



2012 e-Inclusion Awards
Finalists Showcase

Message from Neelie Kroes, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Digital Agenda for Europe

“The digital world is for everyone, but with almost a quarter of Europeans still remaining offline, those people are becoming increasingly isolated and disadvantaged. The e-Inclusion Awards celebrate those people and organisations who are helping to open up the vast social and economic opportunities provided by the internet to a wider audience across Europe.”

“There are so many individuals and organisations across Europe who work tirelessly to bring the internet into the lives of the disadvantaged. Some of the particularly compelling stories in this competition were from individuals who have turned their lives around and improved it through embracing digital technologies and who are now using them to help the others.”



Congratulations to all the finalists of the e-Inclusion Awards 2012.

Established by the European Commission, the e-Inclusion Awards aims to discover and celebrate organisations and individuals across Europe who

champion new technology and harness the potential of the internet as a means of improving prospects, increasing employability and meeting today's complex social and economic challenges.



Running since 2008, the competition this year has been particularly tough, with more entries than ever before, reflecting the ever increasing importance of the internet. The esteemed panel of judges had a challenging time choosing the 12 finalists as the standard from all entries was extremely high. In addition to the 12 finalists, the judges highlighted five additional entries which had a definite “Wow-factor” and these are also highlighted within this brochure.

The Awards ceremony takes place on 22 June 2012 as part of the European Commission’s Digital Agenda Assembly Conference, Brussels

**'I am part of IT' – personal stories, small organisations/ individual
- (Full story from Page 8)**

- ✓ **Elton Kalica, Italy** – an impressive story of **personal empowerment and reskilling through ICT**. A story of a young migrant who, in a new country found himself in trouble and eventually in prison. He was given a chance and through learning ICT skills has improved his capabilities, achieved a University degree, found a good job and a created a new life.
- ✓ **Rosanna Nazir and Nila Sari, The Netherlands** - **women & youth employability and ICT as a personal empowerment tool as well as for wider social innovation and community impact**. Great partnership model with some leading companies
- ✓ **Joy Matthews, 75 year old from Wales, UK, is using ICT to make real changes. It gave her voice she wouldn't have otherwise. She empowered herself and her community.** "E-inclusion training has led to so many different ways I can get involved with my local community and lobby on issues I am passionate about"

'I am part of IT' – personal stories, big organisations - (Full story from Page 11)

- ✓ **Angela Gallagher, Ireland (Age Action)** - "The online world is a **godsend** to those of us who find ourselves living alone. I hope to **spread that message** to as many of my peers as possible who do not have access to technology, yet who have an extraordinary knowledge of e.g. social history". Angela has written over 60 blog posts on Wordpress in the past 14 months that have been read by over 16,000 people.
- ✓ **Siemon Dekelver, Belgium (WAI-Not) – a story about ability, not disability. A lesson that empowering an individual also helps the society to become more inclusive.** The initiative provides mentally challenged young people with secure web-based communication tools so they can learn ICT skills, improve their quality of life and increase their levels of social interactivity.
- ✓ **Marek Sikora, Czech Republic** – the first visually impaired ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) tester in the Czech Republic. Marek set up a not-for-profit organisation Eye-T.cz to make ICT skills tests accessible to visually impaired people in the Czech Republic.



WOW FACTOR Entry

Damian Dugdale, Sweden

Fast Internet + skills and social enterprise = positive social change.

See page 20 for full story.

'Be part of IT' – small organisations - (Full story from Page 14)

- ✓ **Knowledge Economy Project (KEP), Romania** – an ICT-driven ecosystem with the potential to improve the socio-economic situation of 1.8 million people in Romania. It aims to reduce the IT skills gap between urban and rural areas through eLearning programmes and training. Benefits everyone from housewives to entrepreneurs. Boosts skills and employability and transforms public services like healthcare and education to be fit for purpose.
- ✓ **Storybook Dads, UK** – The judges felt this was a simple yet ingenious way to use the internet to improve lives of families where a parent is in prison. Technology enables imprisoned parents to record bedtime stories for their children in order to maintain the important parent/child bond - even if the parents are away for a long period of time. The initiative has been proven to reduce reoffending.
- ✓ **Inforum, Hungary – intergenerational ICT competition. Shows why kids and grandparents can win working together.** Readily replicable and simply impactful.

