

TIGTECH |

THE DRIVERS OF TRUST AND DISTRUST

Learn more about the different aspects of trust and 2 new trust concepts outlined for discussion



This was created as part of the final findings of the TIGTech, Trust in Tech Governance initiative

To see the full document, please click [here](#)

To know more about TIGTech and The Drivers of Trust and Distrust, please contact Hilary Sutcliffe on hilary@societyinside.com

TIGTECH 7 TRUST DRIVERS ARE CORE



For such diverse fields of research there was an unusual and remarkable consensus on the qualities which are important for trust – intent, competence, respect, integrity, inclusion, fairness and openness. Our research made it very clear that these are not just abstract concepts, or academic theories. These 7 Trust Drivers are deeply rooted in our individual and collective psychology and the fundamental ways our societies work and have evolved.

Though there may be different cultural interpretations, they are in some form or another at the heart of national and international justice systems, in most organisational values statements, culture change programmes, good governance frameworks, 'tech for good' guidelines, codes of conduct and more. And it is pretty much common sense that if you do the opposite of these you won't be trusted.

They are familiar almost to the point of banality. Perhaps this very familiarity may mean their importance can easily be underestimated and may explain why they are often overlooked?



Trustworthy organisations will use them as 'guides to live by'; aligning leadership, culture, decision-making, metrics and reward systems to embed them and signal internally and externally how seriously they are taken. To many others however, they are more "hocus-pocus spells, bits of primitive word magic that are trying to make something true merely by incanting it."²⁰ This approach is where the seeds of distrust are sown.



Trustwatch A fun spotting game!

It is quite eye-opening to see the clear correlation between the Trust Drivers and governance, political, business or personal problems. Similarly on the positive side, with trustworthy organisations the Trust Drivers are clear to see. Try it, it's a fun and enlightening game.



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7 TRUST DRIVERS EXPLAINED



INTENT - PUBLIC INTEREST

upheld through purpose,
process, delivery and
outcomes



COMPETENCE

delivering against
expectation effectively,
reliably, consistently,
responsively



RESPECT

seeing others as equals;
listening to and taking
seriously their concerns,
views and rights. Considering
the potential impact of words
& deeds on others



FAIRNESS

enshrining justice and
equality in governance
processes, application,
enforcement, and
outcomes



INTEGRITY

operating honestly, being
accountable, impartial and
independent of vested
interests



OPENNESS

being transparent and
accessible in processes,
communications,
explanations and
interactions



INCLUSION

being collaborative,
inclusive, involving
others

INTENT – PUBLIC INTEREST

The intent and role of tech governance is to protect citizens from the negative impacts of technology whilst shepherding its use for social good. This is upheld through purpose, process, delivery and outcomes.

Why Public Interest is so important to trust:

This core purpose for governance provides the guide rails or compass to help navigate the different interests and values inherent in technology development and governance and demonstrate the trustworthiness of governance institutions and processes. Our research showed that perhaps the most important driver of trust and distrust was the belief that governance was focused on the public interest.²¹



It's reassuring and empowering to know when someone with good intent has a role."

Citizen comment in Food Standards Agency deliberative forums on trust²²



Changes to the governance landscape which reinforce its importance:

Complex ethical challenges, conflicting values decisions and difficult trade-offs come with the territory of many new tech – privacy and human rights in artificial intelligence for example, the replacement of jobs by robots or algorithms and concerns about the move from medical applications to human enhancement using genetic technologies, to name just a few. Governance needs to navigate these complex challenges and a relentless focus on the public interest is the best way to do that. Surveys show that the citizen's greatest concerns are focused on these ethical, moral and social aspects of technologies and they expect governance to manage these effectively.²³



Trust tip

Good intent is central to trust

People are more likely to trust an organisation or process, a decision or outcome, even if it is not in their favour, if they can see the intent is for the general good. Explicit attention and communication about the public interest intent of governance design, application and enforcement is an important driver of trust.²⁴



Watch-outs

Focusing on money and technology development causes distrust

The perception (and sometimes reality) that making money is prioritised over people and planet is the leading cause of distrust in tech and its governance.²⁵ Balancing the 'triple bottom line' of economic, social and environmental good in line with societal values is one of the greatest challenges of governance which a public interest focus helps to navigate.

