

Editorial

Welcome to the seventh edition of the CitizenFirst Newsletter. eInclusion aims to ensure that disadvantaged people are not excluded due to their lack of digital literacy or internet access. e-Inclusion also means taking new advantages



of new opportunities offered by digital and technical services for the inclusion of socially disadvantaged people and less-favoured areas.

The Information Society has the potential to make a massive difference to the lives of people who often feel marginalised or isolated from society because of their social and cultural situation.

Two Citizen First Workshops on "eAgeing" and engaging "Hard to Reach" Groups were held in Ennis, Ireland, on 19 March 2008 to share experience and hear the views of various people in the Region. Both concluded that ICT can help to engage everyone and achieve wider-based community involvement but it must be done with care and putting each individual first.

I would also like to bring to your attention the Final CitizenFirst International Conference which is taking place on 25 & 26 September 2008 in Ennis, Co. Clare, Mid-West Ireland. The theme of the conference is "Citizen First... using Technology to include ALL Citizens" and I invite all of you to participate where you will see a show-case of the eInclusion Projects ongoing in the regions.

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Launch of Citizen First Guideline Fiches

The first set of 21 short Guideline Fiches developed from the experience of the Citizen First pilot trials and other best practice, have been launched on the home page of the website, www.citizen-first.net. The fiches are mainly 2 pages, and can be downloaded with one click to help other European Regions extend their ICT online services from being citizen-centric to being proactively inclusive.

The initial topics covered range from "Top-down or Bottom-up Services - how best to put the Citizen first" and "Providing Public Internet Access... Options & Factors to be considered" to "e-Inclusion ... what is it - why is it so important?", "Web 2.0 for citizen centric services ... what is it all about?" and "INTERREG IV... a very quick guide"

It is planned that the list will be extended and each of the guidelines will be regularly updated and improved based on the project partners' experience and inputs from others. So please let us know what you think, and we welcome your experience, suggestions and comments to Citizen-First@mwra.ie

Dates for your Diary

Final International CitizenFirst Conference

"Citizen First...using Technology to include ALL Citizens"

Ennis, Co. Clare, IRELAND,
25-26 September 2008

This Conference is aimed at public, local & voluntary stakeholders working on providing solutions to social exclusion in our communities by exploring the benefits of Information Communications Technologies.

The CitizenFirst activities to date have successfully concentrated on refocusing local and regional activities from organisation driven services to citizen centric services. The project has led to the successful implementation of services which focus and are deployed around the stated and diverse needs of citizens. However, despite the success of the current pilots the consortium acknowledges that some target groups are still at risk of further exclusion with the digitalisation of public services. In the last year, the project has been working closely with these target groups to further gain the participation of hard to reach, >

marginalized groups and people with special needs.

The Conference should be of interest to all regional or local authority officers and politicians involved in, or concerned with, social inclusion, e-inclusion, e-democracy, e-participation and people empowerment.

More information about transport, accommodation and conference content will be available on the project website www.citizen-first.net.

For information on the Town of Ennis & Mid-West Ireland please visit www.discoverireland.ie/shannon.aspx

The CitizenFirst project is a project funded by the INTERREG IIIB North West Europe Programme.

More information on the CitizenFirst project: www.citizen-first.net

More information on the INTERREG IIIB NWE-ENO Programme: www.nweurope.org

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Introduction

Who Should Be Interested

Partners

Interreg 38 Secretariat

European News

Consortium Area

EU e-Inclusion Portal

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Guidelines

Citizen First Workshops on eAgeing and engaging "Hard to Reach" Groups held in Ennis, Ireland, on 19 March 2008.

1. e-Ageing: Helping older people to access the Information Society

Currently nearly 14% of the EU population is over the age of 65 and the figure is expected to double by 2050.