'Be part of IT' – big organisations - (Full story from Page 17)

- ✓ **Barcelona Activa, Spain** – Barcelona Activa is the local development agency for the Barcelona area and actively promotes ICT skills, training and environments for digital inclusion, employability and competitiveness.
- ✓ **The Information Society Development Foundation (FRSI), Poland** – local libraries as agents for digital change. For underserved communities to be able to fully participate in economic, educational, cultural and social relationships and community life.

- ✓ **UK Online centres** – large scale, comprehensive digital initiative which helps communities tackle social and digital exclusion. There is a network of 3,800 community based centres across the United Kingdom, all working to help more people make the most of online life.



WOW FACTOR Entries

Telenor Serbia

Mobile technology supporting the work of NGO employees (social and health care mediators) and health services, as well as having positive impact on the constituency (Roma) they help. Easily transferable.

Workers Educational Association, UK

Unemployed volunteers becoming digital activists and supporting others to get engaged, learn technology and other skills useful in their situation.

Culture Information Systems, Latvia

The Global Libraries Initiative Project has supplied libraries with IT equipment in order reduced the digital divide and social exclusion of the rural population in Latvia.

Spanish Centre of Subtitling and Audio description (CESyA), Royal Board on Disability (RPD), Spain

Promoting wider accessibility to audio-visual media through subtitling and audio description.

See page 20 onwards for full stories.

Finalists' Stories

'I am part of IT' – small organisations/individuals

Joy Matthews

"The initial E-inclusion training has led to so many different ways I can get involved with my local community and lobby on issues I am passionate about."

Joy Matthews is 75 years old and a retired medical secretary. Through **Caerphilly 50+ Forum**, Joy found out about digital story making. She made a story about the ageism experienced by her husband and his suffering when he went into hospital for the last time. She scanned photos, recorded a story and edited this into a short film.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=o0t92TZ_iRk

Help the Aged saw the film and asked if they could use it as part of their campaign to lobby to include Age Discrimination in the Single Equalities Act and Joy was invited to Westminster to show the film to MPs. Following that, Joy did a number of media interviews for the national TV stations. It was a surprise to her that the film had so much impact – for her it was simply a chance to get something off her chest.



Since then, Joy has worked with the **Caerphilly Youth forum** helping them develop their own stories and with the Caerphilly 50+ forum. She was asked to be on a Service User Domiciliary Care tender panel for Caerphilly County Borough Council Social Services. Joy is planning to create more stories that Social Services can use to develop their services.

The 50+ Positive Action Partnership has been developed by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

<http://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/communityplanning/crossthem/50-positive-action-partnership>

Elton Kalica, Italy

Category Winner

After finishing high school in Albania, Elton emigrated to Italy where, with no money or job, he got into trouble and ended up in jail. While there he joined the team at **Ristretti Orizzonti** ("Limited horizons"), a press agency that work with prisoners to produce magazines, videos and music.

Before starting this project, Elton had never used a computer. He undertook a series of computer courses including **Word** for writing, **FrontPage** for building web pages, **QuarkXPress** for page layout, **AdobePhotoshop** for editing images, **FileMaker** to manage databases, **FinalCut** for video editing and **Audacity** for editing audio files.



After few months, Elton took on greater responsibilities for editorial, graphics, computer maintenance and he also assisted other inmates with any technology issues. He oversaw much of the activity including two websites www.ristretti.it and www.ristretti.org, the weekly news **Tg 2 Palazzi** (on a local television channel), a weekly radio transmission **Ristretti Radio** (on a local radio station) as well as the weekly page in **Il Mattino di Padova** (a local newspaper).

He felt inspired by his achievements and decided to return to his studies. He enrolled at the university for distance learning and spent his time juggling work and study, often hiding away in the bathroom where he could find some peace to read and revise. He received a **degree in Political Science**, with a course in "International Relations and Human Rights". He later completed a **two-year second level degree** with a course in "Institutions and policies for human rights and peace."

