp in Brittany is a camp jointly developed by participants who share their frugal and collaborative digital practices.

• Digital technology enables training to be organised right where it is needed in local areas: one example is the "Wild code school" in La Loupe, Eure-et-Loir.

Digital technology nurtures social ties

• Digital technology connects people, can help fight loneliness and provide new services: fairecompagnie.fr, in the Pays Nivernais-Morvan, the Digital public space in Hauteville-sur-Mer (reception of senior citizens) or the French postal service's options for senior citizens for example.

• Digital technology can strengthen residents' ties with their communities: town of Jun in Andalucía (100% Twitter), digital strategy of the Pays du Perche (participatory platform).

• Digital technology also strengthens the link between producers and consumers, not least in farming; this represents a possible driver for the development of short supply chains.

• In third-place environments, dedicated to digital technology, it brings together communities of entrepreneurs, engineers, developers, teleworkers and so on, and provides fertile ground for projects, social ties and solidarity: French Tech-certified local areas, Digital project of the Maremne Adour Côte Sud intermunicipal community, (www.cc-macs.org), etc.

Digital technology opens up local areas

• It supports the arrival of new residents in the countryside (Arvieu in Aveyron).

• It paves the way for economic opportunities: Campus Les Champs du possible, farm business incubator in Chateaudun (Eure-et-Loir).

Digital technology enhances rural life

• Local area-led digital strategies, combining discussions about infrastructure, uses, contents and services, can have a genuine impact on the development of these areas: department of La Lozère, La Manche and Le Cantal (teleworking), Limousin region, Val d'Amboise intermunicipal community, municipality of Fleury-les-Aubrais.

• It helps businesses to find new markets without having to relocate: Tom Press, online shop for kitchen ustensils, in Sorèze (Tarn). It is the tool box that connects producers directly with consumers.

Digital technology provides new or improves existing services

• Telemedicine (Oberbruck in the Haut-Rhin) provides a partial solution to the lack of doctors in a local area, or can supplement the work of an established practitioner. In this way, it can help to reduce the pressure on A&E departments by providing on-call services at the weekend for example, with the help of doctors working remotely, from home, at times that suit them. It can also avoid ambulance call-outs, which are costly for the French health insurance system.

• Digital technology encourages climate-resilient use of energy by local authorities (Smart Grid Vendée), as well as of inputs and water in farms.

• It facilitates the implementation of databases – such as the Base adresse nationale (Ban), or the opening up of public data, which is used and processed with partners specialising in this field – to which local projects and services can be added.

• By using digital data, it is possible to organise the reception of visitors to an area (Chamonix tourist office) or open-air festivals (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region) and to lay out cycle paths that cater to the needs of residents (town of Mulhouse) for example.

Genuine opportunities for rural areas

The sharing economy and Industry 4.0

According to one of the experts, underpinning the sharing economy – which relies on a networking of citizens to share out goods, spaces, tools and knowledge – is the widespread use of digital technology: coworking, car sharing, colocation, crowdfunding, fablab and so on. It represents a wellspring of opportunities for rural areas (which must nevertheless have a minimum of demographic density) and spawns innovation at all levels, including technological, social, human, cultural and economic.

Digital technology therefore provides a stepping stone to bringing production activity back into local areas. New forms of industry are emerging (fablab, microfactory, Industry 4.0) that depend on and participate in the digital transition of local areas.

Digital technology now makes it possible for any entrepreneur to set themselves up anywhere as long as the Internet connection is fast enough. When used well and understood, it can be turned to a great many more advantages than buying products online on foreign platforms. Having said that, it is important to point out that many rural-based stakeholders use the Internet to the detriment of the local economy, and there is room for significant progress in this regard. Associations of elected representatives and trade unions are urged to seize the initiative in gaining literacy in future system architectures, for otherwise they could see a disproportionate share of the value, generated locally, being transferred to those areas which are well-versed in algorithms, data and digital law.