COMPETENCE

Delivery against expectation;
effectively, reliably,
consistently, responsively

Why competence and delivery against expectation is so important to trust:

Competence – doing what is expected and what you say will do is a baseline of trust. So as not to undermine trust in this competence for tech governance it needs to be delivered in a reliable and consistent way and be responsive to the expectations of others. As the [OECD Trust and Public Policy Report](#) says:



Competence is a necessary condition for trust – an actor, whether a business or a government agency, with good intentions, but without the ability to deliver on expectations cannot be trusted.”^{26,27}



Changes to the governance landscape which reinforce its importance:

On-going research into “The future of regulatory systems in a disruptive world”²⁸ explores the changing nature of governance, in which issues combine high complexity, deep uncertainty, ever-shorter decision time frames and conflicting societal views. These dynamics are vastly different to what many existing regulatory or governance systems are designed for or used to. New competencies will be needed, with responses having to take more of a systems perspective, to deploy a wide range of tools in combination, and to excel in making use of diverse thinking. This is easier said than done. Citizens may have limited patience with the transition or the need to be adaptive – “The system is complicated’ isn’t a good enough excuse for lack of action – find the way to do your job properly.”²⁹



Trust tip

Trust is context specific and about expectation fulfilled³⁰

A decision to trust is a hope that an organisation or individual will fulfil an expectation we have of them. Sometimes this expectation is appropriate, sometimes misplaced. Distrust can occur in the case of a mismatch. Understanding the mandate and competencies expected by stakeholders, and taking steps to rectify misperceptions or respond more effectively to expectations, may be important starting points for earning trust.



Watch-outs

Beware shifting expectations of competence – ‘from Watchdogs of Industry to Champions of the Public’³¹

To respond to the potential shift in expectation of governance institutions from ‘*watchdogs of industry to champions of the public*’, governance organisations may have to adapt their competencies and values if they are to remain effective, relevant and earn trust.³² This also encourages a more assertive ‘shepherding’ role for governance to help steer companies towards social and environmental goals through innovative and inclusive governance mechanisms: such as Design thinking for Policy,³³ Safety By Design³⁴ or Responsible Research and Innovation^{35,36} to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,³⁷ or European Green Deal.³⁸

RESPECT

Seeing others as equals; listening to and taking seriously their concerns, views, and rights. Considering the impact of words & deeds on others.

Why Respect is so important to trust:

Think about when you have felt disrespected. It might have been an angry online interaction, when an employer treated you badly, someone didn't do as they promised, or your concerns or beliefs were dismissed or ignored. Not nice was it? Did you feel like trusting that person or institution after that? Probably not.

The 'science of disrespect' is a huge field which shows we carry the feelings of anger generated by being disrespected with us for a long time. Disrespect and 'slights' are even a significant cause of violence, particularly in young men.³⁹ These feelings are tough to ignore or overcome and colour our judgement of the person or institution and significantly alter our interest in cooperating with a person or institution in future interactions.

Conversely, perceived respect is a powerful driver of trust and satisfaction in institutions and processes. For example, in civil disputes, litigants believe that their case has been handled in a respectful manner was the single most powerful determinant of preference for one type of procedure over another.⁴⁰ In the design of citizen dialogues, the decisions taken, even if they don't align with the desired outcomes, are more likely to be accepted if participants feel they have been respected in the way they have been treated and that the design of the process has been respectful of their views and concerns.⁴¹





Trust tip

Respect those you disagree with

Perhaps the most valuable finding of the TIGTech project is the importance of respecting and taking seriously the views of others – particularly those we don't agree with or whose values and beliefs clash with our own. The perceived disrespect generated by a failure to do this can potentially undermine even the most trustworthy processes. How do you respect people whose opinions and values conflict with your own? You decide to. Then commit to the actions that go with it.

Changes to the governance landscape which reinforce its importance:

The governance of many emerging technologies involves judgements which navigate conflicting views, incentives, values and beliefs. Sometimes there are no right answers. Lessons from the past show the importance of taking seriously all perspectives, or opportunities for understanding may be missed and collaborative solutions lost. The governance of GMOs provides an important lesson.

“ The language of science was the only one allowed. Concerns about the purpose of GMOs & societal values were ignored or blocked. This was seen as ‘not the job of governance’. Had they been more open to and respectful of these concerns initially, before opinions became entrenched, who knows where this might have gone”.

Doug Parr, Chief Scientist Greenpeace. (TIGTech consultation)



Watch-outs

Early warnings missed by ‘wilful blindness’^{7 42}

Many examples of failed governance – such as those catalogued in the European Environment Agency's Late Lessons from Early Warnings report⁴³ – show that someone, somewhere, has been drawing attention to a problem, often for a considerable time. These warnings are usually provided by citizens, civil society groups or academics who sit outside the mainstream policy or industry setting. But institutional and personal ‘wilful blindness’ prevented these from being recognised as important. Wilful blindness is what we human do to feel safe, avoid conflict, reduce anxiety, and protect prestige, but if the perspectives of these individuals and groups had been respected and their concerns considered and acted on these, and so many other disasters, could have been averted.

