# EdTech Hub

**Clear evidence, better decisions, more learning.**

# Behaviour change key principles for EdTech

The MASTER framework

UKaid
from the British people

THE WORLD BANK

unicef
for every child

# About this document

# Ethical Persuasion & Making It Stick

EdTech Hub

# Why this tool?

An EdTech Hub sandbox fast-tracks promising EdTech interventions by providing funding, tools, and access to evidence.

It provides a space for partners to test and grow ideas in conditions of uncertainty.

Since 2020, EdTech Hub has worked with partners in eight countries, to test and grow EdTech based on our sandbox methodology.

**When testing and growing EdTech, this tool aims to help you get started with ways to design for innovation behaviours or mindsets and make them stick.**

# Fundamentals

Our brains process vast amounts of information in a day, and to make sense of it we make shortcuts in our thinking.

This means our behaviours are not always logical or in response to information. Otherwise, none of us would smoke, and we'd all wear our seatbelts. We are all predictably irrational.

"Our beliefs and our wishes and our hopes are **not always anchored in reasons**."

**Daniel Kahneman**

# Ethical persuasion & making it stick

# Six principles of persuasion & making it stick

There are many ways we are influenced by the world around us, and we have many biases (shortcuts in our thinking) and motivations (internal or external incentives). The MASTER framework we present here is not exhaustive, but it can help you get started with ways to design for innovation behaviours or mindsets and make them stick.

**M**essenger
**A**ttractive
**S**ocial
**T**imely
**E**asy
**R**egular

# 📢 Messenger

## Who is the message coming from?

People respond differently based on who a message or instruction is coming from. We typically follow the lead of:

- **Credible, knowledgeable experts** — It's important to signal to others what makes you a credible, knowledgeable authority before you try to influence others.

- **People like us** — It's very effective when peers (e.g., mums, academics, team mates) spread the message to each other.

- **Power, uniforms, authority** —These are to be used sensitively, especially in more authoritarian contexts.

- **Numbers** — Hello, social media influencers with millions of followers!



🧠 **Think about:** Who is your message coming from? Who would your target audience respond best to? Notice the cultural approach to authority, safety, trust, and power. Who would caregivers respond best to?

# 🤩 Attractive

## We are more likely to do something if we find it attractive and rewarding

What we find rewarding differs from person to person. It's our own unique blend of internal and external incentives, a recipe typically made up of:

🧠 **Think about:** What are the incentives in the system you're looking at? Are they internal or external? This is sometimes called intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. How might you design for a blend of all four types?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **INTERNAL** | 🥅 Goal | I want to achieve this for myself |
| | 💪 Guts | I want to get to the other side of this challenge and feel the reward from cracking it and from knowing I had the courage to make it through |
| **EXTERNAL** | 🏆 Glory | I want the recognition for solving or fixing this and the kudos that comes with it |
| | 💰 Gold | I want a prize, money, or something else |

# 👨‍👩‍👦 **Social**

## Consensus

Especially when they are uncertain, people look to the actions and behaviours of others to determine their own.

- Applying this principle works best when it calls on a majority of others, who are "like you" (understand, who are like the person you are trying to influence)

- This is sometimes called social proof or norms

🧠 **Think about:** How might you surface this type of consensus with the people you're trying to reach? What are relevant cultural aspects? How might you make the unseen seen? For example, would a dashboard be appropriate here to show how many others are already doing the thing you are trying to encourage?

## Reciprocity

People feel obliged to give back to others the form of a behaviour, gift, or service that they have received first. That's why freebies are so effective and marketers use them to reel us in. 🐟

🧠 **Think about:** How might you give something first. Be it knowledge, a gesture, a small gift, a free newsletter, a tool, an insight, a link to a cool podcast, etc.

# 📅 **Timely**

## Timing is everything

How a new behaviour is timed and how it interacts with what already exists in a typical day / week / month etc., is key. This is why things like deadlines are so effective for sparking a behaviour and we all like to quit things on dates like January 1st.

> 🧠 **Think about:** How does the new behaviour you'd like to introduce interact with what already exists? What existing behaviour can you hang it on to? What existing event can you align it with?

## Scarcity

We are jolted into action by scarcity, this could be time running out, available places for participants running out, or a deadline after which an opportunity is no longer available.

# 🚲 **Easy**

## **We are more responsive when things are made easy for us**

Reduce the options to make decisions easier with one single Call To Action or perhaps two, to give the feeling of choice or to anchor people (although the ethics of this can be tricky, so be careful and think about the ethical implications).

Remove the friction* — Removing as many steps or barriers as possible means people are more likely to act. For example:

- Reduce the number of clicks or actions needed

- Start small to create a tiny habit or behavioural change

\* Note that sometimes it's good to keep or add in friction. For example, when passengers complained about the wait at the baggage carousel at Austin Airport, the walk to the baggage claim was rerouted to become five minutes longer. Complaints about waiting for the baggage disappeared.



Bad user experience

Good user experience

🧠 **Think about:** What are the defaults? How do you make it easier to stay in than to opt out? What is the Call To Action? How can you remove all the friction?