Key facts:

- Average life expectancy is now over 80, and by 2020 around 25% of the population will be over 65.
- The first women to live to the age of 120 is now 60
- Only 10% people over 65 use the internet
- Over 20% of the 50+ age group are seriously challenged in hearing, vision or dexterity

These demographic changes will have enormous economic and social implications and an ageing population presents significant challenges to society:

- To sustain the level of service provided by health and social systems
- To make sure that the silver generation contributes with their experience to the economy and society >

- The course identified literacy problems in the elderly
- Fear of the computer/unknown
- The course attracted more women than men
- Main reason for using email was to communicate with family
- Building up a relationship/confidence with the tutor is the key to them returning

2. Hard to Reach Groups: Improving access in the Information Society

The Information Society has the potential to make a massive difference to the lives of people who often feel marginalised or isolated from society because of their social and cultural situation. For example, ICTs can help immigrants to share in Europe's cultural life. However, immigrant users are as confronted by barriers in accessing services as other disadvantaged groups, due to lack of technical and language skills or due to digital technologies which are difficult to use.

The European Commission will raise awareness and connect efforts during 2008 through an e-Inclusion campaign "e-Inclusion, be part of it!"

- Enabling the conditions for everyone to take part in the information society by bridging the accessibility, broadband and competences gaps.
- Accelerating effective participation of groups at risk of exclusion and improving quality of life.
- Integrating e-Inclusion actions in Europe to maximise lasting impact.

The participants at this workshop concluded that for Information Communications Technology to improve the lives of marginalised Groups >

- To make sure our industry benefits from this potentially huge market
- To make sure that when people get older they have a good quality of life

The Workshop concluded that the key issues for Information Technology to support an ageing population are:

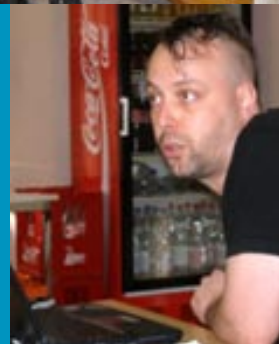
- Awareness – we need to make the elderly aware of what ICT can do for them.
- Make ICT fun as well as practical to get people involved, good tool once people can see what they can actually get out of using ICT. Local history, emailing family and friends are things that can be offered to get people involved which can lead on to other services on offer.
- Participating in video conferencing
- Caring for the elderly – Reach out to more people, if they where able to use the PC as a communication tool emails can be sent from carers to ask residents if they want any thing
- Project sustainability – keeping projects going after the funding ends. The need to recruit volunteers to enable them to keep the offer going. Use Libraries, Community Access Points to gain access to courses and use the internet for free.

From the Citizen First activities in each of the regions, comparisons were made between what Cambridgeshire and Ennis are doing for the elderly population are providing very similar.

Ennis approached IT courses for elderly by providing 10 sessions in small groups while Cambridgeshire only delivered 3 sessions in small groups because of the larger population. Ennis found that the Internet was not the first interest for most learners; this came at a later stage once confidence had improved. Whilst with Cambridgeshire all learners started with an email account to get them online and the course programme was aimed around the Internet.

Both found that:

- You need the appropriate facilities to cope with some disabilities
- Lack of transport to get to people in hard to reach areas and the costs involved in providing this service v



- Physical distance is not relevant, fast direct access straight to your home
- Language barriers – helps overcome them. Allowing new residents to feel part of the local community and seek out services available to them They felt that marginalised groups are becoming more disadvantaged in the Information Society due to:
- Affordability – the cost of running a computer/accessing the internet from your home. Where will the funding come from to pay for this?
- Lack of access through ICT at home in rural areas, if residents won't or can't travel you have an issue of information actually getting to those people. By offering internet access in all new build houses this would be solved
- Making e-government services accessible through the internet only is expanding the divide
- Addiction – online spending and gambling can lead to financial problems
- One size does not fit all – there are many marginalised groups with different issues, needs and motivations, this is hard to overcome and needs an individual approach >

- Local democracy – these people are not likely to be involved in local democracy, any information provided might not be readable, should it be translated?

However we can achieve wider-based community involvement by:

- Involving the community in the creation of new services for example on of the Citizenfirst pilots The Virtuel Plein – asking the community what they want to see on the website and by creating a network of volunteers to keep the site active and up to date.
- Using schools not only to educate young people in ICT for the future but as a way in to make links with migrant parents, offering them fun activities in the community.
- Role of volunteers and the PIAP, recruiting volunteers keeping them involved and sustaining them. Giving people the incentive in becoming volunteers, how do you generate the desire to become a volunteer?
- Inter cultural events – improving involvement in the community between different cultures by providing multi cultural events – encouraging interaction. ○



Kortrijk

Kortrijk and the extension

The City of Kortrijk is continuing and expanding the work done in the First phase of the Citizen First project. More computer courses will be organised by the City, but on another scale and with another emphasis. The scale of the computer courses will be smaller than in the initial project. This is because the target groups that we want to reach are smaller. The emphasis will be on less mobile elderly people, volunteers who organise neighbourhood websites and owners of small businesses.

