



RISE

Retrofit information,
support & expertise

Factors effecting technology acceptance

Rise Discovery

January 2026

Funded by:



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

www.riseretrofit.org.uk





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Introduction: Revealing the real drivers of digital change

Sarah McCelland of RISE Director recently spoke with **Dan Bowers**, Head of Psychology at the **University of South Wales**, about a challenge that sits at the heart of every innovation effort yet is often overlooked: **technology acceptance**.

Beyond the system: Why adoption deserves deeper scrutiny

At the University of South Wales, Dan's research focuses on the behavioural and cultural factors that determine whether new technologies become embedded, or quietly abandoned.

Rather than treating digital transformation as a purely technical exercise, Dan examines the lived experience of users; their expectations, anxieties, motivations, and the organisational environments that shape their decisions.

What is technology acceptance?

Technology acceptance refers to how willing people are to adopt and use new tools or systems. It is influenced by several interconnected factors:

- **Perceived usefulness** – Does the technology genuinely improve tasks or outcomes?
- **Ease of use** – Is it intuitive, accessible, and low-effort to learn?
- **Trust** – Do users feel confident in the system's reliability, security, and purpose?
- **Culture and leadership** – Are people supported, encouraged, and given space to adapt?

Even the most sophisticated technology can fail if users feel excluded, overwhelmed, or unconvinced.

Why it matters

Across the UK, organisations are accelerating digital adoption, from AI-enabled services to cloud platforms and automation. These technologies promise efficiency, resilience, and improved service delivery.

But when acceptance is low, these benefits evaporate. Systems go unused, workarounds emerge, and staff revert to familiar habits.



Poor adoption leads to wasted investment, stalled innovation, and widening digital divides.

“Technology doesn’t transform organisations—people do.”

The acceptance blind spot

To understand why adoption so often falters, Bowers and his colleagues have been analysing real-world case studies across public services, education, and industry. Their findings reveal a consistent pattern: organisations underestimate the emotional and behavioural dimensions of change.

Training is often delivered too late, communication is inconsistent, and users are rarely involved early enough in design or decision-making. Resistance emerges not from hostility to technology, but from a lack of clarity, confidence, and connection. Addressing this then helps with progressing projects.

Identifying the barriers

Through interviews, workshops, and behavioural mapping, the team identified three dominant barriers to technology acceptance:

- **Cognitive overload** – Too many changes, too quickly, without adequate support.
- **Trust gaps** – Concerns about data privacy, job security, or system reliability.
- **Cultural friction** – When organisational norms or leadership behaviours contradict digital ambitions.

These barriers are not technical, they are human.

Expert insights: What drives successful adoption

In response to these challenges, Bowers highlights three essential enablers:

- **Co-design with users** – Early involvement builds ownership and reduces fear.
- **Clear, consistent narratives** – People need to understand why a technology matters.
- **Supportive ecosystems** – Ongoing training, peer networks, and leadership modelling create the conditions for sustained change.

Trust, he emphasises, is the foundation that holds these elements together.

What can be done

For organisations, the first step is recognising that technology acceptance is a journey, not a single event. This means:

- Engaging users early and often
- Providing continuous, accessible support
- Creating feedback loops that allow systems to evolve with user needs

For policymakers and researchers, the challenge is to deepen our understanding of digital behaviour and develop predictive models that help organisations anticipate adoption challenges before they arise.

Want to learn more?

Listen to the full conversation on RISE's Spotify channel:

- **RISE Podcast: [Technology acceptance by RISE podcast](#)**



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