Creating value for local areas

Digital technology can drive economic growth if it creates jobs and added value that benefit local areas. When used well and understood, it can be turned to a great many other advantages than buying products online on foreign platforms. Even Airbnb, which rivals traditional hotels and benefits a foreign company, can also generate income for local areas that had not developed this type of accommodation provision.

Microbusinesses, SMEs and farms are able to sell their products directly online and retain a good proportion of the value created by keeping the number of intermediaries to a minimum. And if they sell to far-flung customers (such as the bienmanger.com platform, catalogues of local products and services created by communities) or attract more tourists thanks to multilingual geolocated assistance, these are all new resources making an appearance in their neighbourhoods.

A study carried out by Google and Terra Nova reveals that, although the ecosystem and concentration of means and resources in the same area are development factors, they are not necessarily prerequisites to success. Some SMEs have been able to grow their business online even when they are located far from urban areas or a "French Tech" area. But for all that, a degree of proximity and local presence are required for digital tools to develop.

In this context, economic leaders have a role to play in promoting the digital profile of their local area, by showcasing success stories, running business owners' groups and offering them appropriate training programmes.

A paradigm shift

Over the coming decade, High-Speed Broadband (HSBB) is poised to set a truly game-changing movement in motion on the social front, triggering a dramatic paradigm shift. One of the specialists we spoke to is convinced of this: "what we are witnessing is a clear departure from the material and energy world. HSBB will make it possible to share knowledge at low cost, without losing any value." A local area's appeal in terms of high-speed broadband will above all depend on the existence of local digital services and skills in algorithms, data, the Web, artificial intelligence and 3D printing...

Quotes from 17 November...

"Without a platform like Airbnb, I could not have visited some towns or cities. Hotels are too expensive. And when I visit a city, I buy things once I'm there."

"We think Airbnb retains a significant share of the rental prices. But it's actually a lot less than other networks, like Gîtes de France for example. Airbnb earns more across the total rental volume."

"I live in the countryside. With Amazon, for example, I can stay put and find the computer parts I need online. And why don't taxis set up a service like Uber?"

"We need to choose between either finding ways to harness the benefits of digital technology, or being burdened with the changes it brings about."

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Changing work practices

More effective collaboration and pooling

Generally speaking, digital technology is transforming the way we work, obliging public and private stakeholders alike to open up their practices and network more. This collaborative mindset is a source of new creativity and can lead to wholly constructive projects. It takes the form of local thematic or general digital "ecosystems", which, according to two experts, nevertheless require a certain density of population and services... So-called "third places" fulfil this role if they cater to actual local needs.

Such cooperation can also take place between different territorial levels – départements, metropolises, conurbations, rural municipalities – with a view to trialling and disseminating best practice. In one expert's view, "rural residents must be able to access the same services as urbanites. But since digital innovation is costly, the quality of partnerships must be enhanced in digital terms between urban and rural areas, so that the latter can reap the benefits."

Local areas are also being encouraged to join forces and pool their means to be able to stand up to private operators, who would otherwise impose solutions with precious few advantages. Elected representatives must be able to leverage the potential of the digital world and gigabit society. To do that, they need to pool their analyses, specifications and solutions.

One of the people we interviewed said that digital technology has also played a part in transforming the legitimacy of public authority intervention. Just as citizens have expectations of local authorities, the latter now expect from the Government more bottom-up, transparent and co-constructive procedures.

Mobility and freedom

Digital technology is also giving rise to nomadic working lifestyles, where professionals alternate assignments with time off back home, which may be in the countryside. Startups located in the city will also be able to organise trips to rural settings for assignments lasting several months.

Professional upheaval we need to be prepared for, including in the farming sector

According to the OECD, 10% of existing jobs are set to disappear in the near future, while 80% of remaining jobs will change beyond recognition... These adjustments within businesses are already under way, and we need to be keeping pace.

Digital uses: divisions have not gone away

Despite the advantages highlighted, digital technology is also carving out and exacerbating divisions, throwing up limitations, engendering requirements and necessary adjustments that local area stakeholders need to take into account.