Less mobile elderly people who might have difficulties in leaving their homes and travelling to and from the computer courses will be picked up at their homes and transported to the venue(s) of the courses. This will be done in a close cooperation between the ICT department and the City's neighbourhood workers. It is a new development that the ICT department, who is coordinating the Citizen First project for the City of Kortrijk, is working together with the City's neighbourhood workers. The neighbourhood workers have a much closer connection with the citizens and can reach them more easily. They will talk to the elderly people from who they know they are less likely to be able to leave their homes by themselves, try to make them enthusiastic and offer them transportation.



Because the City of Kortrijk will have a new website soon, the ICT department is seeking connect with volunteers who want to set up neighbourhood websites by offering them help and assistance in the form of courses. Neighbourhood websites are an ideal tool to include people from (less favoured) parts of the City. These people are sometimes difficult to reach by the traditional website(s) and may feel more comfortable with a website 'of their own'. These websites will then be used by the City in order to connect with these people.

Owners of small businesses in the City of Kortrijk are a 'forgotten group'. The 'Ondernemerscentrum', the entrepreneurs association has done research in this matter and has come to the conclusion that many owners of small businesses are left behind on the wrong side of the digital divide. This leads to missed opportunities of doing (digital) business and therefore is costing the small businesses money. Also, businesses will not be able to do without ICT for much longer, because not only their customers, but also their suppliers will do more and more in an electronic way. For example: in the near future an independent plumber will no longer be able to order spare parts by phone or fax, but only through the internet. Because most owners of small businesses make very long hours they are sometimes not able to learn about ICT even if they want to. It will be a real challenge to organise computer courses for this target group. First, there will be introduction sessions, secondly initiation courses and thirdly (probably outliving the lifespan of the Citizen First project) courses in e-commerce.

A new initiative, not previously undertaken in the project has to do with people with a visual handicap. The City's ICT department will create a computer corner in the City's central library especially adapted for people with a visual handicap. This will concern hardware, software and the needed help and assistance in using them. The City is doing this in close cooperation with the library and 'blindenzorg Licht en Liefde', a non-profit organisation that is committed to helping people with a visual handicap. Licht en Liefde (Light and Love) is a Flemish organisation with branches in seven Flemish cities, amongst whom Kortrijk. The cooperation between the City's ICT department, the library and Licht and Liefde will certainly outlive the lifespan of the Citizen First project. We are very grateful the Citizen First project has allowed us the opportunity to do this first pilot project to inaugurate this new cooperation. ○



On February 22, 2008 the official introduction of the first Internet Access Point in Hoogeloon took place. The Access Point invites elderly people to make more use of digital services. In this way a positive contribution will be made to the liveability in a small community like Hoogeloon. The official opening was done by Mr. Daandels, member of the board of the Eindhoven Regional Government and responsible for rural development, the environment, recreation and tourism.

With support of the village council, representatives of the association of the elderly and the care cooperation Hoogeloon have developed an internet site, www.hoogeloon.info. This site can be seen as a portal with information about associations and organisations and with links to information and services from professional service providers. The municipality of Bladel, the Tourist Information Office, Rabobank and the Eindhovens Dagblad (Regional Newspaper) offer more and more services online. These services on the site www.hoogeloon.info can be reached by using pictograms. In this way the services are easy accessible for people who have limited internet experience.