INTEGRITY

**Operating honestly
and being accountable,
impartial and independent
of vested interests.**

Why Integrity is so important to trust:

We are using integrity in broad terms to cover the honesty and accountability of governance institutions and processes but particularly seek to stress the importance of their impartiality and independence from vested interests.^{44,45,46}

Changes to the governance landscape which reinforce its importance:

The 'pacing problem'⁴⁷ – "the gap between the introduction of a new technology and the establishment of laws, regulations, and oversight mechanisms for shaping its safe development" – places increased emphasis on anticipatory⁴⁸ 'agile'⁴⁹ 'soft law' self-regulatory approaches to governance. These approaches are not directly enforceable by governments,⁵⁰ they are often developed collaboratively with those being regulated, and they are considered by some to be at greater risk of undue influence by vested interests. These factors have the potential to undermine trustworthiness and trust.





Trust Tip

It's never the problem, it's the cover up

Trust can be lost and problems arise, not from a problem occurring, but from the cover up and contorted, yet often quite obvious, attempts to divert attention or rationalise it as something else.

Mistakes will happen and people understand this. SocietyInside's analysis of 19 citizen dialogues about emerging technologies showed that citizens⁵¹ were positive about possibilities provided by all sorts of tech, but they were concerned about the governance and its honesty. When (not if, citizens weren't naive) things went wrong they wanted someone to have thought about it in advance and where problems still arise, take responsibility for them and respond quickly to put things right.



Watch-outs

Collaborative governance must avoid 6 conditions for 'Regulatory Capture'

Regulatory capture is an economic theory that regulatory agencies may come to be dominated by the interests they regulate and not by the public interest.⁵² There are many reasons this may happen, but some of these may be exacerbated by the complexities of new technologies and the proposed new 'collaborative' approaches explored in this report and elsewhere.

A number of conditions arise which allow regulatory capture to occur and mean regulators cease to be impartial or are unable to act in the public interest:^{53,54}

- a** Regulators become too friendly with the firms they are regulating (a particular concern with new co-creation models such as 'sandboxes' or business-led governance initiatives).
- b** Regulators don't have sufficient technology expertise or resources in-house and have to rely too much on information from firms.
- c** Regulators are not as efficient as they need to be and short cuts result in too much reliance on firms for enforcement.
- d** Corrupt firms give 'bribes' to regulators to ignore breaches or 'bully' regulators by threatening jobs or economic repercussions.
- e** Regulatory arbitrage⁵⁵ occurs which describes the practice where those being regulated have such strong economic power they are able to avoid the jurisdictions of regulations they don't like.

INCLUSION

**Being collaborative,
inclusive, involving others**



Why inclusion is so important to trust:

Inclusion is important for three reasons (1) because diverse perspectives result in better and wiser judgements, (2) giving genuine agency to others, including business and citizens, in shaping decisions that matter to them makes them more likely to trust those decisions, (even if they don't go their way) and (3) as OECD research found in relation to societal trust, citizens:

“

are more likely to trust a decision that has been influenced by ordinary people than one made solely by government or behind closed doors.”⁵⁶



Changes to the governance landscape which reinforce its importance:

Collaborative governance⁵⁸ – an approach which involves business, civil society groups and citizens in a governance co-creation processes is being increasingly seen as an important tool in the governance tool box to govern fast-moving technologies, particularly those which need to navigate complex values and ethical trade-offs. This inclusive approach done well could not only deliver more effective governance of emerging technologies, but more trusted governance also.



Trust Tip

Trust first to get trust back

Taking a proactive approach and trusting people in the hope and belief that you will be trusted back increases the likelihood of being trusted. Taiwan's Digital Minister Audrey Tang says that the key to their success in combating Covid-19 is not (as commonly assumed) their track and trace tech or their culture – it was their approach to proactively trust citizens and prove they are worthy of their trust. "If the government trusts civil society then the citizens will eventually trust back, but the government has to make the first moves."

