



Swamps, bridges and the road to data maturity

Key insights from research with small charities and
voluntary organisations

DISCOVER. LEARN. ANALYSE. SHAPE. REPEAT



Your name and organisation

What's one thing you're hoping to understand from the session today?





What we do...

Superhighways helps small charities and community groups gain **essential digital and data skills**, backed by **the right tech**, to achieve their goals.

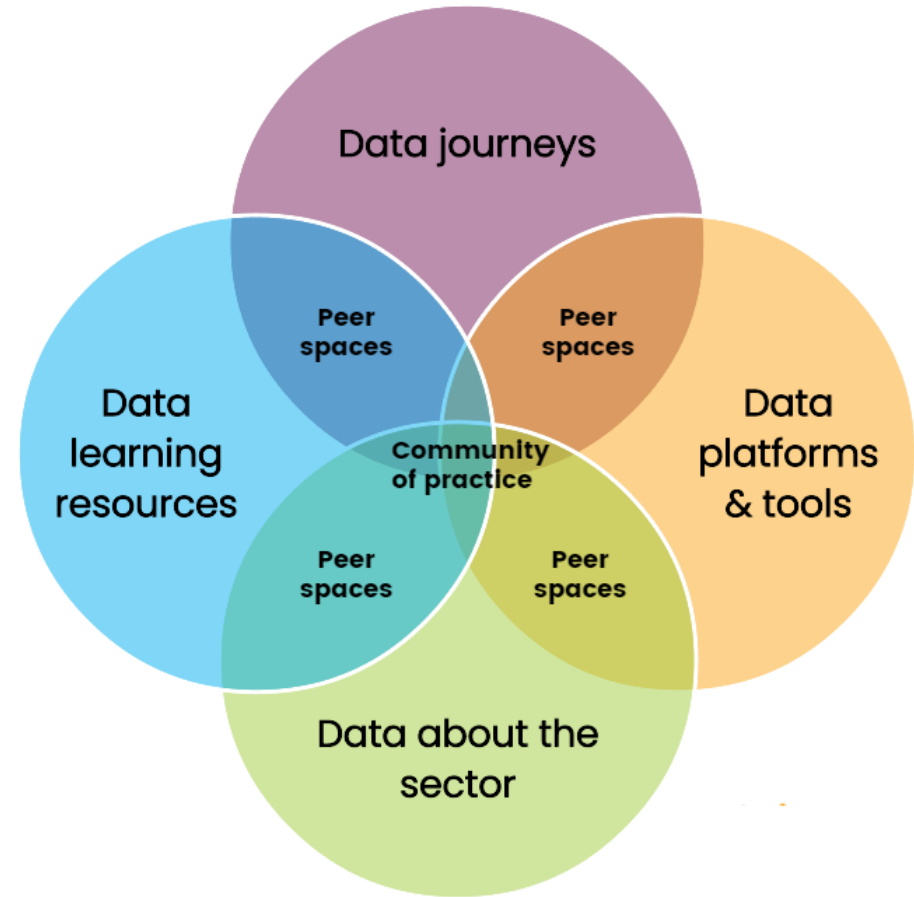


Datawise London



Our data is one of our greatest assets.

Our mission at Datawise is to help you unlock it.



THINK SOCIAL TECH

What I do...

Research, learning and evaluation support in the social sector.

- Understand how organisations mobilise around digital, data and technology.
- Inform funding and support initiatives.
- Document and share insights / good practice.



Plan for today

- ✓ Share lovely examples of small charities using data
- ✓ Tell you about the research
- ✓ Highlight key findings
- ✓ Discuss your experiences



Our goals today

- ✓ You'll understand...
 - ✓ How data helps charities
 - ✓ What the key challenges are
 - ✓ Where support is needed
 - ✓ How Superhighways can help
- ✓ We'll understand...
 - ✓ Your experiences
 - ✓ Ways to move forwards



Data showcase



Lovely examples of small charities
doing great work, with data



Data Showcase

Kentish Town Community Centre

(Speaking at our Where's the Power
in Data event, Dec 22)



“

Discuss in pairs or small groups

What interesting data
projects / approaches
have you seen?