When Elton finished his sentence, he was sure he would struggle to find a job, but managed to secure employment with the Ristretti Orizzonti project. He does the same job he was doing inside but is now free.

"Being able to use the technology today has allowed me to get involved in the world of work, despite the difficulties related to my past and to the economic crisis. My future is looking much more positive."

Rosanna Nazir and Nila Sari, World Smart College, The Netherlands

Rosanna Nazir of Vrouwen aan het Werk (VAHW) – Women at Work developed a four-month long project for 10 women who were looking to find a job in Amsterdam, but she had a dream to help more people. She wrote a bid “**World Smart College**” for a competition run by IBM and won a US \$10,000 grant.

Together with volunteers and prospective students she started to develop the project – finding support from 100 volunteers at **Cisco, IBM** and the **University of Applied Science of Amsterdam**.

The school started in November 2011, with three areas of study, **project management, event management** and **ICT**.

Among the first 50 students was **Nila Sari**.



Nila Sari is an Indonesian living in Amsterdam who has directly benefitted from the work of Rosanna Nazir and the World Smart College. Due to personal circumstances, Nila was isolated from the outside world for three years. She then joined the VAHW foundation and became one of the founding volunteers who helped to build the World Smart College. Now, thanks to the skills she has built through her involvement with World Smart College she has already started a traineeship with IBM in the Smarter Cities department. Her role involves assessing how digital media help to engage citizens in a Smarter City. She will be looking to ensure citizens become informed, involved, and inspired members of society.

The World Smart College urges participants to make the most of the internet. The college gives **rewards** for participants who achieve certain levels of engagement through the internet. Some participants give internet and computer **training** in their neighbourhood centre for people who are still computer and internet illiterate.

The aim is to bring people to realize how the internet can improve life and then to encourage them to go out and deliver the message to others.

<http://www.worldsmartcollege.nl/> or <http://www.vahw.nl/index.php/NL/>

'I am part of IT' – big organisations

Angela Gallagher, Age Action, Ireland

“As an older person living alone I find being able to use the internet has changed my life. In the last two years I have learned how to write a Blog and use Facebook and Twitter. I am now connected with so many people around the world, I no longer feel isolated.”

Angela believes that the social media revolution is perhaps more relevant for older generations than to any other. Living in a rural community, with limited opportunities for interaction, her life has been transformed by becoming e-inclusive.

Through self-learning and perseverance, and with the online technical support of her son, she is now part of an **international e-community**. Through use of social networks, such as Facebook, Yahoo Messenger and Yahoo Groups, she has **formed new friendships** and **renewed friendships with friends from decades ago**.



A high point in her 'e-career' was the nomination for, and subsequent winning of, the **Social Networking category in the 2011 Silver Surfer awards** run by Google and Age Action, the national charity for older people. She has an established and well-read Blog (over 60 blog posts on in the past 14

months that have been read by over 16,000 people) and has recently ventured into the exciting world of **Twitter**.

In the past 12 months, Angela has met face-to-face with individuals from USA, Australia and many parts of Ireland who she had not previously known - new friends from across the globe.

Blog: The Silver Voice <https://thesilvervoice.wordpress.com/about/>

Marek Sikora, Eye-T.cz, ECDL, Czech Republic

Marek Sikora has been visually impaired since the age of 14. Through a visually impaired friend, he became interested in digital skills and together they obtained the **European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) certificate**, eventually becoming fully ECDL certified in the spring of 2010.

This inspired Marek to make sure that the benefits of ICT certification and skills are available to other visually impaired people, so he became the first visually impaired ECDL tester in the Czech Republic. This enabled him to impart the necessary skills and certification to others.

