

EISCO 2005

Cracow

2-4 June 2005

key issues raised by delegates

A. Being aware of the challenges

Concerns – issues to be resolved

- Digital gap still exists – still large number of people do not have access
- How can other businesses/countries join in initiatives developed in member states
- are the projects described all aware of the various digital micro-systems
- Surprised that we are all still talking about training people to use technology after all these years
- Concerns about how to approach such a vast market
- How do we market what is being developed – and test user take-up and satisfaction
- regional growth and regional competitiveness
- target to avoid damaging local companies – when you start e-procurement
- how do we strengthen research and innovation at the regional level – keep the public involved
- to sustain research need critical mass of researchers?
- Some e-business is a threat to SMEs – e.g. buying cars and housing online – also in dealings with government (direct and online)
- Partners are changing - and business environment is changing
- what works – what doesn't work
- lack of skills in some SMEs
- lack of relevant and suitable solutions
- management may not recognise the requirements
- what can we each do in our own situation
- what can we share
- what's transferable
- who are the stakeholders
- are there things with which we need help – politically and practically – who do we ask
- Revenue of LAs – more than 45% of GDPs – ICT is about
- Easier to take risks at local and regional level
- Take some risks to innovate
- Clustering – chatting – meeting – but need clear operational objectives
- How to meet the needs of researchers (who are looking to do original research) and those working at a practical level
- Cooperation at a European level can be theoretical as well as practical
- Can talk about best practice in one country – but may not be able to implement in another country for regulatory reasons?
- We should identify the risks and difficulties in working with consortia made up of people from different organizational cultures
- Training is a major issue for e-inclusion.
- We should understand what we would do if things go wrong
- It is important to offer end users enough adaptation time and education to overcome the fear of technology
- use easy but secure enough access methods to back-office systems.
- We need to ensure that the drive for efficiency does not compromise quality
- people are different in the adaptation of new ways

- Content of e-services is the main reason but there has to be good enough infrastructure which make use possible
- how do you leverage / scale up good practices – important in cities and regions – so can benefit from other cities and regions
- how do you integrate R+D dimension in any experience – each is at a certain place and still improving – can others contribute to innovation and creativity
- financing options at any stage – financial models in Europe – existing resources and mechanisms – what to rely on so that they are used most efficiently
- linguistic diversity – how can others benefit – at cheap cost for investment – how to translate into not just language but also culture
- management of change – human element is most difficult
- top down and bottom up approaches should be seen as complementary and not exclusive
- e-government has to result in better services for citizens
- Public Administration needs to study how to get business benefits from ICT
- SMEs need to understand better the needs of their local Public Administration in term of ICT use

B. Creating the best conditions

Lessons learned – success factors

- When online this should not be a problem
- Develop software once only – configurable for other systems – develop once – deliver locally – support from the centre
- keep it local
- get buy in from all organisations involved
- Can make a big impact by collaborating and joining up
- Manage mixed public/private sector teams
- Help to improve skills
- Need to sit with SMEs to make it work
- Works because customer is telling them what to do
- working e-commerce website produced with help in two hours
- replicate and practice – model work
- local authorities should set up pathways for SMEs to do e-business – some of which will be with the local authority itself
- help SMEs by visualising change and improvement
- provide evaluation plan for SMEs
- working model is important
- people need hands on training
- in Finland 98% are using e-banking
- outline best practice library – working models shared – budget planning tool
- regional network of users and research – experiences, concerns (e-govt network (public/private sector))
- Innovation is not the privilege of private sector
- Avoid case by case ad hoc development
- The ingredients are there – glue not yet there – this will come from scientific/research approach
- Innovation will come from several aspects – rather than research which may be more independent
- The need to integrate systems within and between municipalities is essential when developing services and possible if there is well defined open adapters which connect front office and back office
- it is possible to develop multi-channel solutions based on different kind of data-communication. Internet technology (in data-communication and www in user interface) makes it easier.

- multichannel solutions allows you to move information and bring the service where people want to have it. Therefore dataflows and man-material flows should be planned separately.
- what are lessons learned – European cities and regions – positive gains – self esteem, knowledge and for them to work in public sector
- open-source is expanding and has to be considered as a serious possibility
- development of e-services is not a project it is a process which leads to citizen centric solutions
- good solutions save money and leads to customers satisfied
- networks of virtual organisations hide the complexity of physical organizations and services can be provided around life events
- one service provider offer a common interface for citizens
- one common technical infrastructure allow service providers to concentrate on service using robust multichannel infrastructure which they could not develop alone.
- open source added with open standards like xml makes it possible to launch open platform
- meta data is needed to handle information chaos
- open source makes systems flexible and can easily be tailored to meet special needs of organizations
- open forums can be used to share open source solutions and it is possible to modify systems to meet special purposes
- open source environment technical design is essential to avoid problems in future and national standards if they exist should be used
- multi channel solutions are mature also in open source
- driving force to use open source software is that municipalities have similar services and it possible to share and reengineer solutions
- open source programs also needs professional support
- open source is not as itself secure but by skilled personal it is possible get high security
- Plenty of countries moving or studying to is it possible to exploit open source software
- The local level has to be involved in the development of new ICT systems to guarantee e-inclusion
- Open standards are also concerned with e-inclusion issues
- It works well, if Local Government is encouraging SMEs to be on-line, as the most significant customer

