

# The Road Not Taken

ICT for social inclusion:  
myth or reality?

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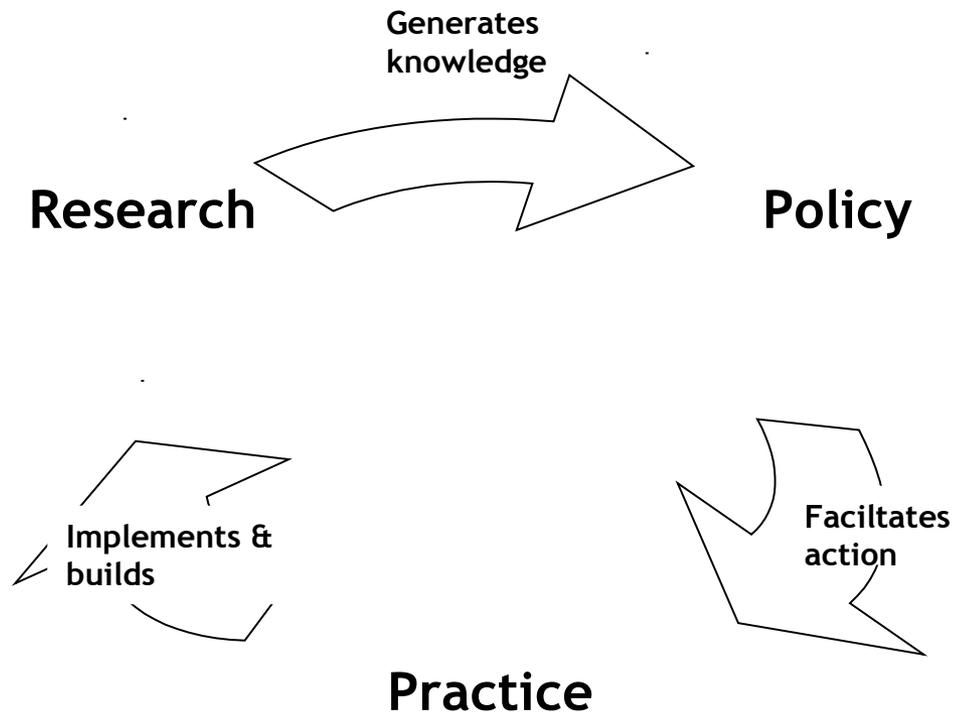
# Think about it



13/06/15



# Contextualising the discussion:



# Question for the discourse

“Although the dominant discourse of American culture opens its arms and beckons the ‘illiterate’ to join its ranks and learn its practices, how many speakers of the dominant discourse regularly visit and attempt to participate in the discourse of marginalized groups in our society?”

(Peck, Flower & Higgins, 1994)

Further clarify that, “ Discourse in this sense means not only language but the available roles, motives and strategies that support a transaction.”



# What is social inclusion?

Social Inclusion is a positive phrase covering a range of policies aimed at promoting equality of opportunity, maintaining Social Cohesion, building Social Capital and minimising social exclusion. (Dev Trust Assoc, 2008)



# Social Inclusion/exclusion

***“Social Exclusion refers to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society. The commission believes that all Community citizens have a right to the respect of human dignity”***

***Commission of the European Communities  
1993***

**What can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown” (SEU, 2000) ([www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)).**



# Considering the 'Good Society'

In the good society there cannot, must not, be a deprived and excluded underclass. Those who heretofore have made it up must be fully a part of the larger social community. There must be full democratic participation by all, and from this alone can come the sense of community which accepts and even values diversity.  
(Galbraith, 1994)



# How does this relate to us?

Community Informatics (CI) is the application of information and communications technologies (ICTs) to enable community processes and the achievement of community objectives.  
(Gurstein, 2002)



# Not the same thing!

**Social exclusion** happens when people or places suffer from a series of problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime, ill health and family breakdown. (SEU, 2000)

**Digital exclusion** means lack of access to digital technology or the inability to enjoy the benefits of the internet and other digital technologies (e.g. through lack of ICT skills).



# Measures of social exclusion

<b>Economic</b>	<i>Long-term unemployment Job insecurity Workless households Income poverty</i>
<b>Social</b>	<i>Breakdown of traditional households Unwanted teenage pregnancies Homelessness Crime Disaffected youth</i>
<b>Political</b>	<i>Disempowerment Lack of political rights Low registration of voters Low voter turnout Low levels of community activity Alienation/lack of confidence in political process Social disturbance/disorder</i>
<b>Locality</b>	<i>Environmental degradation Decaying housing stock Withdrawal of local services Collapse of support networks Concentration/marginalisation of vulnerable groups</i>
<b>Individual</b>	<i>Mental and physical ill health Educational underachievement/low skills Loss of self-esteem/ confidence</i>
<b>Groups / Diversity</b>	<i>Concentration of above characteristics in particular groups: Disabled people Ethnic minorities Elderly etc. (Gallant)</i>



# So is there a relationship?

Many of those who are socially excluded are also digitally excluded. In particular, many of those who suffer specific social disadvantages also lack the skills to engage with technology. It is estimated that 79% of those on means-tested benefits lack practical ICT skills.

