

EURIM Working Group Minutes

Working Party: Theme 02 – Modernising Government
Ref: 03-T02-Min08
Minuter: Emma Fryer
Date: 03/09/16
Circulation: Attendees and Apologies
Queries to: Emma Fryer, Tel: 0191 240 3332
Mob: 07714 803 650
Emma.fryer@eurim.org

THE EUROPEAN
INFORMATION
SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



Minutes of EURIM's Social Exclusion Planning Meeting 28th January 2004, kindly hosted by IPF, 27 Queen Anne's Gate, SW1

Summary

Meeting Objectives

1. To assess whether the "Exclusion Map" was a useful tool to examine the social exclusion landscape and provide a context for activity.
2. To clarify the role of ICT in the social exclusion agenda
3. To try and identify whether gaps or overlaps exist in government's current inclusion policy
4. To highlight any emerging issues that need to be addressed, and identify priorities for group action accordingly.

Key Actions for the Group

1. Establish how far the Digital Inclusion Panel has progressed in setting its agenda and how the group can best contribute to it.
2. Develop the "Exclusion Map" further as a reference tool from which a coherent picture of the social exclusion landscape can be built.
3. Augment the reference list in conjunction with the Exclusion Map, so that initiatives and projects can be located within the exclusion landscape and related to other existing work.
4. Continue to identify and liaise with other organisations and potential partners for this work.

Documents circulated

1. Agenda
2. Exclusion Map straw man (ppt slides)

Meeting Notes

Action

1 Chairman's Introduction

- 1.1 PJ welcomed everyone, tabled the objectives of the group and outlined the purpose of the meeting. The objective was to try and identify whether gaps existed in the government's current inclusion policy and any emerging issues that needed to be addressed. The first phase of work was to establish a conceptual baseline to pull together the different agendas, stakeholders and issues.
- 1.2 Useful meetings had been held with the Social Exclusion Unit of the ODPM and an array of reports, papers and information on initiatives, projects and resources had been sourced. From this information a simplistic "map" in the form of a set of slides had been prepared.
- 1.3 The map aimed to identify how the key social exclusion issues related to the different exclusion agendas on the one hand and to policy priorities for government on the other. Its objective was to set out the social exclusion landscape in very simple terms to provide a starting point from which activity could be taken forward.

2 Conceptual Maps of Social Exclusion Landscape

- 2.1 EF ran through the set of slides:- see attached ppt. slides and commentary. *(To print out the commentary with the slides use the notes pages option in the print menu).*
- 2.2 Some strong messages had emerged from the research and from building the maps. Firstly the plethora of initiatives, projects, programmes and organisations involved, (supported by or working with different government departments) and the vast amount of research that already existed, suggested that the government's approach to social exclusion could benefit from being more cohesive. Secondly, insofar as ICT related to social exclusion, there were many ways in which ICT could genuinely contribute to tackling social exclusion. One important way was simply to raise the standard of user interfaces and customer service levels provided by ICT suppliers to the same level as more mature retail industries.

- 3 Feedback on the Map**
- 3.1 PJ asked everyone for comments on the map and their thoughts on whether it could be used as a starting point.
- 3.2 SK raised four issues:
- User self-definition - inclusion programmes were targeted at discretely defined user groups, but most people did not think of themselves as belonging to any of these groups. Microsoft was conducting a major research project on self-definition with Forrester in the US, which might be a useful reference.
 - Individuals fell out of the employment system through ill-health, which needlessly prevented them from using ICT when in fact the hardware could be adapted to their changed needs. Some ill health was even caused by poor use of ICT hardware, (such as RSI).
 - ICT was viewed as something that people had to adapt to, rather than an adaptable tool, and a change in perception was needed.
 - There was scope on the map to include quality of life as a factor. Self help, self-esteem and independence could all result from being able to control one's own environment better.
 - In many cases, exclusion was needless as solutions already existed, people were simply unaware of them. Too much bad advice was given, and expensive tailored solutions proposed when what was needed were already provided in the accessibility features of their existing PCs.
 - There was too much focus on the intermediaries rather than the end-users.
- 3.3 RS added that
- ICT was too closely associated with PCs. Mobile phones and digital TV were also aspects of ICT and should be included.
 - As well as an EFL issue for some people there was an additional language issue because the ICT community had a tendency to invent jargon and many websites used over-complex language which was off-putting to users.
 - This issue was not just about education, but raising interest and awareness. The major funding providers, the LSCs, were only interested in qualification-related training and the requirement to work to a qualification was an instant turn-off for the non-digitally-oriented. SK agreed.
 - With the increasing use of intermediaries to deliver government services, there would be an increasing issue of variable quality of service.
 - There were also major issues around sustainability in terms of delivering services over the long term. Budget issues usually meant that follow up was harder to resource than the initial set-up. SK agreed, even when funding was provided for training, there was no provision for special needs hardware, for instance.
- 3.4 PV noted that:
- Businesses were viewing accessibility options as an add-on, and needed to make accessibility considerations integral in the design process for products.
 - Interactive TV was being used successfully in Finland to help carers and intermediaries in their work.
 - New technology was expensive to deliver to government's target client groups. The current approach was focused on the abilities of those people who needed the services least – the educated middle class.
 - People needed to be able to control their environment more easily, simple things like large telephone keypads and large screens were obvious examples.

