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Third issue of European Journal on ePractice highlights inclusive e-services

Inclusive e-services is one of the five priority objectives of the European Commission's i2010 eGovernment Action Plan. The aim is to provide all citizens with access to services from administrations at different levels using different e-channels. This doesn't only increase efficiency and reduce costs but also expands **democratic participation**. However, more than 40% of the European population still makes little or no use of the internet and other ICT. This can easily become an increasing obstacle to well-being and progress for individuals and society as a whole. For this reason, many **local and national initiatives** are taking place all around Europe to fight **digital exclusion** involving public administrations, private companies and third sector organisations.

The third issue of the European Journal of ePractice analyses attempts by local, regional and national governments and agencies to **use new technologies to promote social inclusion**. Contributors to this issue reflect on what has been achieved and what still needs to be done from a variety of perspectives and contexts. The invited editor of this issue is **professor Sally Wyatt**, Senior Research Fellow at the Maastricht University & Virtual Knowledge Studio for the Humanities and Social Sciences and Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Bridgette Wessels uses the case of South Yorkshire, England, to demonstrate how regional partnerships, linking public and private sector organisations, can play a role in **fostering inclusion in relation to local needs**. Many people living in South Yorkshire do not already have access to ICT nor high levels of education. Thus, this case shows how a regional partnership can be effective in developing ICT capacity from a low base.

Marianne Posfai and Andrea Fejer show how in Hungary professional and individualised training is provided to help people make effective use of eGovernment services. They describe the development of an **eCounsellor network** in which trained local professionals provide assistance to people living in small, isolated, rural communities to help in the effective use of the Hungarian eGovernment portal.

The focus of the article by Beate Schulte, Ulrike Peter, Jutta Croll and Iris Cornelissen is a national competition used in Germany to stimulate **best practice in the design of accessible websites**. The authors show how such a competition, involving people with disabilities in both the design of the criteria and in judging entries, can play an important role in improving overall accessibility.

Peter Verdegem and Pascal Verhoest provide the results of a Belgian study about **non-adopters**. In a country such as Belgium, and many other EU member states, internet use is already very high, so measures adopted a decade ago to stimulate take-up may not be appropriate for those who remain hard to convince of the utility of the technology.

Ali Riza Cam raises an important area, namely the role of technology in the **modernisation of legal and judicial systems**. He describes a project launched in Turkey in 2001 as part of its EU accession programme. Through this comprehensive and ambitious national programme, Turkey is now ahead of many EU member states in its use of technology in the legal system, thus providing an example of good practice from which others could learn.

Published articles

- *Creating a regional agency to foster eInclusion: the case of South Yorkshire, UK*
Bridgette Wessels
- *The eHungary Program 2.0 - Building an Army of eCounsellors to fight against digital illiteracy*
Andrea Fejer | Marianna Posfai
- *Methodologies to identify best practice in barrier-free web design*
Schulte Beate | Peter Ulrike | Jutta Croll | Iris Cornelssen
- *The 'relative utility' approach for stimulating ICT acceptance: profiling the non-user*
Pieter Verdegem | Verhoest Pascal
- *EU principles in modernisation of Justice and the Turkish IT project UYAP*
Ali Riza Cam

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Notes for editors – About European Journal of ePractice

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