Marek established a not-for-profit organisation called **Eye-T.cz**, which makes ICT skills tests accessible to visually impaired people in the Czech Republic. The establishment of Eye-T.cz has enabled Marek to share his own experience with ICT and the **opportunities that becoming digitally proficient can bring to the everyday lives of visually-impaired persons.**



In recognition of the added-value and opportunities that ICT training and certification can bring to visually-impaired people, Eye-T.cz was officially accredited as an educational institution by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Czech Republic in December 2010.

Marek is a digital activist and in addition to his work with Eye-T.cz, he has a personal website on which he shares information and stories about himself and his work. His motto is **“We can perceive the essentials through the heart, and for the rest we have zeros and ones.”**

<http://www.Eye-T.cz>

Siemon Dekelver, WAI-NOT, Belgium

Category Winner

Although Siemon cannot read or write he can now go online thanks to the **WAI-NOT project**. WAI-NOT has built an accessible website with content that can be used in special education schools and help mentally challenged young people to improve their quality of life through ICT.

Siemon has learned to write emails, using pictograms. He can now read the newspaper because it is audio supported and translated into pictograms. He learns about educational topics, which are available through an accessible website.

All of this gave him the title of WAI-NOT ambassador and he has promoted the use of WAI-NOT on many occasions: in schools for special education, at educational fairs, at conferences in Belgium, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, The Netherlands and Morocco. He met with two ministers of education in Flanders and



demonstrated WAI-NOT for Princess Mathilde of Belgium. When meeting with one of the ministers, he introduced himself: "Hello, I heard that you are a minister. Well, I'm the ambassador of WAI-NOT. Pleased to meet you."

Lately, Siemon has learned to travel more independently thanks to an ICT tool developed by **K-point** (the ICT and inclusion research centre at **KH Kempen University College**). Siemon was, until recently, completely dependent on others to travel. After a training period with the mobile technology app, Siemon can now take public transport to travel home, and he cycles independently to visit friends living in his village. He is fully aware that he is monitored by the system and he enjoys the fact that he can now travel on his own. Siemon got to know all the bus drivers on his route. They became part of his social network. And the bus drivers learned that Siemon, having Down's syndrome, can take a bus. He just needs some support to indicate when he arrives at his stop.

This project not only promotes digital inclusion - at the same time it invites society to be more inclusive.

<http://www.wai-not.be/>

'Be part of IT' – small organisations

Storybook Dads, UK

Category Winner

"Children are comforted and parents feel proud and empowered"

Storybook Dads uses digital technology to provide **learning opportunities** for prisoners and help imprisoned parents **maintain contact** with their children. This helps to **reduce re-offending** and **improve the social and learning outcomes** for some of the most marginalised families in society. Imprisoned parents record bedtime stories and messages for their children and then these stories are edited and enhanced by specially trained prisoners who can gain **valuable work experience** and a **qualification in Audio Production**.

Despite being a small charity, in 2011 Storybook Dads reached over 20,000 beneficiaries and trained over 450 prisoners in digital audio or video editing. One, upon her release from prison, has set up her own small editing business. From its humble beginnings 10 years ago in a converted prison cell in Dartmoor Prison, Storybook Dads has now been rolled out to over 100 UK prisons. The scheme is replicated in prisons in the US, Poland, Denmark, Hungary and Australia.



It can be used to maintain family ties in other situations. Storybook Dads has provided 'start-up' information to organisations such as fostering/adoption services & hospices and has worked with the Army, Royal Navy and RAF who can use the service for personnel serving abroad.

<http://www.storybookdads.co.uk>

Project Management Unit, Ministry of Communications and Information Society Knowledge Economy Project (KEP), Romania

This is a strategic project that aims to support a **better use of knowledge** by **reducing the digital information gap** that exists in villages and small towns in Romania. It has been developed and carried out by the Government of Romania, through the **Ministry of Communications and Information Society (MCIS)** and is financially supported by the **World Bank**.

The project is targeting **1.8 million inhabitants**, approximately **20% of rural Romanians** who have low and very low access to knowledge and ICT skills. KEP's mission as an innovative socio-economic system-changing initiative is to enhance digital inclusion based on community generated public services and learning process based on **open educational resources and boosting employability by delivering smart competences and skills**.