”



Data showcase

**Latin American Women's Rights
Service (LAWRS)**

&

**Indo American Migrant and
Refugee Organisation (IMRO)**



Data showcase

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)

&

Indo American Migrant and Refugee Organisation (IMRO)

- ✓ Supported over 600 Latin Americans to access a GP and Covid vaccinations in Southwark.
- ✓ Gathered data in community languages in face to face delivery.
- ✓ Created case studies to bring data to life, showing barriers in action.
- ✓ Their report documents the barriers their community faces when accessing healthcare.
- ✓ This fills a gap in evidence about healthcare inequalities.
- ✓ It evidences the need for a grassroots approach.



“

**Data is important, because
without it our community
remains invisible.**

If you can collect data then do.

”



Data showcase

Voluntary Action Camden

Provide a social prescribing service, connecting residents with community activities for health and wellbeing.





For us the real value is being able to use our data to work with others and help develop services which respond to local needs



Data showcase

Voluntary Action Camden

Provide a social prescribing service, connecting residents with community activities for health and wellbeing.

- ✓ VAC use Salesforce to collate data on hundreds of referrals.
- ✓ Their data shows that demand for community activity referrals have decreased, amidst an increase in cost of living crisis referrals.
- ✓ The benefits of health and wellbeing community activities are well evidenced.
- ✓ It shows an emerging need to co-locate wellbeing activities alongside cost of living support.
- ✓ They are collaborating with the council and local voluntary groups to respond.



Data showcase

Bromley Third Sector Enterprise (BTSE) delivers **Bromley Well**, a partnership with local voluntary sector organisations.



Data showcase

Bromley Third Sector Enterprise (BTSE) delivers **Bromley Well**, a partnership with local voluntary sector organisations.

- ✓ Bromley Well provides a single point of access to health and wellbeing services for people living in Bromley.
- ✓ This means quicker referrals.
- ✓ For example, an elderly gentleman was referred due to hospital discharge. A house visit found he needed handrails. This was flagged on the system. They were installed within 48 hours.



Data showcase

Bromley Third Sector Enterprise (BTSE) delivers **Bromley Well**, a partnership with local voluntary sector organisations.

- ✓ The service is paid for by Bromley Council and NHS South East London Integrated Care Board.
- ✓ The contract has been renewed to 2027. BTSE were able to employ a full time data manager.
- ✓ Started using Power BI to spot trends.
- ✓ Discovered 37% of clients identified as having a disability this year.
- ✓ After a spike in demand for cost of living support, BTSE created new online resources.
- ✓ Share insights on service pressures with partners and the council.



Data showcase

Southwark Travellers' Action Group (STAG)

A community organisation for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers based in Southwark.



Data showcase

Southwark Travellers' Action Group (STAG)

A community organisation for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers based in Southwark.

- ✓ Undertook an annual survey in 2022. This captured the extent of overcrowding in local Traveller sites.
- ✓ STAG used the data to help influence the Southwark Plan (a statutory development plan for the borough to 2036).
- ✓ Southwark Council has now committed to protect all four existing Traveller sites and to look for sites for new pitches.
- ✓ Previously, all sites were at risk.



Data showcase

Sobus

A Community Development Agency
and the Council for Voluntary Service
in Hammersmith & Fulham.



Data showcase

Sobus

A Community Development Agency and the Council for Voluntary Service in Hammersmith & Fulham.

- ✓ Set out to explore the prevalence of mental health issues in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population in Hammersmith & Fulham.
- ✓ Needed local data for stakeholders to act.
- ✓ Turned to Superhighways, who supported them to access DataKind.
- ✓ Datakind organised a DataDive. Experienced volunteer data scientists analysed local datasets.
- ✓ Discovered a high correlation between deprivation, ethnicity and prevalence of mental health issues.
- ✓ The report has led to new investment in local mental health prevention and support services.



What we know from looking at success stories

Data is valuable to small charities. It can be integral to achieving their mission by:

- ✓ Making specific communities and their needs visible
- ✓ Highlighting gaps in services
- ✓ Giving legitimacy to experience
- ✓ Building the evidence base needed for people to act
- ✓ Helping a coordinated response



**Charity
Digital Skills
Report data
backs this**

62%

of charities say their key priority over the next 12 months is to use data insights to improve services or operations



**BUT, we also
know that...**

It's not easy.
It takes vision and a lot of work.
Small charities can really struggle.





Discuss in groups

Where do you see charities getting stuck?

When do they come to you for help?

What problems do you see when looking at applications or monitoring reports?



