New Directions for Work in Digital Scotland

A Knowledge Exchange Programme

This programme is funded by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute which has as its general aim to create new knowledge by bringing knowledge together. More specifically, the aims of the Institute are to:

- Exchange and mobilise knowledge to the benefit of participants engaged in the development of policy and practice;
- identify gaps in practical and theoretical knowledge that can be filled by further knowledge exchange and new research collaborations;
- grow networks between academics and those outside the Academy.

New Directions for Work in Digital Scotland

The questions addressed in this Programme relate to the future of adults’ working lives that are affected by rapid technological change and new work formats. We take as our central problem how Scotland’s digital knowledge and skills can be strengthened to respond to challenges that derive from its geography, from the threat of digital exclusions and from new learning demands. The programme mobilises knowledge to address these concerns for academic disciplines, business, policy-makers and the public. The aim of the Programme is to exchange knowledge and generate new insights into how digital working lives may be improved and sustained for the future. Its objectives are:

- To share and disseminate knowledge on how present digital strategies and innovative work practices can be developed to support jobs and new learning in the future, including beyond the Central Belt;
- to identify barriers to digital working, related to age, ability, gender, and suggest ways that these may be overcome;
- to show how new learning methods and theories can be used in digital working, particularly to sustain work in distributed contexts.
Details of seminar programme

Seminar 2 - Overcoming Digital Exclusions

Dates & times

Wednesday 30th May at 9.30 [please note the change of time to accommodate discussion with digital users]

Thursday 31st May 15.00

Venue: Wolfson Theatre, School of Computing, Queen Mother Building, University of Dundee
http://www.computing.dundee.ac.uk/travel.asp

Aim

This seminar suggests ways that digital exclusions may be overcome.

Content

The focus of the seminar is on addressing problems of digital exclusions. It will examine current and potential exclusions that are based on age, ability, gender and social class. It will consider the complexity of these exclusions, how their workings are often hidden and how they are inter-related. Speakers will draw on their research and practice to present analyses of exclusions they have encountered. They will discuss the origin and operations of these to suggest new directions and ways that they may be overcome.

Outcomes

A key outcome of this seminar will be a working paper that analyses exclusions, highlighting those that are neglected or unresolved. It will discuss the nature of interactions between forms of exclusion and it will make recommendations to address these, identifying relevant stakeholder groups. The seminar will also identify the development of knowledge themes, as well as research and knowledge exchange questions.

[all speakers are asked to keep their presentations strictly to 15 minutes with 5 minutes for questions]

Day one

Session 1: Understanding digital exclusions and why they matter

The goal for this session is to understand what is meant by digital exclusions and why it is important to address them.

9.30 Coffee on arrival

10.00 Introduction to the day and to the Digital Users Professor Vicki Hanson, Chair of Inclusive Technologies, School of Computing, University of Dundee

10.10 Meeting with digital users group (at University of Dundee, School of Computing User Centre)

10.45 Professor Vicki Hanson, Chair of Inclusive Technologies, School of Computing, University of Dundee, "Addressing Digital Inclusion"

What is your experience with disabled workers? What is your experience with older workers?
11.05 Mr Brian McKechnie, Knowledge Exchange Manager, Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde, “International Perspectives”

11.25 Working groups. One-to-one discussions with other delegates in a ‘speed dating’ format. The goal is to share expertise, with each pair writing down: a question, identifying a knowledge gap or suggesting an opportunity related to digital work, inclusions and exclusions.

12.30 Lunch

Session 2: Building on strategies and practices that address forms of exclusion among adult workers

The goal of this session is to consider detailed approaches being used to address forms of digital exclusion among adult workers.

13.30 Thematic development from Seminar 1 Dr. Irene Malcolm, University of Dundee

13.40 Do Coyle, Professor in Learning Innovation, College of Arts & Social Sciences, University of Aberdeen, “Drawing on Linguistic and Cultural Capital”.

1. Cultural Capital: how can cultural capital be used to sustain communities? What do we mean by cultural capital? Can it be transformed into business opportunities? What is the role of technology during these transformational processes? How can adults be supported in taking ownership?

2. Linguistic Capital: how can technology be used to support linguistic inclusion of workers whose language is not mainstream? Linguistic diversity is symbolised by power relations and socio-political agendas. How can these processes be conceptualised as building on linguistic capital for digital, societal and work-based inclusion?

14.00 Working groups: “Knowledge tables”. The goal is to examine the questions and suggestions produced in the previous session in order to summarise your responses in three sentences on a sheet of paper to refine and distil the points raised. Participants will be asked to work in groups of 4 and move round the tables to discuss the ideas on each sheet.

14.45 Tea break

15.15 Working groups “Distilling our ideas”. The goal is to seek synergies in the content of presentations or identify differences. Participants are asked to draw on previous group-work, together with speakers’ questions and thinking points and produce 4 recommendations or questions.

16.00 Thematic summary: Professor Bente Elkjaer,Aarhus University

16.30 Discussion and questions: “What goals did we set ourselves? Are we addressing them?” What do we think has to be done and by whom? Chaired by Mr Sanjin Kaharevic, Scottish Government.

17.00 Close

Day Two

10.00 Introduction to the day and summary of themes, Dr Irene Malcolm & Dr Sanna Rimpilainen, University of Dundee

Session 3: Critical responses and actions
The goal of this session is to offer a critical analysis of strategies and practices that address digital exclusions. The session should support participants’ analysis of these and answer the question as to how we respond to critical issues of digital exclusion for the future of adults’ working lives.

10.15 Mr Colin Mair, Chief Executive, The Improvement Service “Social Exclusion and Digital Exclusion”

10.35 Professor John T. Richards, Thomas J Watson Research Centre, Hawthorne, New York, USA, “Can The Web Be Made Accessible?”

How might the creation of accessible Web content come to be seen as an opportunity rather than merely a cost? Can new Web technologies be designed to promote Web accessibility as a useful side effect?

10.55 Working groups Participants are invited to critique the recommendations produced so far, analyse and crystallise these. What recommendations should be made and for which stakeholder? How do the themes emerging here relate to “overcoming exclusions” and “learning in digital work”? Each group of 4 is asked to develop a recommendation from the previous day in the light of critical analysis from this session.

12.00 Lunch

Lessons learned: Going forward

13.00 Introduction to working groups, Professor Vicki Hanson

13.15 Working groups. The goal is to reflect on and critique what has been achieved and suggest key themes that need to be taken into account in the next seminar and meeting. Participants describe areas where further knowledge exchange and research may be needed. What research and knowledge exchange questions have been generated? What are the implications of Seminar 2 for learning? What has to be done? What are our key recommendations so far, and for which stakeholder groups are they intended?

14.15 Thematic summary and key questions identified: Professor Bente Elkjaer, Aarhus University

14.30 Questions and discussion: What goals did we set ourselves? Did we addressing them?” “What do we think has to be done and by whom?” “What recommendations will we make and to which stakeholders?” “Is there a key question that requires further research?” Chaired by Professor Tara Fenwick, University of Stirling.

15.00 Close

Preparatory activity: reading of a summary document, proposed by Professor Vicki Hanson, which will be uploaded to the Programme website.

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