The benefits that are being achieved through the implementation of knowledge technologies are far reaching. Adults who have previously been stuck in slow-moving societies are unleashing their potential and being given new digital competences; small enterprises are now able to run businesses in virtual environments; teachers are collaborating with their peers across the country and children are using ICT in their studies. Libraries are becoming genuine digital-learning hubs and public clerks are offering modern services to their communities. Some indicators of the impact of the programme: 5.225 citizens have passed ICT professional certificates; 10.000 jobless have benefited from a professional and/or reconversion coaching; 600 potential entrepreneurs have been assisted in business developing; 20 hobbies have been turned into real businesses.

The accompanying online platform to the programme, the www.ecomunitate.ro portal, offers digital access to 255 communities, a social network where users transfer knowledge and generate content using Web 2.0 technologies. This eCommunity holds all the functions of a virtual platform for all public sector innovators, hosting specific features about areas of interest like economics, education, culture and public administration. It comprises 6000 comments, 4000 blog posts, 2000 wiki materials, 2.6 mil visits, 9,000 registered users and 4,164 pages visited.

<http://www.ecomunitate.ro>

Grandparents-Grandchild Competition of Informatics, Inforum, Hungary

This **internet competition** for **grandparents and grandchildren** demonstrates how children can play an important role in motivating their grandparents to use computers and the internet.

The competition raises awareness of all family members and the community as a whole towards **including older people in the information society**.

The project responds to the challenge of ageing societies all over Europe. The majority of people aged over 50 years do not have the IT skills essential for everyday life. **Their families and the whole society must help support them in improving their IT skills in order to reduce their isolation**. With better skills, this generation will have more chances on the labour market, will be able to learn through their life and improve their well-being.

Inforum (Forum of Hungarian IT Organisations for Information Society) has been running this awareness raising program since 2003. The competition has been receiving repeatedly good media coverage, which has also helped raise awareness of the e-Inclusion issue with policy makers and private companies. A large number of companies support the competition by providing gifts for winners.



The competition is very popular, with a number of applicants rising every year, and has been **well accepted by seniors**.

Since the completion started in 2003, the number of internet users over 60 has increased from 20,000 to 300,000 today.

Inforum has been actively fostering an understanding of the information society in

Hungary since 1997 and considers its mission **to achieve the wide usage of social IT, and to improve the quality of life of the Hungarian society** with the aid of IT.

<http://www.inforum.org.hu/grandparent-grandchild-competition-of-informatics/>

'Be part of IT' – large organisations

Cibernàrium, Barcelona Activa, Spain

Category Winner

Cibernàrium is the IT skills acquisition programme of **Barcelona Activa, the local development agency of the City of Barcelona**. Cibernàrium offers free digital training for internet beginners at two Cibernàrium centres and 11 satellite centres



located in public libraries. Cibernàrium provides a **wide range of practical internet-related training activities** that helped **75,219 participants in 2011** to develop their **IT skills**, promoting their **e-inclusion and employability**.

The digital literacy programming of Cibernàrium includes 45 training activities characterized by their short length (between 1 and 2 hours), practical and innovative contents and flexible timetables. The courses are offered on an 'à la carte' basis to give users the maximum flexibility in order to create a course that suits them. Courses are updated quarterly.

The Cibernàrium programme has now moved beyond digital literacy and has opened a second centre specialising in providing **advanced and theme & sector-oriented IT training for professionals and companies to improve their competitiveness** (Cibernàrium at Mediatric currently provides **146 training activities** and had **23, 315 users in 2011**).

<http://www.barcelonactiva.cat/barcelonactiva/cat/> or
<http://w144.bcn.cat/cibernarium/cat/index.do>

**Library Development Programme,
FRSI, Poland**

Category Winner



The primary objective of Library Development Programme (2009 – 2014) of the Information Society Development Foundation (FRSI) is **to provide equal opportunities** for the underserved population living in rural areas. This has been achieved by **revitalizing local libraries** and providing them with **multimedia equipment and internet access**. Training has also been offered in order to improve **staff capacity**.

