

## Language, Education and Community in the Digital Age: A Welsh Case Study

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### Abstract

In 2017, the Welsh Government published an ambitious strategy to reach one million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government 2017). Key cornerstones of this strategy are the education system and the use of Welsh within digital platforms. Nonetheless, this strategy is ambitious as the Welsh language is considered a vulnerable language by UNESCO and faces constant challenges relating to the sustainability of the language in communities across Wales. Despite the fact that learning the Welsh language has been a compulsory component of the curriculum in Wales since 1988, language planners and policy makers alike have long pointed out the lack of social use of the language outside the formal education system. Issues relating to language use such as confidence, fluency and a lack of social opportunities to use Welsh will be discussed within this paper as will finding all important spaces to use Welsh such as various digital platforms to in order to reverse language shift.

This paper will provide an overview of the current situation in Wales by concentrating on the sustainability of Welsh as a community language. Furthermore, this paper will tease out important themes relating to how education and digital technologies can contribute to language maintenance and language revitalisation. This paper will draw upon examples from recent studies into the community use of Welsh (Hodges et al 2015), an innovative toolkit to promote the use of the Welsh language in the community (Hodges and Prys 2017) and also pioneering multi-media resources for the teaching of Sociology through the medium of Welsh (Prys and Hodges 2017-). This paper will also look to the future and assess the ability of the Welsh language to embrace new technologies moving forward within the digital age, especially as Wales will be adopting a new educational curriculum in 2022 where digital learning is at the forefront.

### References

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