Digital inclusion: opportunities for older people

Conference or Workshop Item

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oro.open.ac.uk
Digital Inclusion in Europe: key findings and some examples from Value Ageing
www.value-ageing.eu

Dr Caroline Holland: Ransackers Association Conference and AGM 2016
Value Ageing:
Key findings on dignity and social inclusion

ICT development can risk indignity and discrimination for older people, but they can also provide solutions to those risks:

- ‘It is generally not ICT developments as such that threaten dignity and inclusion, but the ways in which specific ICTs and services are conceived, designed, promoted, introduced, used, supported, and monitored’.

- ICTs can support physical, cognitive, emotional, social and cultural aspects of daily life, and safety in the environment; increase participation in the Information Society and in social and civic life; mitigate practical barriers to social inclusion; support good and appropriate care and health monitoring; encourage self-fulfillment and self-expression; mitigate incapacities.

- Risks arise when ageist attitudes treat older people as a block, ignoring different needs and wants; when older people are not in control or in a position to make informed choices; when issues of affordability, local access, and cultural practices are ignored; when older people are not involved in the design, development and use of ICTs; when dignity, especially of people with impaired mental capacity, is not respected and promoted.
The Internet Bus

Netti-Nysse began in 2001, based on Tampere, Finland. The bus is equipped with ICT – linked computers with internet access – to deliver free training in basic computer and internet skills to digitally excluded people in their local communities. The bus also has a 10-seater auditorium with a projector and audio-video equipment.

The service has full-time staff and is funded by a consortium of public and commercial organisations.
Using local places

Seniornett (Norway) is a voluntary organisation encouraging seniors (55+) to try the internet.

- It receives annual funding from the government, and some from industry and local authorities, as well as club member fees.
- Seniornett uses local public places such as clubs, libraries, senior citizen centres, social organisations and voluntary centres.
- There is a website, with news, advice, and links to technical support, and an annual ‘Senior-surf day’ open house event nationwide for older adults to learn about ICT.
The aim of the project is to call attention to the importance of older people’s inclusion in the information society. Children aged 4 to 14 and their grandparents are invited to compete with other grandparent-grandchild couples in a quiz, using an internet browser as a support. Since 2003 there have been 8 competitions with mass-media coverage, mobilizing 1,200 families so far.
University of Dundee – User Centre Group *(Scotland)* established in 2005 to provide a space for older people to become familiar with technologies and benefit from learning opportunities, social interaction and research. It involves:

- formal class-based training
- Informal drop-in centre
- informal training among friends and family acting as ‘coaches’
- ‘virtual’ groups meeting online via a social network embedded in the centre’s official website
- opportunities to become involved in research as reviewers of ICT software, projects, and initiatives
- peer support to continue discussions outside the formal activities.