About the research



We spoke to

35 charities with an income under £1 million

- ✓ 15 in-depth interviews (July - Sept 2022)
- ✓ 3 roundtables (1 in Oct 21 and 2 in Sept 2022)
- ✓ 6 case study interviews

A range of different types of organisations

- ✓ 60% frontline services, 40% infrastructure and membership organisations
- ✓ Half with an income of under £100k, two thirds have less than 10 staff
- ✓ A third offer pan London services, two thirds work in specific boroughs



We asked them



- ✓ How did you get to where you are now with your use of data? What were the key moments in your journey? Thinking of a roadmap...

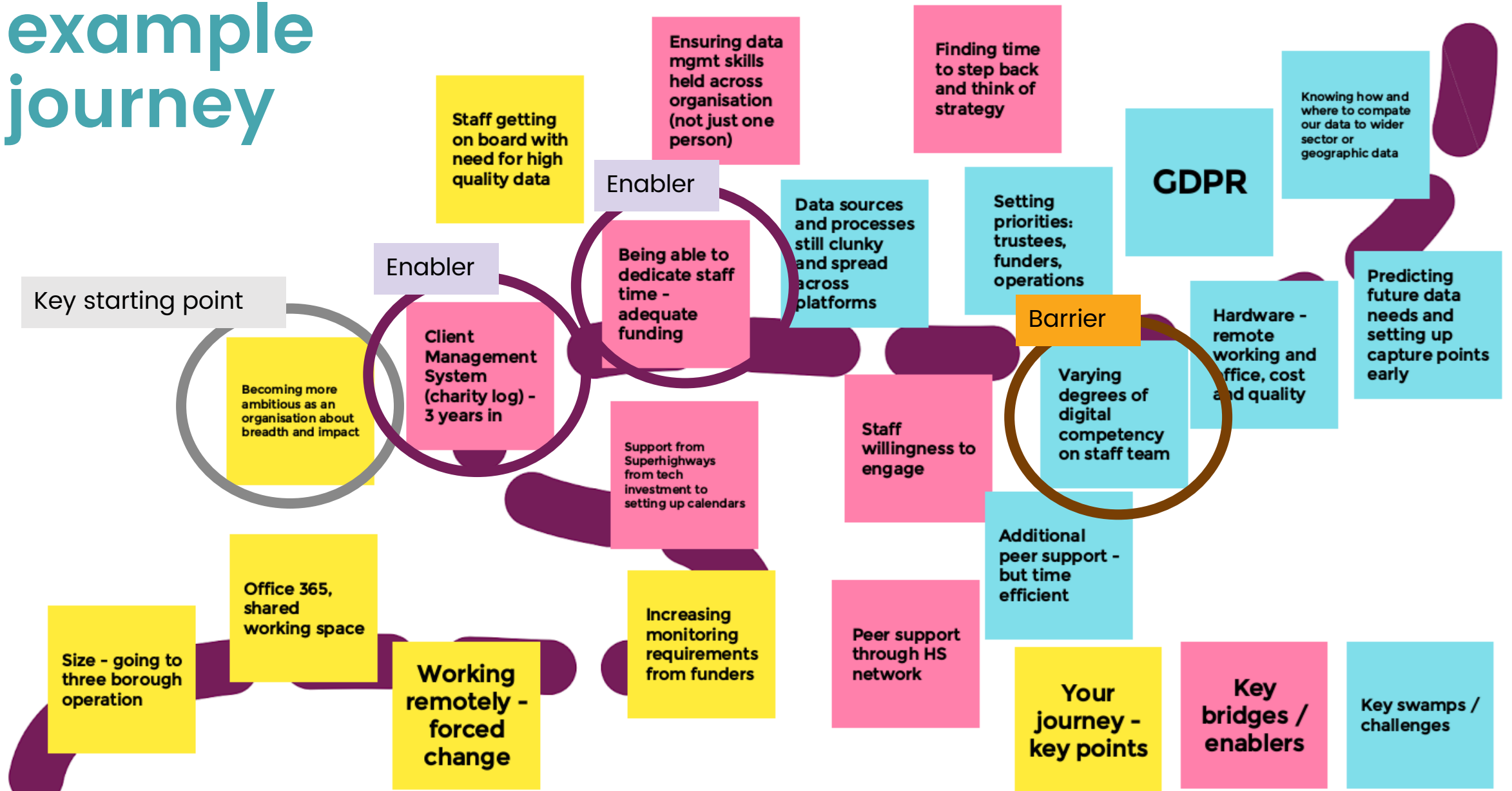


- ✓ What were the bridges that helped you overcome challenges? What enabled you to progress?