**(Social Exclusion Unit, 2000)**

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# Technology alone is not enough

Simply providing technology to a young disadvantaged person, or using ICT within a traditional pedagogy, is unlikely to succeed in alleviating disadvantage or increasing aspirations and attainment.

(Becta, 2007)



# On ICTs & transforming our society?

However, as we embark on this journey we run the risk of leaving behind the people living in our poorest neighbourhoods. But we are determined to tackle the 'digital divide' and prevent a new gulf emerging between the information rich and information poor. We want everyone to be able to reap the benefits of living in an e-nation.

To prosper nationally and to compete globally, we need to empower people at the local level to become active participants in society. Social inclusion and economic success are not mutually exclusive - they are mutually reinforcing.

(Patricia Hewitt, Minister for Small Business and e-commerce [e-Minister] and Champion Minister for PAT 15, March 2000)



# Why does policy not 'get it'?

- Disjointed policy
- Ignorance, arrogance & laziness
- Policy/consultant continuum
- Lack of effective dialogue
- Lack of effective engagement
- Lack of participation
- Techno/economic determinism
- Prioritises the economy & votes



# i2010 Strategy

The i2010 Strategy is the European Commission's strategic framework for information communication technologies (ICT) and media policy for the European Union from 2005 to 2010. The i2010 Strategy is a far-reaching initiative of which the main objective is to meet the Lisbon Agenda (2000) target of ensuring ICTs makes a real and positive contribution to **growth, productivity** and **social inclusion** in all 27 Member States of the European Union.





The i2010 Strategy consists of 3 *priority areas*:

**(1) A single European Information Space**

**(2) Innovation and Investment in Research**

**(3) Inclusion, Better Public Services and Quality of Life**

The importance of this area has increased significantly; as the European Commission diligently works towards making digital access for all a reality. Since the publication of the Commission's e-Accessibility Communication in September 2005, there has been the signing of the Riga e-Inclusion Ministerial Declaration in June 2006 and the Portuguese Presidency's e-Inclusion Ministerial Debate in December 2007. This event, which was attended by representatives from all 27 Member States, marked the launch of the European Commission's Communication on e-Inclusion which proposes actions that should be taken to create a digitally inclusive society by 2010.

**Communication on e-Inclusion "To be part of the Information Society"**

***[Contact to be confirmed]***



# Media literacy

*'the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts'.*

Ofcom

A media literate person should be able to, for instance, use an electronic programme guide to find the programme they want to watch. They may agree or not with the views of the programme maker, or just enjoy the programme. They may also recognise that the programme maker is trying to influence them in some way. They may interact with the programme using interactive features or by telephone. And they may respond to the programme by writing to or emailing the broadcaster with their point of view. People may also be able to use communications technology to create their own video and audio content.

Media literate people should be able to use the internet to find information and accept that sometimes what they find may represent a particular view rather than a statement of objective fact. They will be able to control what they and their children see to avoid being offended. They may also be confident enough to be able to order and pay for goods and services online and to create their own website and contribute to a chatroom discussion.



# More rhetorical questions

- When we consider terms such as media/digital literacy or e-Inclusion digital inclusion.....what do we mean in a community informatics context?
- What do we have to say about this that might shape policy and contribute to practice?



# Not all doom & gloom

As part of the Government's overall policy on website rationalisation, and in the interests of government as a whole, COI's Media Monitoring Unit and Research Unit will develop tools to enable government to research the scale and role of user-generated websites. Where necessary, and as part of their overall guidance to departments on website rationalisation, COI will advise departments to avoid duplication of existing user-generated material and/or to modify them to complement citizen-led endeavours.

**UK Govt response to Power of Information Review**



# Digital Inclusion action plan

**Empowering Communities: Technologies, particularly multimedia applications, can** provide powerful platforms to help people express their views and understand the views and experiences of others

**Rural Communities: Technology has an important role to play in supporting strong** rural communities, in tackling isolation, delivering improved services to remote areas and increasing opportunities for small and medium enterprise.

**Sustainable Communities: There is increasing evidence to suggest that technology** will be a vital tool in tackling climate change and environmental degradation.



# Community development processes defined as:

“helping local community groups and organisations to achieve the objectives they set themselves.”