The initiative covers more than 3,300 libraries servicing 10.6 million inhabitants. It has provided internet access to c. 750,000 people, half of which have made their first click on the internet in libraries. **The libraries participating in the program assist more than 50,000 people annually**, offering group classes and individual consultations on the hardware and internet usage. The assistance is given primarily to seniors and is free-of-charge. The librarians enjoy a high level of trust, which is conducive to the learning process. The users value the friendly atmosphere created in the libraries, now perceived as open and welcoming places.

The Information Society Development Foundation (FRSI) is a non-governmental organization established in 2008 by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation. The Library Development Programme is a result of the partnership between the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Polish-American Freedom Foundation.

<http://www.frsi.org.pl>

UK Online centres

UK Online Centres is Britain's leading digital inclusion initiative, supporting over **3,800 centres** throughout the country to help people get online in their communities. Through working with **partners** and running **marketing campaigns**, they have supported **1 million people** to get online since April 2010.

As the number of offline residents in the UK decreases, and **those left offline become harder and harder to reach**, UK Online Centres has developed **innovative outreach programmes helping people to get online in unusual locations**, including **pubs, cafes and launderettes** - places which are more accessible than traditional learning environments, combating traditional **misconceptions associated with formal learning**.

The impact of the work done is huge. 70% of learners visiting UK Online Centres progress to using government websites, 67% to further learning and 60% to employment.

“Staying positive and being proactive is really important when looking for work but it's not always easy. That's why I'm so proud of all the new skills I've managed to gain while being out of work.”

UK Online Centres has also recently launched **two specialist networks** to provide support to the two groups who are **often most in need**. The **Specialist Into Work Network** is a group of centres with the specific resources and expertise to support those who are **offline and unemployed** (29% of UK online centres users classing themselves as unemployed), **upskilling** them and helping them get back into work. The **Specialist Network** comprises centres that help those with a **disability** get started online. Almost half of the total offline population has a disability, so they need the in-depth support.



<http://www.ukonlinecentres.com/>

Entrants with the "WOW FACTOR"



These initiatives did not make it through as one of the 12 finalists this year, but the judges felt their stories offered something special and deserved to be told:

Damian Dugdale, Sweden - For bringing social change

Seven years ago, **Damian Dugdale** moved from London to Bygdsiljum, a remotely located village in the northern part of Sweden. Thanks to the fibre-based network provided by **Skellefteå Kraft**, he was able to set up the village's own Internet Service Provider (ISP), called Bygdsiljum First. The profit generated by the ISP is returned to the village, where it generates social change through joint development projects. Damian has developed and is now in charge of the websites for the village. He is keen to make digital communication part of the everyday life of the residents and is constantly looking for ways to improve the digital services provided to them. In this way, Damian has created his own job and become an important stakeholder in society.

"Because of this project, I've made new friends and have developed a valuable professional network. I'm now included in new projects that are implemented in our village and the entire municipality."

<http://wdo.se/Skekraft-Einclusion/i-am-part-of-it>

Povezivanje' (Enable) project, Telenor Serbia – For supporting social work through ICT

The 'Povezivanje' (Enable) project in Serbia allows **Telenor Serbia**, a mobile network operator, **UNICEF Serbia** and the **Serbian Ministry of Health** to work together to bring **vital information and access to health services** to the Roma population of Serbia.

Through the 'Povezivanje' project, some **75 Roma women** have been **trained** to become **health mediators**. These women serve as the bridge between the official Serbian health system and the Roma communities. With the help of **laptops, mobile phones, internet, special software and training** provided by Telenor, the mediators communicate better among themselves and with the Roma. For example, the mediators are able to provide **critical health information** on topics such as **vaccinations** (immunisation level is very low in the Roma community) and **prenatal care via SMS** to Roma families. Also, thanks to the database developed as part of the project, there is now reliable data on the Roma population and the database is used by all state institutions.

The concept of the project is also applicable to other areas of social development. Telenor Serbia is in the process of applying a similar concept in the area of inclusive education.