Most experts maintain that the needs and expectations regarding digital technology have become much more aligned, and are now much the same between urban and rural users. But the reality of uses on the ground tells a completely different story. Divisions persist on several fronts, and would even seem to be becoming more pronounced:

Divisions between local areas

The lack of digital infrastructure is still a problem by many experts' reckoning. Metropolises tend to capture the bulk of material and human resources. Internet cover is improving, the High-Speed Broadband plan is in motion, but there is still some way to go before rural residents can access the same services and uses as city dwellers.
One of the experts makes the point that, since it is expensive to roll out fibre optic broadband everywhere, 4G is made available to remote areas. "This is a mistake. As this means they will never be connected to the fibre network by the planned date, or even at all. This jeopardises the future installation of telehealth services for example." Another expert thinks that, on the contrary, pending the uptake of HSBB in rural areas, stopgap solutions must be found. Given the situation, rural areas should even be first in line when 5G becomes available.

Divisions between sections of society

With administrative formalities going digital (and public service branches closing) and digital technology growing ever more complex, such procedures are becoming ever less accessible to some groups of people – not least senior citizens and jobseekers. Several specialists raised alarm bells in this respect: digital tools must help (rather than hinder) residents, and human relationships must always be given priority and come centre-stage in the systems set up. A gap also seems to be emerging in terms of educational attainment and age – even if one telemedicine specialist claims that senior citizens have successfully embraced some uses (email, using the Internet, etc.).

Divisions in terms of technology

As digital technology grows in complexity, so the line where the divisions lie is moving... Even if we've had training, we can all, at one time or another, find ourselves out of depth.

Some local areas are grappling with several of these divisions at once.

Quotes from 17 November...

"Care should be taken that the digitisation of public services does not lead to more of them closing down. Digital technology should provide a genuine additional service to residents, complementary to services that already exist."

"Digital tools are not our enemy, but neither are they the solution to all our problems. It's more complicated than that. It's up to us to work out how best we can respond."

"Digital technology enables some people – who don't feel comfortable going to public services in person – to carry out some essentials online (family planning for example)."

"Students can also vote anywhere, anytime. Some services are ideally suited to going digital, others less so."

"A digital service is not necessarily associated with one or more physical settings. For example, a bike rental service can be 100% managed from a digital platform."

"We are seeing a complete change in our attachment to physical places."

Fully-fledged local strategies and infrastructure

One fact that the majority of experts agree on is that digital infrastructure is necessary and indispensable. It is a prerequisite for a rural area to remain active and retain its population, and thus avoid going down the same route as a "ghost town".

One of the specialists we spoke to elaborated on this idea, pointing out that with or without a rural area reception policy, two million urbanites are looking to leave the city and carrying out searches along these lines, on such platforms as laou.fr, paris-jetequitte.com or www.fuyonsladefense.com. *A key criterion of their search is the Internet connection they will have in their new location.*

But to turn it into a fully effective driver of development, digital infrastructure in itself is not enough. It must form the cornerstone of (or the tool behind) a fully-fledged economic, social and environmental local strategy... One of the people we interviewed outlined a question to be asked prior to any project: "what are our aspirations for rural areas? Without ambition, there can be no projects, and urban concentration will continue."

Local areas must therefore be able to make the "best" use out of these technologies in order to meet residents' needs. Several experts have found that what attracts and retains new businesses and populations is above all what an area has to offer in terms of living environment, natural environment and services (transport, education, healthcare, culture, housing and so on).

The building blocks of local development have thus been explained again for the benefit of local authorities. Among other things, they need to: equip themselves to listen to and take note of the needs of residents, local stakeholders, microbusinesses and SMEs and associations; spot talent and bring them on board in a networking approach to jointly craft appropriate solutions (which are not simply copy-and-paste versions of urban models) over the long term; and support and initiate private and public projects alike. "Local representatives have realised that the digital tools connecting them with residents are only effective if they are collaborative for example".