- ✓ And what were the swamps?! What traps did you fall into? What obstacles did you find on the way?

An example journey



We discovered across the journeys

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Curious |  |
| Starting out |  |
| Advancing |  |
| Advanced |  |

Four stages / pathways

- ✓ Each has a similar intention
- ✓ Common challenges and enablers (but these can crop up at any stage)

Note that charities:

- ✓ May not want to progress to next stage
- ✓ Don't always start from the beginning



An example: Starting out

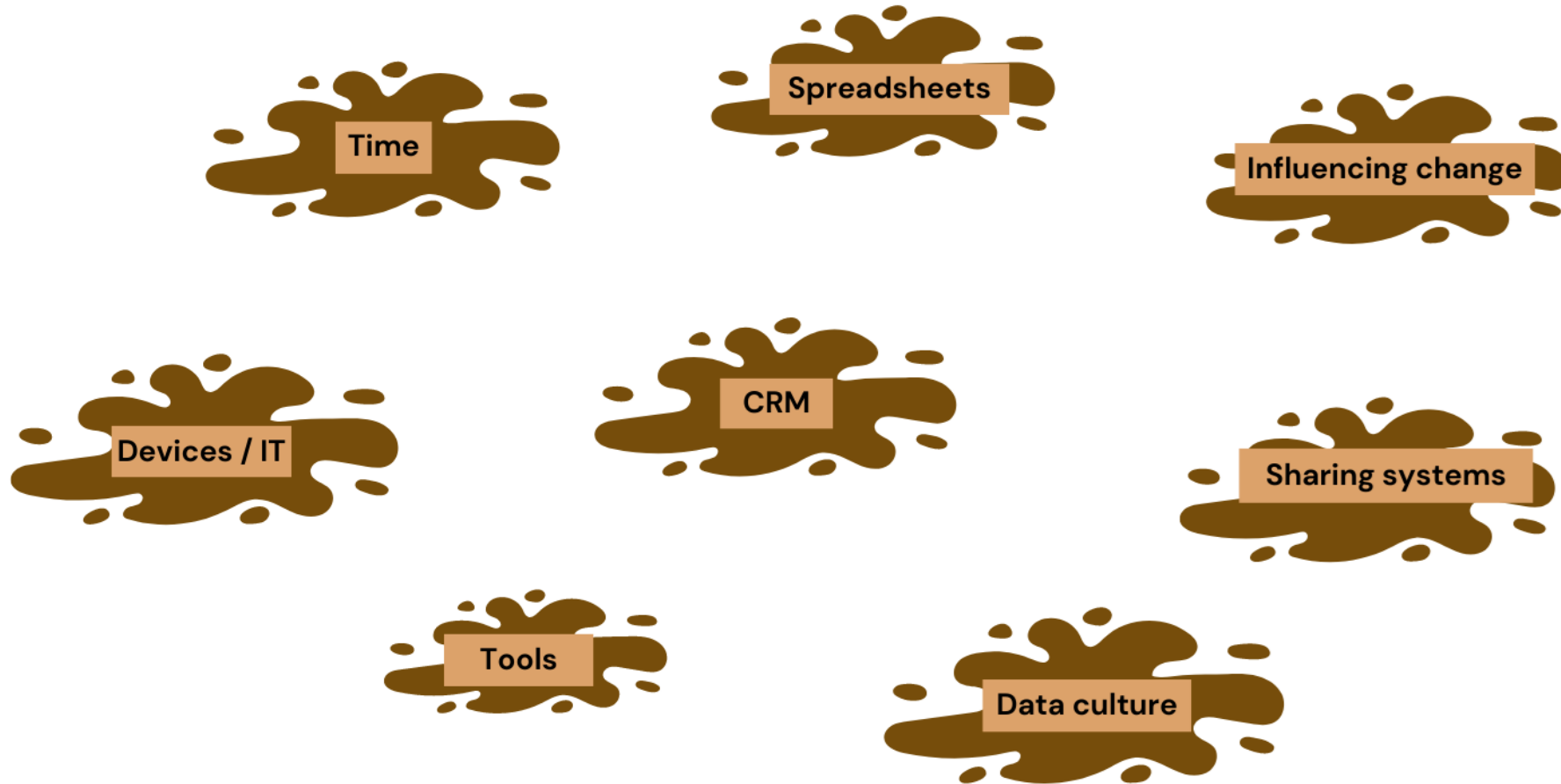


Note that

- ✓ Bridges help make progress, but there are no shortcuts.
- ✓ Rabbit holes are important. Time well spent.
- ✓ Swamps are where funders, intermediaries etc really help!