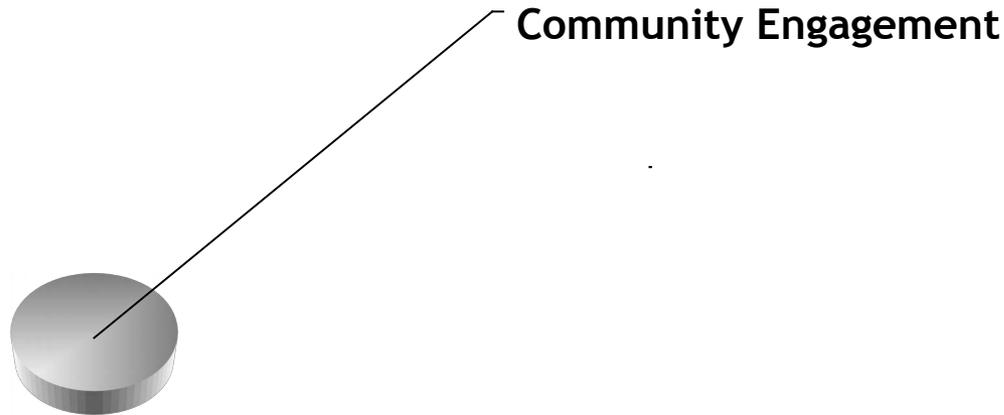
(CDF, 20008)

Community Development =

- 1) Engagement, 2) learning,
- 3) active network & 4) empowerment



# CNA community informatics research partnership processes



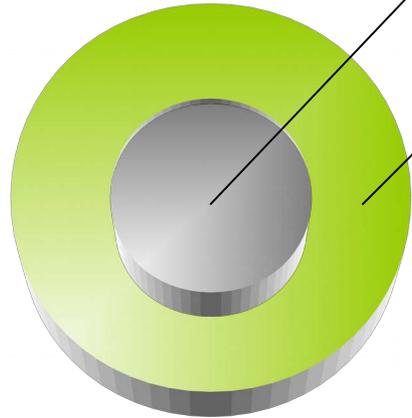
Us & them

The process whereby public bodies [*universities*] reach out to communities to create empowerment opportunities

(Communities and Local Government, 2007)



# Community learning



**Community Engagement**

**Community Learning**

Community  
generated  
learning contexts  
& content.....or  
situated learning.



# Community learning



## Community learning:

“ is a broad name for those individual and group processes which not only produce, but also *sustain* community development outcomes.”

(Falk & Harrison, 1998)

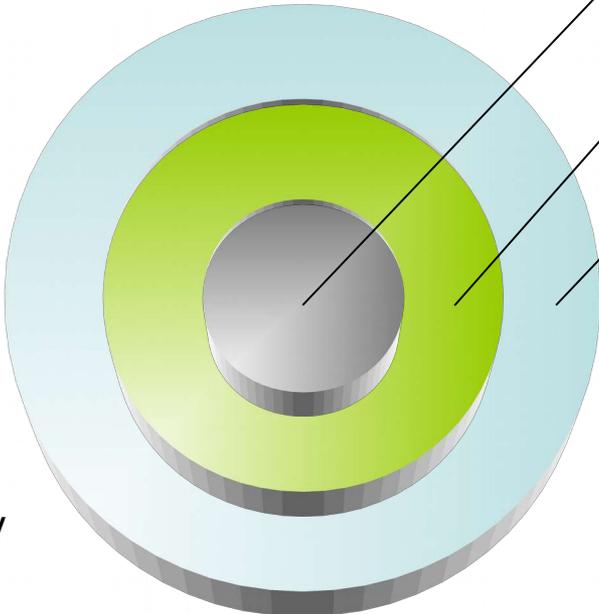
Community learning is guided by four components:

1. open participation
2. building dialogue
3. information sharing, and
4. networking

(Nielsen, 2002)



# Community empowerment



Community Engagement

Community Learning

Community Empowerment

Participants become empowered not just by building their capacity to use technologies but also through the processes of dialogue & application. That is to say by deliberating with others about ways in which the technologies might be used to suit the contexts & needs of their community ecology.