We therefore need to break with clique mentalities and cooperate between public and private stakeholders, innovate and try out.

The objectives of providing digital coverage across local areas, via landline and mobile networks, are a priority for the State, and are being addressed in the "France Très Haut Débit" plan for high-speed broadband. In July 2017 the President of the Republic vowed to expedite the programmes under way by pledging, for all French citizens, access to decent broadband from 2020 (>= 8 Mbps) and high-speed broadband (>=30 Mbps) in 2022, and to improve mobile coverage with a view to rolling out fast, high-quality 4G coverage. The Government has initiated broad talks with local authorities, their representative associations and all stakeholders across the telecoms sector aimed at defining concrete proposals for achieving these objectives. This is particularly the purpose of the agreement reached by the Ministry of Territorial Cohesion with telephone operators on 11 January 2018. Through €3bn worth of investment, this deal seeks to extend mobile networks to currently unconnected areas within three years.

Quotes from 17 November...

"The question to be asked first and foremost is: how can the project help to improve life in rural settings? Does it represent an opportunity for the future of local areas?"

"Digital technology may be a driver as regards local area appeal ... or it may not. This is neither a given nor a foregone conclusion. It all depends on local requirements."

For the majority of people we spoke to, digital technology is one driver among others. A digital platform for example, launched by a local authority, can only really achieve the desired effect if it comes hand-in-hand with a proactive development policy.

"To invest and become proficient in the infrastructure of their areas, local authorities can set up a Public Initiative Network (RIP)."

"High-Speed Broadband is an undeniable draw for businesses. Like any private or public user, they now publish digital data just as much as they receive or consult such data. ADSL, asymmetric digital subscriber line, no longer cuts it."

"La Cocotte numérique, a third place set up in Murat in the Cantal, is a great example of this collaboration between local stakeholders."

Mediation and training: two priorities

The specialists are also unanimous in their belief that any local digital strategy must be backed up by digital training and mediation. This involves bringing it home to elected representatives and stakeholders just how radical the change being wrought by digital technology really is. There's no such thing as determinism in this regard. What we need to be doing is closing the technical and political gaps that, to a lesser or greater extent, are hampering all sections of society.

An insufficient grasp of digital technology is still a problem

• a relative ignorance of what "digital technology" means, a term which sparks both hopes and fears. Many local and regional elected representatives are struggling to grasp the political implications of digital technology, overall and in terms of the future, as well as the current and future socioeconomic upheavals it is engendering. And yet these very implications must be grasped to be able to make use of such technology. Take the subject of data protection for example, with which we have still not fully got to grips. Not only does this lack of knowledge represent a barrier to delivering relevant digital strategies tailored to local areas, but it is also a source of distrust, of fear that nothing will be in our control any longer (this is the case with opening up public data for example).

• Young digital natives are certainly well-versed in all the apps and uses, but are, for the most part, unaware of what's at stake in terms of "what they can't see" (data protection for example).

• Most residents know how to use digital technology for specific uses. But this is not the case for 15 to 20% of them, who either find it genuinely difficult to use or quite simply don't know how to. What's more, French citizens are primarily concerned about the security of and access to their personal data. We need to be able to give them clear answers.

• In France, microbusiness and SME owners are lagging behind other European countries in developing and using digital technology and have not grasped the extent to which their business could gain from it. A mere 19% of companies with fewer than 250 employees practise online sales.

• Training is also necessary in the farming sector: the use of digital data is also upending the way this profession is run, and farmers need to be given training in how to use the tools.

Setting up digital mediation spaces

For all these reasons, the various experts agree on the importance of providing digital mediation resources and spaces in rural areas, where they are currently in shorter supply than in cities. They remark that the more digital our society becomes, the more citizens will need mediation and support venues. Such places can come in a wide array of forms: public service centres, public digital spaces, third places, postal contact points ... with stakeholders and leaders from a whole host of backgrounds, depending on the local needs on the ground: associations, local authorities, private partners, chambers of commerce or industry (for microbusinesses/SMEs), students, youngsters enrolled in the civic service and so on. Mobile digital mediation units are also possible (such as the "Digital Bus" in Gironde).