Swamps





We are still entering everything into the Excel spreadsheet once a month. It takes a long time.

It's slowly getting us recording the right data better, analysing it in a useful way and showing it to funders. There must be a simpler way.





I'm thinking I really should be getting some sort of client management system, but I'd have to either pay for one or adapt a free version.

Then we'd have to have everyone trained, make sure that all the data is in the right format to enter into it.

I am weighing it up. For the size we are do we need it? Have we got a month to spend transferring data over? At the moment I think no.



Context

Small charities are more likely to get stuck in these swamps because..

- ✓ Cash strapped (and fear paying)
- ✓ Relying on free tools with limitations, tools prohibitively expensive
- ✓ May not have office space limiting time and equipment for data work
- ✓ No admin support limiting time for data work (CEO may do it)
- ✓ Volunteers/ staff have varied roles
- ✓ Lots of small funding pots with different funder requirements
- ✓ Reliant on skills of one person who may be data savvy (but lack time) or totally new to data
- ✓ Time poor prevents thinking about the organisation
- ✓ Vulnerable clients/ethical concern



Charity Digital Skills Report data backs this

53%

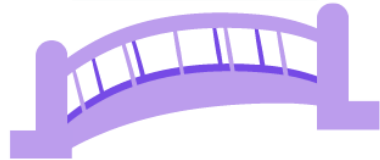
of charities say their CRM* is causing significant challenges for their organisations

*Customer Relationship Management System e.g. Salesforce, Dynamics, Lamplight



Key enablers

Free tools



Clear need for data



Someone leads on data



Training / support



Dedicated data role



Data savvy trustees / CEO



Partnerships / collaborations



Sharing data / insights





There are so many options for data collection tools out there. How do you strategically decide, this is the best way to go?