<http://telenor.com/corporate-responsibility/communications-as-enabler/>
video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gUkz0Nmr5w> (in Serbian)

Digital Activist Inclusion Network, Workers Educational Association, UK – For improving employability

The **Workers' Educational Association** - also known as the WEA - is the UK's largest voluntary-sector provider of adult education. The association runs over 10,000 part-time adult education courses each year. Its courses are created and delivered in response to local need, often in partnership with local community groups and organisations. **Digital inclusion** is a large growth area.

Launched in the East Midlands, the Digital Activist Inclusion Network (DAIN), part funded by the European Social Fund, has been set up by the WEA with a key aim to **develop the skills of unemployed volunteers** in order to **improve employability prospects**. True to its aims, the project has seen many Digital Activists progress into further learning, voluntary and paid work. Many of the Digital Activists offer support and advice to new Digital Activists.

The initial phase of the action research project recruited and trained **100 unemployed volunteers** who worked to **engage members of their local**

community in use of technology. The DAIN model has enabled volunteers work closely with community members, breaking down barriers to learning and showing the benefits of becoming e-included in terms of upskilling, improving job prospects and opening doors to further education.

<http://www.dainproject.org/>

Culture Information Systems, Latvia; For mainstreaming e-accessibility

The **Global Libraries Initiative Project** in Latvia, also known as the “Father's Third Son” (the hero of a Latvian folk tale) has implemented outstanding changes to reduce the digital divide and social exclusion of, in particular, the rural population in Latvia.

The project has equipped all of Latvia's 825 public libraries with PCs, software and free broadband internet connectivity as well as providing a comprehensive training programme for librarians. Since 2006, working in partnership with the government at both national and municipal levels, this project is the biggest culture-education-social project ever implemented in Latvia and has created unprecedented opportunities for everyone in Latvia to have free access to the internet and ICT training.

The project has demonstrated outstanding results for the entire country. Since the beginning of the project in 2007, the number of public library non-users have reduced from 62% (2007) to 9% in 2011, the number of inhabitants using free internet access in public libraries has increased almost three times. The majority of those who regularly use the library internet live in rural areas and have relatively low incomes. Every fifth public library internet user has no alternative internet access.

<http://www.kis.gov.lv>

Spanish Centre of Subtitling and Audio description (CESyA), Royal Board on Disability (RPD), Spain – For making ICT accessible

CESyA is a multidisciplinary research project aimed at promoting wider accessibility to audio-visual media through subtitling and audio description. Since 2005, CESyA has made significant contributions in research, standardisation, communication and social awareness to improve the inclusion of deaf, hard of hearing, visually impaired, elderly and foreign nationals in scenarios that involve audio-visual information.

Advances in technology have enabled these groups of people participate more fully in watching television, enjoying the theatre and cinema and visiting museums. In terms of Education, CESyA has contributed to the e-inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing students with its AEINTA project, which uses automatic speech recognition to provide real-time transcripts to students using their tablets or laptops.

The activities of CESyA are all about empowering people with disabilities, enabling them to live a more fulfilled life.

<http://www.cesya.es>

European e-Inclusion Policy

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play an essential role in supporting daily life in today's digital society. e-Inclusion aims to achieve that "no one is left behind" in enjoying the benefits of ICT. e-Inclusion means both inclusive ICT and the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion objectives. It focuses on participation of all individuals and communities in all aspects of the information society. e-Inclusion policy, therefore, aims at reducing gaps in ICT usage and promoting the use of ICT to overcome exclusion, and improve economic performance, employment opportunities, quality of life, social participation and cohesion.

e-inclusion features prominently in the Digital Agenda for Europe adopted by the European Commission in May 2010. Under Pillar 6 (Enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion) of the Digital Agenda, the Commission proposes a series of measures to promote take-up of digital technologies by potentially disadvantaged groups, such as elderly, less-literate, low-income persons. Improving access for people with a disability is another of the policy actions set by the Digital Agenda.

e-Inclusion is closely related to European policies on social inclusion, education and culture, regional development, innovation, industry and internal market.

For further information:

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<http://ec.europa.eu/einclusion>

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