These mediation spaces concern not just citizens but also elected representatives and local authority officials. The creation of a national pooled advisory and help service has also been recommended for their benefit.

Quotes from 17 November...

Training and guidance in using digital tools were identified as important by several participants in the seminar. Some asked about the most appropriate places for this. Where possible, they need to be collective (public service centres, digital public spaces and why not Digital Centres?) and easily accessible to residents and SMEs.

Such places need to nurture community ties as well as provide training for elected representatives and local stakeholders.

Training how to learn

These mediation places need to be rounded off by a training provision. But what should this training focus on? Who should the target audiences be? What about the training leaders?

Here are just some of the answers the experts gave:
Digital technology encompasses a vast and multifaceted realm. It is therefore important to clarify exactly what aspect of it we have in mind so as to identify the training needs: should the training focus on email? Social media? Algorithms? Blockchains? The complex interconnections and thoughts brought about by digital technology? Future opportunities?

Several experts think that the aim is not necessarily to teach the techniques (material, in this respect, can always be found online) but to train how to learn, how to work independently with these tools and their operators, how to keep the upper hand, how to find solutions when necessary and how to turn this technology into opportunities.

Enhance knowledge

Other training objectives were mentioned, depending on the target audience:

• For elected representatives and local authority officials, local decision makers and microbusiness/SME owners, what matters above all is to build their skills so that they can gain an overall picture and a thorough grounding in digital technology.

• For people without access or unaccustomed to such technology, it is more about learning basic uses (email, the Internet, etc.).

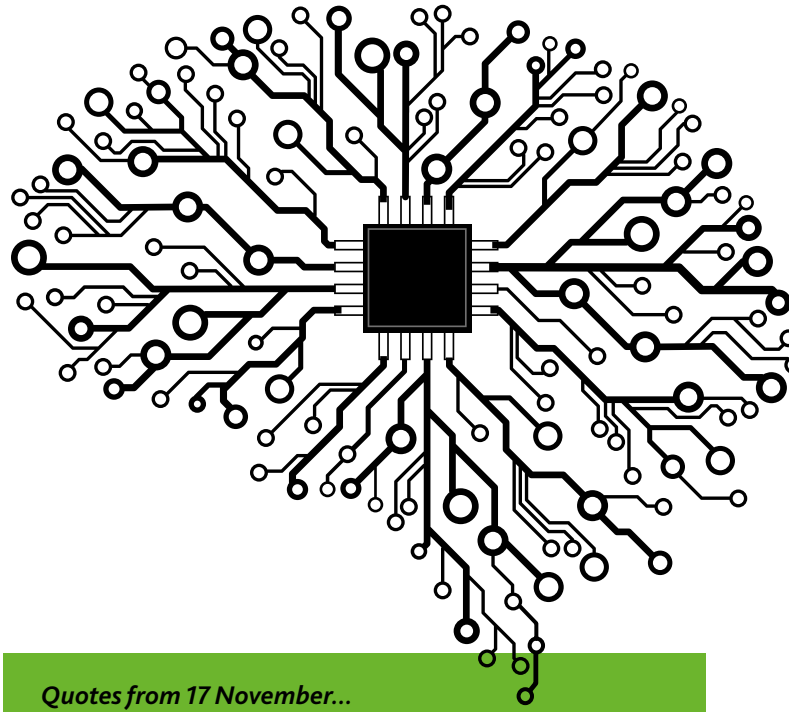
• For healthcare professionals, what is also needed is practical training in certain medical procedures, carried out by nurses for example, when they consult with patients in the context of telemedicine and there is no doctor physically present.

• For teachers, the point is to include digital modules in all teacher training courses.