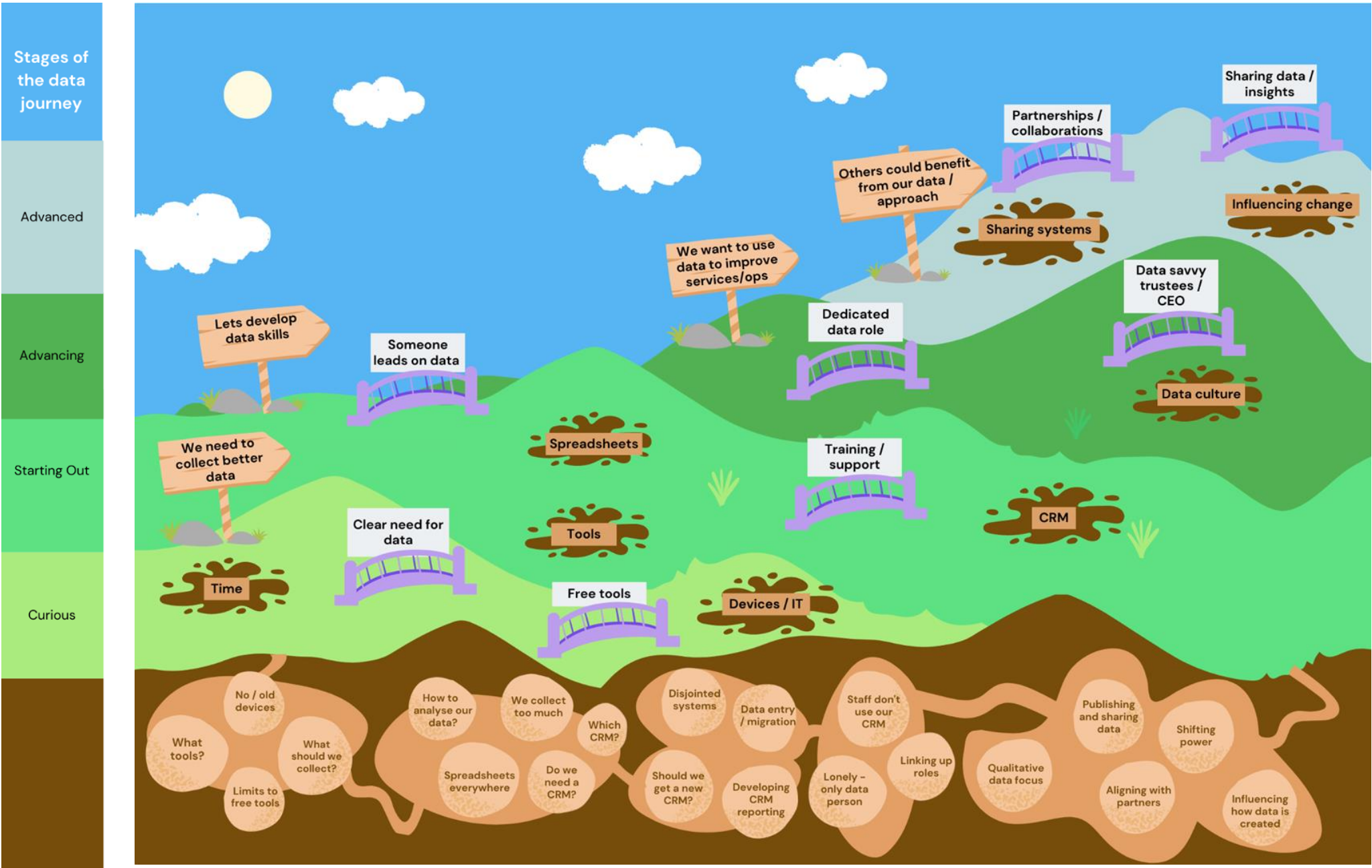


“

Meeting Superhighways and attending some of the meetings really opened my eyes as to those and what potentially we could be using data for and how data is important.

”





Key takeaways

- ✓ Data matters to small charities
- ✓ People, skills, tools, systems are crucial to move forwards
- ✓ It takes A LOT of time to do the hard work to make it simple
- ✓ We can help when they hit swamps and rabbit holes



Quick break! 5 mins



Our role and what helps





In chat

How do you help?

Do organisations come to you for funding for data projects?

What do you fund when it comes to data (and systems/digital)



Good funder practice

Some examples we know about...

- ✓ **Trust for London** – Stronger Voices programme enhancing the capacity of civil society to influence policy and decision making

Funding and sharing research & providing data and evidence for the sector to use.
- ✓ **Cornerstone Fund** – funder collaborative including a focus on using data to achieve better outcomes for Londoners.
- ✓ **City Bridge Trust** – Anchor programme core funding for infrastructure – co-design identifying that it's a struggle to get funding for policy work, for data work, and for working collaboratively.



Good funder practice

Some examples we know about...

- ✓ **Lloyds Bank Foundation** – Enhance Funder Plus support including to implement a new database
- ✓ **Clothworkers Foundation** – Open programme capital funding tweaked to enable set up costs and initial subscriptions for e.g. database implementations
- ✓ **The Legal Education Foundation** – Community Data Principle – Justice Lab, data cohorts and data leadership paper



Our current offer

Supporting small charities and community groups - bridges, swamps and rabbit holes

- ✓ Developing further resources and support to choose & implement a CRM / database
- ✓ Convening User Groups for specific systems so peers can share and learn together
- ✓ Influencing product suppliers - adjusting existing tools or developing new ones
- ✓ Making open data more accessible - running sessions on build your own Census 21 data sets + using pivot tables and charts to visualise
- ✓ Encouraging small steps to improve data collection and sharing to better understand London's civil society
- ✓ Continuing to develop & deliver data basics training and one-to-one support sessions

[See our digital basics and data essentials training](#)



Some of what we'd like to do more of!

Get in touch to work with us!

- ✓ Deliver a continuous training programme catering not just for the curious & getting started, but for those transitioning to advancing and advanced
- ✓ Partner with others to facilitate further cohort / peer learning programmes around specific theme or place
- ✓ Curate an annual data & insights conference similar to the successful Where's the power in data 2022
- ✓ Work with others to develop data leadership at CEO / trustee level





Discuss in groups

Where do you see charities getting stuck?

When do they come to you for help?

What problems do you see when looking at applications or monitoring reports?





Thank you for listening

Nissa Ramsay

Think Social Tech

Sorrel Parsons & Kate White

Superhighways

www.datawise.london