Other Issues

- 3.5 PJ noted that technology was only a means to an end. If there were definite benefits from using technology in this context, was there an opportunity cost of not being conversant with technology to consider? He asked whether that had emerged as a particular issue.
- 3.6 SK replied that there was lots of anecdotal evidence of the opportunity cost of not being connected, but not much hard data existed in the form of statistics.
- 3.7 ER observed that, in order to engage users, ICT had to be viewed on the basis of the practical applications that could enhance people's lives, rather than the theoretical benefits of technology. This was agreed.
- 3.8 GW observed that incentives were needed for supplying solutions:- commercial arrangements had to take exclusion issues into account irrespective of who provided the service.
- 4 Digital TV**
- 4.1 RS referred to the Digital TV project on Carpenter's estate in Stratford, which had been

extremely successful in building community cohesion, although expensive to set up. He added that the same technology that was used to tackle the digital divide could be used to make social housing cheaper to run, eg monitoring electricity and water supply remotely. Newham was using technology to help old people stay in their own homes rather than going into care.

- 4.2 SK noted that people were more likely to spend money on services via TV because they used it a lot, rather than paying for internet access through the phone bill.
- 4.3 PV cited the example of carers using interactive TV in Finland and giving the people they looked after the opportunity to use it themselves.
- 4.4 PE noted that digital TV was not, as yet, a user-friendly tool. EF agreed that it was better at broadcasting information and was not an effective two-way medium and added that using digital TV did not give people the kind of skills they needed to re-engage in the working community. NG felt that any kind of engagement, even for “unpurposeful” activities, was better than disinterest because there was a hook to build on.
- 4.5 PJ observed that there were two levels of engagement – one was to use ICT to deliver services in as user-friendly as way as possible, and the other was to use it to enable people to do more complex tasks and increase their economic capital. Would over-intuitive access mechanisms allow people to bypass the new skill-sets that would otherwise help them?
- 4.6 EF replied that this depended on whether ICT was being used to try and tackle the underlying causes of exclusion or simply to ameliorate the symptoms.
- 4.7 It was agreed that the way ICT was deployed could vary depending on the user group. For young people who needed to be engaged in the workforce, developing new skill-sets was important. For older people who just wanted access to services, easy access mechanisms such as digital TV were more appropriate.
- 4.8 RS noted that the community TV programme had been successful not so much by developing skills but by creating community cohesion where there was none before, which was an equally valid objective in terms of tackling social exclusion.

5 Identifying gaps, overlaps and barriers to inclusion

- 5.1 PJ asked whether the group could identify particular areas or gaps that cried out for better government coordination to addressing aspects of the e-inclusion agenda.
- 5.2 PV replied that departmental budgeting structures were the biggest obstacle to solving problems that crossed organisational boundaries. GW observed that local Government had to address this problem all the time so their perspective would be useful. NP agreed and suggested that the group might usefully examine those areas that already had joined up budgets and illustrate the benefits that had been achieved, as exemplars.
- 5.3 PV noted that whilst the policy agendas were clear, the means to implement them were as yet undefined and must be clarified or money would be wasted.
- 5.4 NN identified additional barriers, such as performance measurement techniques, that discouraged information sharing across different bodies such as health and social care. Greater incentives were needed to break down those barriers, retain focus on the user and encourage councils and health bodies to work more closely together, for instance by coordinating targeting and performance measures more closely.
- 5.5 SK noted that business failed to take into account the cost of losing staff unnecessarily from ill health and the good business sense and all-round benefits to state and citizen alike of keeping people economically active for as long as possible. The focus needed shifting accordingly.
- 5.6 NG referred to the issues slide and reinforced the factors of mistrust and disinterest. Recent reports had shown the 38% of people did not feel they got any benefit from the internet. This was a big barrier and it was important to understand why people felt this way.
- 5.7 SK referred to the DoH ICES (Integrated Community Equipment Services) project and the difficulties in providing integrated services. Putting in PCs was not enough, there were maintenance issues and a whole range of intermediaries had to be informed and trained.
- 5.8 Quality of Experience
 - a SK noted that people had very low expectations of ICT, but once they started using the technology, those barriers tended to dissolve. IS agreed and noted that the Cybrarian Project was doing good work in this area.
 - b EF observed that a lot was due to the quality of experience when using the internet. The broadband internet experience was completely different to dial-up.
 - c NG agreed that quality of experience was vital but this extended to services. Poor online service, for instance from a company who supplied goods late or had poor follow-up would discourage users for ever.
 - d PJ asked how the OeE was working to build trust and confidence. ER observed that their work was focused on participation in the democratic process and uptake of government services and the issue of trust related to developing public confidence in the system.