• For young people, training should focus, on the one hand, on educating them in the issues at stake and, on the other, on future occupations where there are current skills gaps. Indeed, companies are struggling to find skilled recruits in the fibre optic sector for example.

• As for farming, digital technology is a potential source of added value as it can contribute to short supply chains and savings in agricultural inputs; training will also be necessary in this regard.

Such training may be administered by private and public continuing professional development bodies, associations or chambers of commerce for example. 80% of the continuing professional development provision is city-based. Several experts think that it needs to be brought closer to the intended audiences (local branches, remote training, etc.).



Quotes from 17 November...

"Digital literacy needs to be nurtured, as was previously the case for the telephone or electricity, whilst ensuring that humans keep the upper hand over these tools."

Health, a priority

With such cross-cutting implications, digital technology concerns all activity sectors.
But if one had to be given precedence over others, most people would cite the health sector, owing to the growing phenomenon of "medical deserts" – areas with few or no medical services left. This calls for decent Internet connection and better coordination between practitioners and all the stakeholders involved...
Telemedicine is a tool that cannot replace human doctors, however – who are still crucial for certain types of disorder (diabetes for example).

Economic growth crops up next, as this is the lifeblood of thriving local areas. Some businesses rely on digital technology and are bound to look towards the best-connected areas (and therefore the ones that advertise this most effectively). Microbusinesses and SMEs are lagging a long way behind in the use of digital technology.

Farms are also mentioned, in the hope that digital technology enables them to improve their ecological, economic and social performances (keeping a closer and continuous eye on their consumption of water, input, animal feed and calving for example).

State responsibilities were also brought up, which include education and transport for example.

Digital development is everyone's business

Digital development is transcending all boundaries and impacting all levels of decision-making and action, whether private or public, local or European. It remains to be seen who does what... Here are a few answers from the specialists we spoke to:

• Europe is expected to support policies geared towards projects and finding solutions. Given the risk of certain divisions becoming more deeply entrenched (between sections of society or between local areas), one recommendation is to channel the ESF and EAFRD towards these themes. Local Action Groups (LAGs) were also cited as being relevant for conducting digital projects as part of their local development strategy.

• The State has a key role to play at several levels: rolling out high-speed broadband across French territory, enabling universal equal access to digital technology, leading policies to facilitate the digital transition and uptake (financing for engineering, investment, operational aspects, R&D, etc.), implementing tools for disseminating local practices and listing private stakeholders...

The Regional Health Agencies (ARS) are expected to back digital use in access to healthcare and medicine in general.

• The Regions are the right link for supporting continuing professional development, connecting and coordinating local project leaders from associations, companies and local authorities. The Centre-Val de Loire Region, for example, is getting behind the organisation of "weekend startups". They are also being called on in terms of funding and continuing professional development.

• The department-level Councils are at an appropriate level for setting up infrastructure and helping mediation places and training to get off the ground.

• Chambers of commerce, industry or agriculture for example are in an ideal position to educate, train and guide microbusinesses/SMEs and farms.

• The Family Benefits Fund (CAF) also cropped up, in terms of the support it lends in implementing "the Web Walkers" (a platform which puts youngsters in touch with youth leaders, www.promeneursdunet.fr) in partnership with the MSA, Département-level Directorates for Social Cohesion and Département-level Councils.

• Local and intermunicipal authorities, Pays and public establishments known as centres for rural and local balance (PETR) are THE links for crafting local projects, digital strategies which address residents' needs. They

carry out national policy at their level, co-fund projects, sometimes infrastructure even, determine what the priorities are and are the gateway to public services... They set up collective tools (which do not have to be expensive, take Bras-sur-Meuse for example, which has designed a very active social network for keeping in touch with locals) and initiate digital projects. This entails conducting a genuine R&D strategy at the local level, which can be informed by multidisciplinary think-tanks and labs.