**What Mike might call 'effective use'.**

Participatory Learning Workshops – Static, Mobile & Scenario



# Community network relationships



**Community Engagement**

**Community Learning**

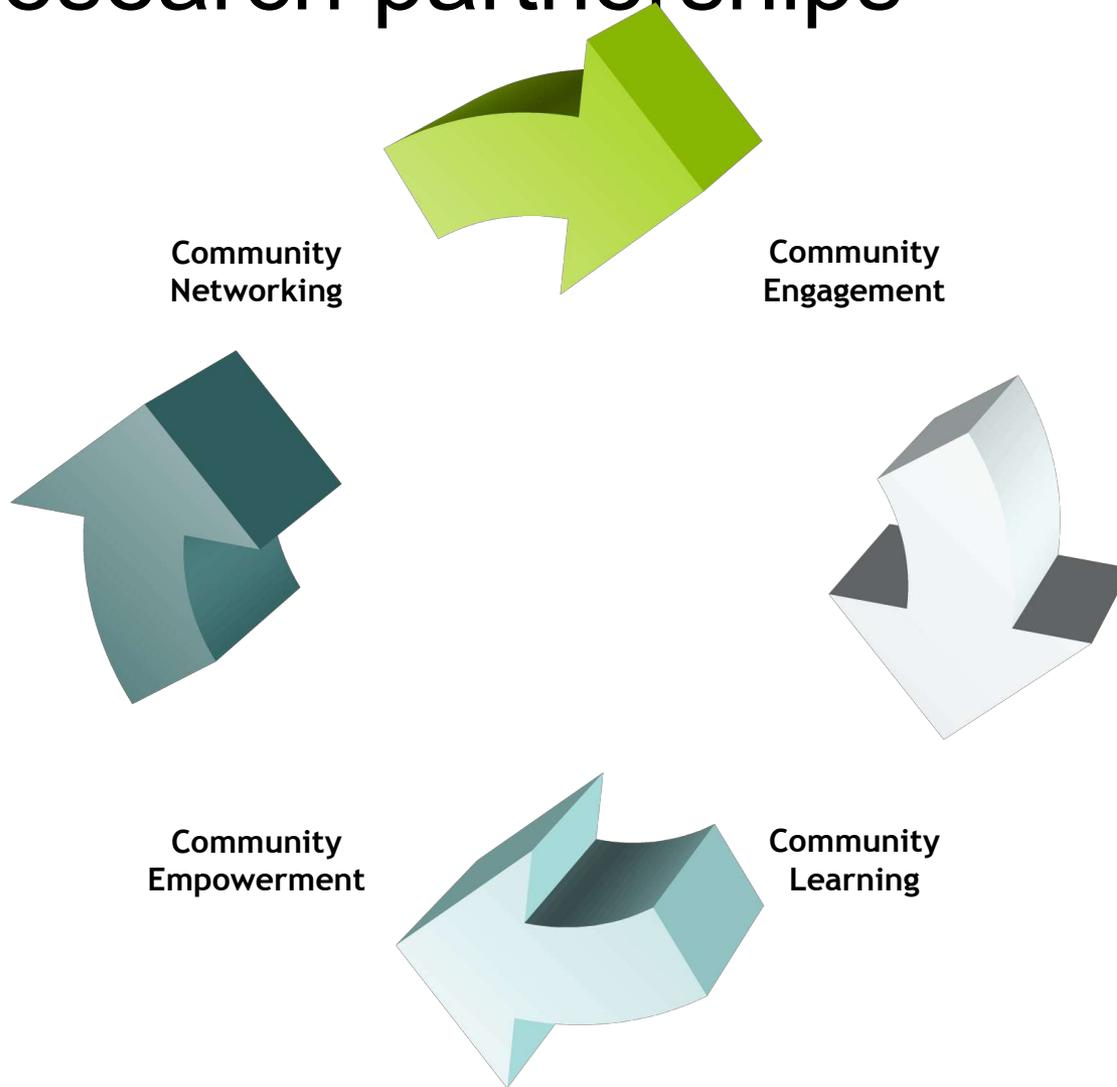
**Community Empowerment**

**Community Networking**

The structures and organisation of the individuals, groups & organisations in a community. The ties and relationships that bind them in transactions. The communication patterns and behaviour, and the different media forms used to communicate. All these are component parts of community networks and community networking – be they social and/or technological constructs.



# Cycle of community informatics research partnerships



# Cycle of community informatics research partnerships



# Social Capital

‘connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue”....”social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations.’ (Putnam)

‘bridges the space between people. Its characteristic elements and indicators include high levels of trust, robust personal networks and vibrant communities.’  
(Cohen & Prusak)

**Willingness to organise & act in order to improve the social environment of the community**



# Cycle of community informatics research partnerships





# Framework for CI policy

## Community technology policy should:

- 1) Understand and meet community needs;
- 2) Work in partnership with active community groups and organisations;
- 3) Be based on one or more community value, i.e. solidarity, participation and coherence;
- 4) Prioritise the needs of the community's socially excluded, marginalized, disadvantages and oppressed;
- 5) Valorise and celebrate cultural diversity; and
- 6) Reflect a commitment to the objectives of community autonomy and responsibility for community initiatives.