5.9 Education & e-Learning

- a SK noted that the main government agenda was around e-learning, but education was the one area that excluded groups were most distanced from. There was a disjoint in the agenda.
- b NP noted that, despite this, education was one key sector that had truly realised the business relevance of ICT and the benefits it could bring in raising standards. That was not to say that other areas could not benefit so well, but that the evidence was clear in the education sector and attention was focused accordingly.
- c PJ noted that the e-Learning agenda was being addressed in its own right. RS agreed that there was already a great deal happening in that area. However, once people were over employable age, most learning initiatives vanished from the agenda because they were targeted at giving people skills for work.

6 **Chairman's Summary**

- 6.1 PJ summarised the discussion. Members had suggested additional inclusions in the map but had not proposed radical changes so the basic structure would be used to develop the work further. He identified the distinctions the group had made between developing human capital through e-skills and benefiting the citizen through improved access to the e-Society. Barriers involved lack of awareness, culture, demographics, price, accessibility, health, user-friendliness of devices and social cohesion and these barriers applied irrespective of whether services were supplied directly or via mediators. People needed incentives to use one medium rather than another, and it was harder to build a business case from the demand side than from the supply side.

7 **Defining Group Objectives**

- 7.1 NP asked what contribution the group was planning to make on a policy level.
- 7.2 PJ replied that the group had initially been asked to look at the social exclusion agenda by two MPs with very different perspectives. It was agreed that the work must start by looking at the social exclusion environment holistically, identifying the different agendas and establishing whether there were gaps and whether issues were emerging that needed addressing in a policy context. The initial work to identify the different agendas was now in front of them in the form of a conceptual map, which identified some of the barriers to inclusion and some key issues.
- 7.3 Now the social exclusion landscape had been established, the group could use this baseline as a starting point to identify overlaps and gaps in the government's e-exclusion agenda and to highlight any key policy issues that were emerging as a result.
- 7.4 NP reported that the Digital Inclusion Panel had just been announced and suggested that the group could identify ways of complementing their work. He suggested that they approach the panel to establish how they could be most helpful. This was agreed.

8 **Next Steps**

- 8.1 PJ suggested that the next step should be to present the cognitive maps in a narrative form.
- 8.2 NP asked what the objective of the document would be, and its intended audience. PJ replied that the first destination for this output should be the proposed Digital Inclusion Panel: an overview of the current situation and some suggestions as to policy priority areas might help them set their own agenda.
- 8.4 EF noted that the main issue that emerged very strongly from the research material she had looked at was the urgent need for Government to take a more cohesive approach to social exclusion agenda, based on the enormous number of initiatives, papers, reports, programmes and projects, the agencies, departments and organisations involved. It was agreed that the primary action for the group should be to help government simplify and co-ordinate its approach.
- 8.5 EF added that from the corporate perspective, it was important to identify clearly how ICT could help address social exclusion. This would be a useful area for the group to focus on in more depth.

9 **ACTIONS**

- 9.1 PV to ask Norwich Union about their experiences of consumer selling over the internet. **PV**
- 9.2 EF to liaise with ER regarding the Trust Charter. **EF**
- 9.3 PV to speak to Dave Waltho at EDS to follow up his activity there. **PV**
- 9.4 RS agreed to forward information on Carpenters Connect **RS**
- 9.5 EF agreed to investigate the use of Digital TV via Jason Berg at Action Knowsley, Jamie Bend and James Crabtree. **EF**
- 9.6 PJ/ EF to establish whether the Digital Inclusion Panel has set out its agenda. **PJ/EF**
- 9.7 PV agreed to forward a copy of the Real Time Club report to PJ **PV**

- 9.8 EF and SK to liaise regarding Citizens Online list of initiatives. EF/SK
- 9.9 EF agreed to include suggested additions to the slides, add a commentary and circulate them together with the minutes and the reference list. EF

Perspectives Represented at the meeting

AbilityNet (SK): a charity to help give people access to ICT, working with people from all exclusion environments.

Audit Commission, (NN): Priority to understand the inclusion agenda so they can evaluate Local Governments next year in the context of ICT

BT (Education and Local Government), (GW): Primary interests from the BT corporate responsibility perspectives are education and digital divide and how they are becoming more closely linked in terms of policy

CIPFA (PJ & PE): Developed an interest in social exclusion via the disability agenda, and what organisations need to do to comply with legislation such as the DDA

Cisco (NP): from the public policy perspective

Consultant, RS: worked on both Wired up Communities and Digital onLine, particular interest is how to drive up use.

EURIM (LR): Background with Dyslexia Education Trust and others, here to get an overview.

EURIM (PV): Primary objective to ensure technology is fit for use by its intended clients

Fujitsu Services (NG): A systems architect across local and central government e-services, concerned about building inclusive systems

ITNet, (PJ): From the perspective of a provider of services to lots of local authorities, to find out what we can do vis a vis the SE agenda.

OeE, (ER): Perspective of increasing online participation in the democratic process.

OeE, (WS), Central Strategy Unit, Interest in Digital Exclusion Issues.