• Other stakeholders and entities were also mentioned, among them the French Digital Agency, Secretariat-General for Government Modernisation (SGMAP), General Commission for Investment (CGI), National Council of Elected Representatives for Digital Technology (CNEN), businesses and associations.

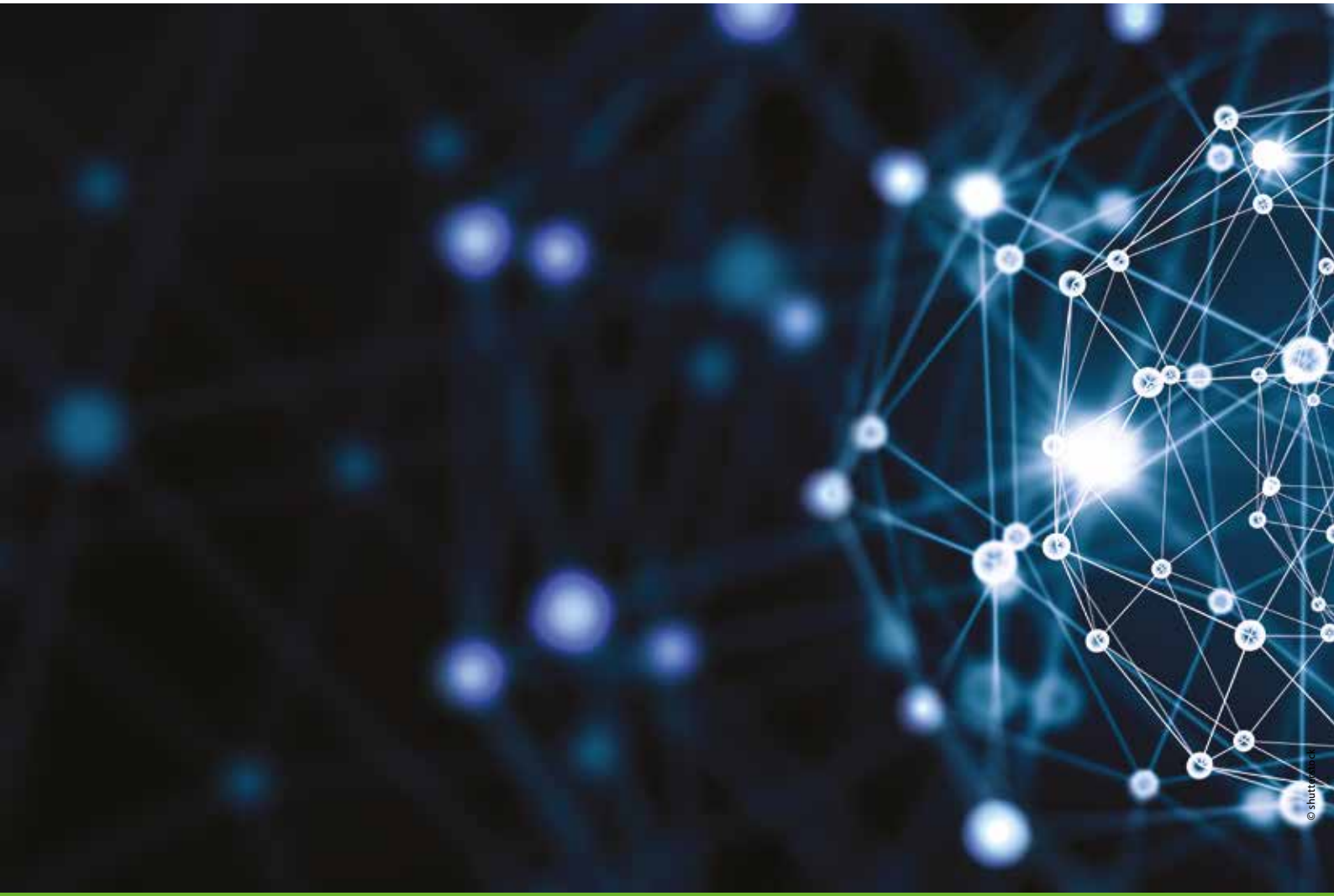
At regional and local levels alike, it has also been found that the digital dimension is more effectively taken on board when there are convinced, enterprising and pioneering leaders involved.