Counter-intuitively, given integrity concerns, this is also true of those organisations being regulated. An approach which starts with respect and an inclination to trust is more likely to generate compliance and trustworthy behaviour in return.⁵⁷



Watch-outs

Tick box engagement wastes time and misses opportunities

Stakeholders (and regulators) have better things to do than waste their precious time on a pointless engagement exercise, where views are not taken seriously and where the rationale is mainly about ticking a box on the 'good governance checklist'. But more importantly, opportunities are missed. Assumptions about what people think are very often wrong and initiatives designed based on incorrect assumptions more likely to fail.

“Assume...makes an Ass of U and Me”

Miss Rowe, Primary School
Teacher, 1972

OPENNESS

Enshrining justice and equality in governance processes, application, enforcement, and outcomes

Why openness is so important to trust:

Openness and transparency help increase understanding, demonstrate accountability, prevent and expose wrongdoing and provide 'evidence of trustworthiness' to help earn trust. Closed processes leave a vacuum to be filled by speculation, but 'warts and all' transparency can make individuals and organisations reluctant to share opinions freely and difficult discussions to go even further underground.

'Goldilocks' transparency is required – a thoughtful, evidence based approach which delivers the right balance of openness and confidentiality to facilitate sharing and build external trust, whilst understanding where confidentiality may be important or effective in achieving public interest goals.



Changes to the governance landscape which reinforce its importance:

Distrust in tech governance is fuelled by the belief (and often the reality) that institutions are arrogant, secretive, aloof and their decision-making processes opaque.⁵⁹ If regulators and governance designers are indeed shifting to be 'Champions of the Public', it is important to their legitimacy that they are more transparent in their approach and public knows more about what they do.

“ How can regulators protect consumers effectively if most don't even know what they do?... Regulators are used to being in the background, it's their comfort zone, but if they are going to communicate their value they need to overcome their instinctive reticence”.⁶⁰



Trust Tip

Be open about lack of openness

Be innovative and default to openness and transparency where possible. But where this is not desirable, provide clear explanations why this is in the public interest or the interest of participants in a trusted process.



Watch-outs

Don't be coy; people can only judge you on what they see

Some governance organisations are very proud of the way they live their values, practice integrity and deliver their public interest mandate with skill. But they are coy about communicating this: 'we like to keep under the radar'.⁶¹ They are right to believe that PR-style self-promotion of their good works could be counterproductive, but wrong to think that this 'keep your head down' strategy comes without a cost. How is anyone to deem you worthy of their trust without 'evidence of your trustworthiness'?

FAIRNESS

Enshrining justice and equality
in governance processes,
application, enforcement,
and outcomes

Why fairness is so important to trust:

Perceived unfairness is one of the most powerful drivers of distrust. Even as tiny children we calibrate fairness and unfairness with great precision – ‘it’s not fair’ we wail and feel the injustice viscerally. Conversely fairness is an influential driver of trust.



When a governance process or outcome is seen as fair it leads to greater acceptance of decisions, better compliance with regulations, and more co-operative behaviour in dealing with agents of the government.”⁶²



Changes to the governance landscape which reinforce its importance:

A proactive role in helping deliver fairness and equality in innovation is increasingly seen as the role of tech governance – particularly through new outcome-based instead of rules-based approaches. The history of innovation and technologies have always created unfairness by exacerbating injustice and inequality.⁶³ The newest technologies, such as artificial intelligence, gene editing and others already show little sign they will be any different. Thomas Piketty in his 2020 book *Capitalism and Ideology*⁶⁴ argues that inequality is a political choice based on a flawed ideology – the market will provide – and not the inevitable result of technology and globalization. He demonstrates that it is neither true, nor irreversible and that fairness in governance outcomes is key.



Trust tip

Fairness drivers and trust drivers are the same

The concept of fairness has been a core part of governance purpose and design for millennia. The focus on fairness in process, application, enforcement & outcome is enshrined in the term and practice of 'procedural justice' and the drivers are the same as those for trust: Intent, independence, inclusive, respect, consistency, transparency, openness and accountability.⁶⁵



Watch-outs

Fairness is cultural and contextual with high risk of confusion and inconsistency

Much of new tech operates across borders limiting the potential for cultural interpretations of fairness in tech or governance. Individual nations are limited in how they can regulate, and with so many different approaches (sometimes even within one country), there is a high risk of creating confusion, inconsistencies and unfairness with how different issues in tech are dealt with. The IEEE Global Initiative on Ethics of Autonomous and Intelligent Systems has been grappling with this – exploring different interpretations of fairness, ethics and cultural traditions to avoid a western ethics bias in tech development and governance – for example exploring interpretations according to Buddhist, Ubuntu and Shinto traditions.⁶⁶

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