



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Education and Culture

Lifelong Learning: Education and Training policies

**Innovation and transversal policies**

Brussels, 22 November 2005

DG EAC/JP D(2005)



## **Report on the consultation workshops**

### **‘Digital Literacy’**

**Held in Brussels on 12 October 2005**

## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. 'DIGITAL LITERACY' .....	4
2.1. Discussion topics .....	4
2.2. Discussion summary .....	4
2.3. Recommendations .....	5
3. CONCLUSION .....	7
A. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.....	8

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of the EU's *eLearning Programme*<sup>1</sup> is to support European co-operation for the effective integration of ICT in education and training. Running from 2004-2006, the programme has a budget of €44 million, which is divided into four priority areas, as follows:

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Digital literacy    | 10 % of programme funding |
| 2. Virtual campuses    | 30 %                      |
| 3. School eTwinning    | 45 %                      |
| 4. Transversal actions | 7.5 %                     |

The consultation workshop was organised in support of the first element of the programme. Its purpose was to explore the issues associated with the themes of '**Digital Literacy**' and provide recommendations to the Commission in the possible topics for the final Call for Proposals under the *eLearning Programme*.

The workshop involved invited experts representing a cross-section of interests from education and training, industry, media, research, academia and government, together with representatives of relevant Commission services. The list of participants is provided in Annex A.

This document may be freely copied, circulated and quoted provided that the contents remain unchanged and the copyright of the European Commission is recognised.

© European Commission, 2005.

---

<sup>1</sup> DECISION No 2318/2003/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 5 December 2003 adopting a multi-annual programme (2004 to 2006) for the effective integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (*eLearning Programme*)  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/elearning/programme\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/elearning/programme_en.html)

## **2. 'DIGITAL LITERACY'**

### **2.1. Discussion topics**

The Terms of Reference for the workshop contained a series of specific questions which the delegates were invited to consider and discuss. These questions, and a summary of the discussions relating to them, follow.

*What themes should be privileged and why?*

*Should we focus our attention on building upon the previous two Calls for Proposals, which concerned identification and dissemination? If so, how?*

*What type of approach is more suitable at this stage? Research based, practice based or other? What type of services and resources are still needed?*

*How to better envisage the European dimension in the promotion of digital literacy?*

*With the relatively small amount of money available for this action line (between 1 and 2 million €), what type of funding should we provide (small or large projects; 50% or 80% funded; etc)?*

*In addition, for those participants who have participated as an evaluator for previous call(s):*

*What lessons can we usefully learn from the previous Calls for Proposals, in terms of participation, type of project, understanding of the objectives, etc?*

### **2.2. Discussion summary**

During the initial discussion relating to the topics above, there was generally a large degree of consensus around the key issues and how to deal with them.

One of the most significant issues identified by participants was the poor track record of past projects in the dissemination of their results and longer term exploitation. This had led in turn to projects having limited long-term impact. Active dissemination strategies depend too much on international conferences on e-learning. The usual attendees at the conferences are academics or high level staff of stakeholder organisations and the real benefits of projects do not seem to reach easily the initial target groups. A number of contributory factors for this were cited, for example: limited involvement by parent organisations in the creation and execution of Digital Literacy projects by subsidiary organisations; lack of emphasis on the requirement for dissemination in previous Calls for Proposals.

In view of this, it was suggested that the next Call should focus on the exploitation and dissemination of results from previous projects.

From a European standpoint, it was suggested that dissemination could be improved by requiring projects to publish in more than just 2/3 principle European languages. It was also considered ironic that too many projects addressing Digital Literacy issues relied almost exclusively on web sites to report on their work.

Another commonly identified issue with past projects was their lack of sustainability and long-term impact. A first analysis of projects established in 2001 revealed that almost none of the project consortia were still in existence. One way of addressing this would be to require new projects to draw up a clear long-term strategy, supported by a substantial business model, which identified and analysed potential problems and put forward objective proposals to address them. Future projects should be closely scrutinised for adherence to these requirements and other pre-conditions.

Regarding project focus, it was widely agreed that there should be greater emphasis in future Digital Literacy projects on the socially disadvantaged, special needs groups and adults, in particular the Over 55s, or proposals that address the training of new immigrant groups and refugees. Curricula should be made more relevant to these groups, addressing their real life issues.