Quotes from 17 November...

Brittany is pledging to roll out fibre-optic broadband across its region by 2030 through the "Mégalis Bretagne" project, an ambition that it has been possible to pursue thanks to input at all levels: Europe, the Region, the Département and local authorities.

The National Rural Network has set itself the task of being a resource centre for local areas in the complex field of digital technology, and of leading forward-looking discussions that factor in the paradigm shifts taking place.

Thematic inter-regional workshops could be held in conjunction with these measures. The network could also provide them with a more European perspective and insight into how the EAFRD could be better used.



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17 November: live polls

On 17 November, various questions were put to the audience via the Internet during the debates. Between 30 and 40 people answered on average.

Here are the main findings:

Digital technology and local areas: identify two key issues

The question was asked at the beginning and then at the end of the discussions. The results changed quite a lot in that time!

• Before the debates: training (12), employment (7), democracy (6), accessibility (5), uses (4), information (4), support & guidance (4)...

• After: human dimension (9), adaptation (5), location (5), "uberising" rural areas (5), tool (4), support & guidance (3), community ties (3)...

As local stakeholders, do you think you are sufficiently informed of the issues concerning digital technology?

• Yes: 44.12%
• No: 55.88%

If not, how might awareness be improved in your view?

Show the potential digital technology holds / training and discussions between young and senior citizens / Increase the use of digital tools and training of all sorts, including for rural elected representatives, association leaders, microbusinesses and, primary schools. / Engage in progressive pilot programmes / Promote pioneering actions, tools and examples.

Is digital technology a driver as regards local area appeal?

• The main driver: 5.41%
• One driver among others: 91.89%
• Not an essential factor: 2.70%

Is digital technology a driver in participatory democracy?

- Yes: 78.95%
- No: 21.05%

Access to public services via digital technology can:

- **help fight loneliness: 50%**

Why?
It makes it easier for everyone to participate in and access information and services. That said, actual contact must be maintained / people are having less and less contact with public service officials, whether or not this is via digital technology / this access fosters all sorts of interaction across different services / it forges new links, such as car sharing.

- **exacerbate loneliness: 50%**

Why?
Lack of human relationships / what is needed is to come into contact with competent human beings / it limits interaction and creates a certain distance between stakeholders / if all public services are accessed using digital technology, this does away with all ties, with the State's social presence in rural areas / services must enable human interaction, 100% digital therefore poses a threat / not everyone knows how to use it / some procedures are complex.

Should public services definitely retain a specific physical location?

- **undermine the added value of local areas: 53.13%**

Why?
Yes, but only partly / you only mention the most prominent services! You have left out all the others with a local foothold (AlloVoisins for example), which create value in local areas / digital technology does not contribute to local development / these websites generate profits that do not stay in the local areas / overly centralised applications / this encourages product and service ranges to grow exponentially / the question implies the answer already.

• **benefit locals and help local areas to thrive: 46.88%**

Why?
Airbnb attracts tourists who would not have stayed in a hotel for example / boosts the modernisation and appeal of local areas / the locals benefit directly from the income earned from renting out their building or indirectly from visitors' expenditure / creates new activities / economy for users and value in the area for service providers / they provide services and bring customers to local areas.

Digital technology is:

• **an opportunity for employment: 84.85%**

Why?
Teleworking / new occupations / new jobs / new services, products and requirements / more information / human support is still important / it develops innovation / it creates jobs, but also gets rid of them. It is above all reshaping occupations / Jobs no longer need to be tied down to where people are living / frees up the market / threat only in terms of robotisation.

• **a threat to employment: 15.15%**

Why?
You only need look at what is happening in the banking sector, in telecoms, in insurance and soon the public services. Everything is done online, fewer workers are needed / both! Silly question!

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