Apart from the village portal, the Internet site offers access to specific services offered by volunteers, such as repair services, driver services and First Aid for inexperienced PC users. Via the site the schedule for the volunteers can be checked. In this way it is very easy to balance the supply and demand of the volunteers. ○



Citizen First for E-Inclusion initiatives are well under way across Cambridgeshire

A launch event took place on 9th April at the High Barns Community Access Point in Ely, a market town North of Cambridge. High Barns is an area of deprivation and recognised as a 'hard to reach' community. Our work there has been in partnership with staff from Cambridgeshire Racial Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS) and the Hereward Housing Society. No cost learning sessions in ICT, literacy and numeracy are being offered by Citizen First project staff, with an important element of support from volunteer tutors who will offer sustainability to the work established during the project.



Also taking place at High Barns Community Access Point (CAP) is a series of sessions offering Driving Test Theory learning to members of the local Traveller community. These courses commenced on the 23 April and will run for up to 6 weeks. We hope to expand our work with the travelling community as a result of these sessions, and through a new countywide partnership with the Traveller Liaison section of the CREDS team.

CitizenFirst has also allowed us to offer learning opportunities to Cambridgeshire's growing migrant worker population, seen particularly in Fenland. A key focus for delivery to migrant workers is the Fridaybridge agricultural workers camp near Wisbech. Sessions offering 'Taste of English' English for Speakers of other Languages introductory courses to Polish migrant workers are scheduled for delivery. These sessions will make use of 3G mobile broadband enabled laptops, allowing us to take outreach learning beyond our network of CAPs to locations such as Fridaybridge, previously difficult to reach with learning opportunities.

Also in Fenland, the Youthoria multimedia youth team have set up a very successful youth club at the CAP in the village of Parson Drove. The young people are now looking for further funding so their club can continue running. Many of the young people involved did not know that there was a CAP in the village pavilion until they came to the new youth club. The Young Lives 'Jam Van', a multimedia bus, has also been visiting the Parson Drove youth club. Youthoria have also been supporting the Young Lives 'Jam Van' at the CAPs in the villages of Murrow and Guyhirn. In Guyhirn work is also taking place on a project designed to reduce speeding amongst a group of young people. The young people involved are making a DVD about speeding cars in their village. They are very concerned about this issue as there have been a number of accidents in the area, some of them fatal'. ○

The Limerick City Community ICT Steering Group recently launched a report on "Identifying ICT Needs in disadvantaged communities in Limerick City" and are undertaking an initial consultation with a view to developing an ICT Strategy for Limerick City Communities.

Their research found that those living in disadvantaged communities are far less likely to effectively adapt and use new technologies, according to recent research commissioned by Limerick City Community ICT Steering Group. The research 'Identifying ICT Needs in Disadvantaged Communities Within Limerick City', which included a survey of 440 households in Limerick showed that internet access in disadvantaged areas was 50% below the national average. The research shows that close to half of respondents (47%) in disadvantaged communities do not use computers at all. In particular, older people, the unemployed, women in the home, and those with lower education levels are less likely to use computers.

Dr. Pat Bogue said that the report confirmed 'the existence of a large divide between disadvantaged communities such as Southill and Moyross and more affluent communities such as Caherdavin'. The level of home computer ownership in these communities stand at 45% compared to 73% in Caherdavin. Interestingly, the uptake of technologies such as the mobile phone (89%), Text Messaging (79%), and ATM machines (72%) was significantly higher than the uptake of computer technology. These technologies are seen as relevant, whereas 34% of respondents considered computers irrelevant to their every-day lives. However, even for these every-day technologies, usage still fell well below comparable figures for non-disadvantaged communities. The report highlighted what was described as 'a real and urgent need to tackle the issue of digital exclusion in Limerick City'. It calls for an approaches involving 'simple, straight-forward messages, which are centered on relevance and the benefits of technology'. 'Jargon and techno-speak' were identified as key turn-offs for many, and the report also called for an increase in the delivery of practical, relevant training focused on real-life tasks.

Officially launching the report, Paddy Flannery of Moyross Community Enterprise Centre spoke of the report as being extremely timely in view of the regeneration of the City. He said that whilst technology held out the promise of helping those who have been traditionally excluded, this report highlighted the real danger of people in disadvantaged communities being alienated and excluded in this 'information age'. He welcomed the focus on e-Inclusion in the recent regeneration vision documents and identified the work to date of the Steering Group as crucial work which needs to be built upon if we are to learn from this research.

The full report and consultation forum is available at <http://einclusionlimerick.blogspot.com>