# ⏰ **Regular**

**Start small.** It's best to start small and build up a rhythm. Then you can begin to add in more asks and tasks

> 🧠 **Think about:** What's the smallest thing you can do today? Start there.

**Drumbeat —** Consistency is key for setting up new behaviours and having them become habits.

> 🧠 **Think about:** What rhythm and frequency will you use to set up the habit?

**Loops.** We tend to stick with new habits when we see progress or have frequent (small!) rewards

> 🧠 **Think about:** How will you create feedback loops or reward loops to trigger a dopamine release?

# ⏰ **Regular**

## Commitment and consistency

Here's another quirk about regularity. We like to be consistent with our former selves.

Once we've made a single decision, we use that as a reference for subsequent related choices.

If we undertake a small action (e.g., like writing a post, voting on something, entering a competition) we'll be much more likely to do a similar, bigger action (e.g., buying something, telling our friends, or starting a new habit) in future when asked.

🧠 **Think about:** What's a small thing you can ask people to do now that will ensure they'll take a bigger action later?
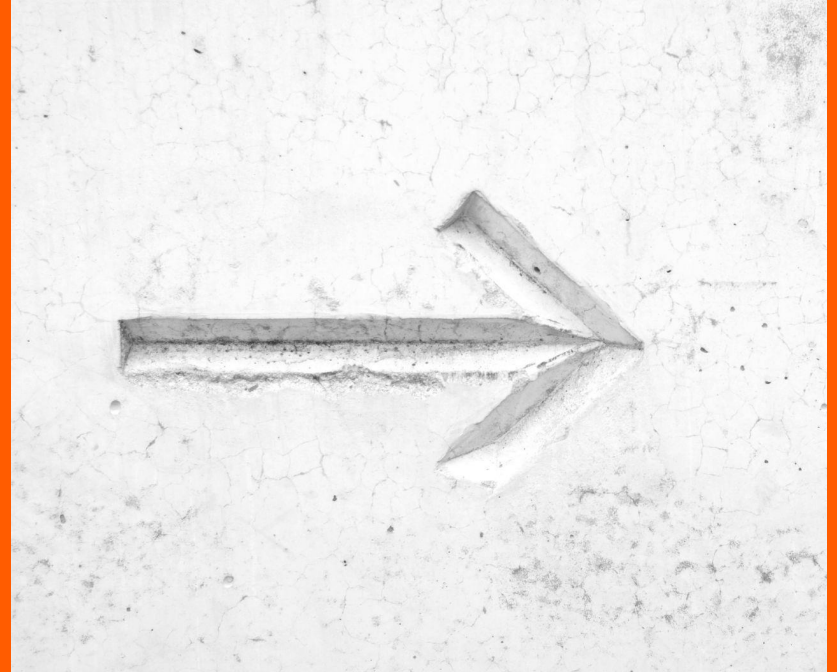
# Let's talk ethics

# Nudge or sludge?

**Consider:**

- Who gets to decide when we need to change behaviour?

- How do we design something that leaves no one behind?

- Should you test with one group and leave a control group untouched?

- Do people have a right to know you are influencing them?

# And finally...
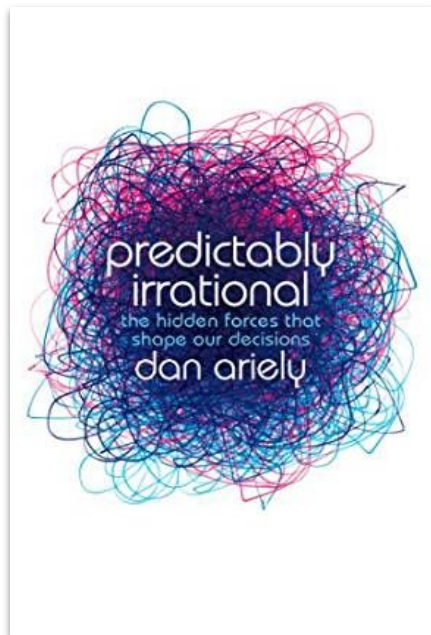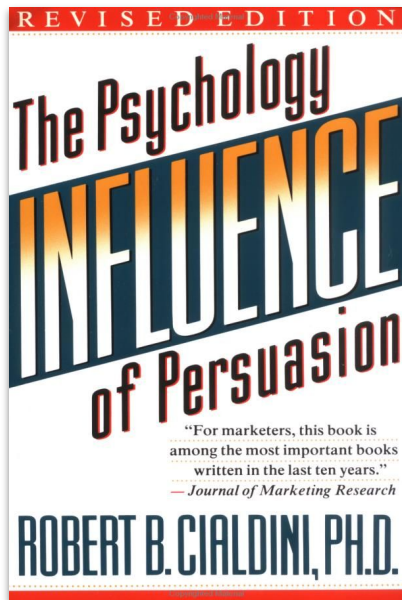
# We are all predictably irrational

Whilst we all have our own unique blend of personality, experience, motivators, and perceptions, we all share very similar biases.

We have hundreds of them. The main thing is to know we have them, and always look at things from a different perspective when we can.

This means inviting in divergent views and listening. Always try to ask the counter question: What would happen if we stopped / if we didn't / if we approached this from a different angle?

# If you only read three things

# Further reading

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