Other areas of focus for future projects included: demonstrating the potential of new technologies for eLearning, such as mobile phones; promotion of active citizenship in areas such as online voting; and incorporation of ICT into existing working environments on a one-to-many basis.

Finally, there were mixed views in relation to the appropriate size of future projects. Overall, it was felt that the quality and relevance of project proposals was more important than specifying that they should be of a particular size. Also a balance is needed between research based and practised based approaches.

### **2.3. Recommendations**

Based on the above discussions, the workshop formulated the following recommendations concerning the final call for proposals on Digital Literacy under the current eLearning Programme.

#### Recommendation 1

**Focus on dissemination of project results, making it the specific responsibility of one consortium member.**

- Explain the term so that it implies raising awareness and promoting to a wider, more appropriate public, eg voluntary sector, scientific community
- Focus on dissemination to the end user via the teacher, motivating the teacher to champion the dissemination process
- The project consortium should 'sell' the project to the dissemination partner to help clarify messages and key benefits
- Require one dissemination activity to be at a transversal level
- Since not all consortia members will have the relevant experience in dissemination, ensure that support is provided via a larger network of organisations
- Require consortia to specify dissemination outcomes in their proposals
- When evaluating projects, score more highly those which both propose a clear strategy for dissemination and quantify expected impact
- Incorporate quantitative results as part of the dissemination, as well as using innovative means of dissemination

## Recommendation 2

Establish a series of pre-conditions for projects

- Proposals should demonstrate a knowledge of what work already exists in their project framework and identify the problems they wish to address
- Projects should be more specific and less generic, working in one specific area
- Proposals should identify the needs of potential user groups and provide justification for their choice of group
- Each consortium member should state their specific relevant experience and their precise role within the consortium
- Ensure that language/translation and communication issues are linked (ie visuals for disability groups) so that end-users are able to understand and make progress
- Resources should be produced to motivate and guide digital content produced by the target groups. There should be tangible outputs for end-user groups, such as SMEs, schools, etc
- Proposals should ensure that transferability takes place, so that the resources are suitably adapted to the end user
- Proposals need to acknowledge diversity between different national groups and state how they will accommodate this diversity
- Consortium members should also demonstrate an interest in sustaining the project results after the project is completed

### 3. CONCLUSION

Information and Communication technologies (ICT) have the potential – when used effectively – to open-up access to education and training, especially to persons who might otherwise be excluded; to act as a catalyst for innovation in learning; to facilitate organisational change within public and private institutions; and to help us achieve the political goals of lifelong learning and the Lisbon agenda.

At the same time there is still a need to address the problem of social exclusion resulting from the inability of some individuals to take full advantage of the benefits offered by information and communication technologies (ICT) and the Internet in the knowledge society, which often affects young people, the disabled and elderly, and social categories who are already victims of other forms of exclusion.

The goal of the *eLearning* Programme is to help make this happen, by funding projects which support the use of ICT for learning, which produce results of value to the wider community and which help develop good practice. However, this goal can only be achieved if the results and experience that consequently emerge are analysed, widely disseminated and exploited.

This workshop has provided a valuable contribution to the debate on Digital Literacy. It has identified a number of important issues to be addressed if we are to achieve the true potential of *eLearning* and provided some concrete recommendations for action. Our attention must now turn to making these happen.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### Invited expert

AUBERT	Benoit	Centre TIME, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
CONTAGYRIS	Athanase	Dialogos, Greece
FLETCHER	Nigel	Learning & Skills Council, UK
SKOKEFALD	Guri	Ministry of Education and Research, Norway
LYNCH	Paul	Queen's University, Belfast, UK
MARTINY	Steen	Innovia, Denmark
MAZURA	Margaretha	European Multimedia Forum, Belgium
MICHAELIDOU	Maria	Ministry of Education, Greece
SAHLIN	Erica	Veradotter Scandinavian Culture and Education, Sweden
STEVENS	Anne	Open University, UK
VON STAFFELDT	Nina	The Knowledge Exchange Office, Denmark

### Organisation

### Commission staff

CASSIO	Laura	DG Education and Culture
LIBREAU	Geraldine	DG Education and Culture
PESSANHA	José	DG Education and Culture
RAMBERG	Kirsti	DG Education and Culture

Support for both workshops was provided by Peter MORGAN of DPA Corporate Communications Ltd.