C. Political and operational measures

Key issues - recommendations

- We need multi-disciplinary clusters which involve – research, business and local authorities, get policy people involved from the beginning so that they can be thinking about the issues this may affect
- Pioneers today – for tomorrow regional govt – should put in place multi-disciplinary teams so that innovation can grow up
- Need to have information available in member state languages (including semantic translation),
- Needs to be a revolutionary change in ways of working
- Encourage providers to develop intuitive systems so that we just need to help people understand and articulate what they want to do
- Work with the users/customers
- Think about the local community
- Involve citizen in development of local policies
- Stress importance of political support – funding and regulation if necessary

- Change the way you do business – think about business
- need to be realistic
- has to change the ways of working as well as the way they trade
- need central government change to encourage this to happen
- have to help SMEs deal with the processes
- demand may have to come from the customer
- identify SMEs needs and develop relevant training – enable discussion forums etc
- provide centrally hosted online resources
- public/private partnership
- Start with what you have
- research and real life projects
- actively involve citizens and different sectors of community including disadvantaged
- (looking for funding to help enable bringing together of various
- needs three parts – public sector (includes citizen involvement) – research and education – smes
- Prelude Challenge framework of regions – European collaboration is key
- Involve stakeholders in moving R+D into real world
- Work in alliance with private sector – innovating – modernising and reforming – sometimes
- break the rules – need to understand what is modernisation and innovation
- Show the way – at this level – as too difficult for high level government
- Public services should be the flagship and lead the way
- Public administrations should support innovations in a regional even if there is a risk
- Learn from others – best practice and mistakes don't start from scratch with each innovation
- Can we benefit by working at this practical level – even when higher political level is struggling to work together
- Practical people – need to know – what is the problem – what do you need to happen – what would be a measure of success
- Need to know who don't use e-government services and why as well as how many use them when evaluating success
- e-Government has to be more Government than e
- Getting communities to appoint an e-champion with interpersonal skills is a key to getting buy in
- There is a key role for community and voluntary groups acting as intermediaries in e-inclusion and therefore you need to help them to get online
- Local councils are far more likely to be close to their citizens and understand their needs than regional or central government
- Need more bottom up approaches to address e-inclusion as well as top down
- The four "e"s for e-government:
 - Engage – active participation of citizens and business developing solutions for local needs and linked to local culture
 - Educate – citizens, businesses and council staff
 - Enable – services but also networks
 - Encourage
- Need to bring together issues of economic convergence, social cohesion and cultural diversity
- Need to create the right environment locally – physical, cultural and technical
- Need to examine the generational aspect of the digital divide – different needs of different ages and different strategies
- Create a virtuous cycle of services opening up access channels driving up skills and increasing demand for more services
- Projects based on local needs and culture but with potential for universal application – develop standards based on practical and successful projects in as bottom up way

- Using standards as a way of ensuring transparency of services across borders eg EU wide IPSV and set of actors as basis for metadata to allow searches of all EU public sector websites for a service without knowing local name or level at which it is delivered
- Use of standards also enables better comparison and ability to search for comparable best practice in different countries based on delivery of same service to same clients regardless of government structure
- Research should be based on real needs of citizens and business locally not top down policy or technology solution “push”
- But not all citizens and businesses understand the potential of new technology and sometimes they need to be led
- E-government should be about governance, e-inclusivity is the view an organisation takes rather than a focus on ICT
- Citizens must be in the middle of the decision process
- E-inclusion needs new cooperations between different levels of government, the private sector and the community and voluntary sector
- Evaluation standards have to be developed to cover all aspects of e-inclusion and user groups
- The support and understanding of the politicians and administrators is needed to foster e-inclusion
- For some citizens first steps back to learning leading on to training is a core element for a successful e-inclusion project
- Support for networks of collaborators but flexibility to establish the networks based on the most appropriate partners from public, private and academic sectors
- Funding to support for networks outside of projects e.g. long term dialogue not short term focused discussion
- Must have goal of universality of access
- Driving up take up is one of the key issues we all face and needs concerted action
- Must research and address cultural barriers to change within and between organisations – middle management machismo, allowing projects to be based on the different aims of partners not the things that they share. How do you develop a positive appetite for change
- Building in acceptance of risk – cultural and financial issues have to be addressed
- Need to learn from others rather than re-invent (is there a way of giving feedback to failed applications that points them to examples of best practice that already exist in the area of the application?)
- Citizens need to be engaged not just in commenting on suggestions for service improvement etc from municipalities, but enabled to suggest their own solutions and innovations for consideration
- Key goal must be the development of joined up transparent services across organisational and geographic borders by supporting the development of online services to link front and back offices, created and delivered in partnerships
- Facilitate decision making by giving relevant information to the person who requires it

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