

ECEI10: 'DELIVERING DIGITAL EUROPE IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES'

A Belgian Presidency Event organised by the Flemish Community

In association with Civic Agenda

supported by Bibnet, NAPLE, EBLIDA (further partners names to be added during development)

Conference Concept Note

Introduction

The European Congress on E-Inclusion 2010: 'Delivering Digital Europe in Public Libraries' (ECEI10) is an official Belgian Presidency Conference taking place **on 21st and 22nd September at the Flemish Parliament in Brussels.**

Hosted by the Flemish Community in association with Civic Agenda, the conference is a follow up to the inaugural European Congress on E-Inclusion (ECEI09), "Technology in Beyond in Public Libraries", which took place in October 2009.

This conference is being planned within the framework of the Belgian EU Presidency by the Flemish Community and will consider the vital role of public libraries in delivering a digitally inclusive Europe. Set over two days, the conference will seek to develop a forum for policy debate and create a networking opportunity that will bring together senior representatives from the 27 nations in the EU involved with public libraries and in increasing e-inclusion and access to technology to assist in combating poverty and social exclusion.

Key partners supporting this event include the European Union; the Europeana Office; Bibnet; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Telecentres Europe; Eblida (the European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation associations); and NAPLE (the forum of National Authorities for Public Libraries in Europe).

This official Belgian Presidency Conference is an invitation only event for 250 targeted stakeholders representing the 27 EU countries, covering Public, NGO, Academic and Private sectors, with delegates from public policy, technology procurement, library services, delivery partners and technologists from across Europe and internationally. Attendance of the European Commission's High Level Expert Group and the Member States Expert Group for Digital Initiatives at is also expected.

2010 Agenda

This conference is being organised within framework of the **European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**. It builds on the outcomes of ECEI09, which included looking at the existing success of European public libraries in providing direct citizen access to technology and partnerships with other local venues provided under initiatives such as Telecentres Europe; the need for a European policy for public libraries; and the increasing need for new links with other institutions to share Europe's rich digital content with all citizens.

The conference agenda will consider role of public libraries within the context of a whole network of collecting institutions that are providing information online to the general public. Key areas for discussion will include the relationship between public libraries as points of access to knowledge and information locally at a community level as well as in national archives, museums, scientific libraries and audiovisual collections. The conference will place this aspect of the debate within the context of the future development of Europeana, following the recent EU consultation exercise and how partnerships with public and other libraries might be developed.

The debate will therefore extend beyond digitisation and content aggregation to consider the initiatives to be taken to make this content accessible for different social target groups in order to create an **inclusive European society**. In this regard, the discussion on **media literacy** will be opened.

Key Objectives:

The conference will seek to address three overarching objectives to be achieved through plenary sessions and five parallel workstreams:

- To explore the future roles that public libraries have in supporting European policy agendas (e-inclusion, enterprise, anti-poverty, social inclusion, learning, accessible cultural content, creativity, personal development through life, citizenship, and accessible information society services) through networking and learning from best practice.
- To examine what should be included in a European policy statement on public libraries and what such a policy might achieve.
- To consider the role of European public libraries in any future developments of the i2010 digital library initiative, including Europeana's future development opportunities for the peoples and communities of Europe.

ECEI10 SUMMARY PROGRAMME

MONDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER

14.00pm **WELCOME and keynotes**

19.00pm **CONFERENCE RECEPTION AND DINNER**

TUESDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER

9.30am **WORKSHOPS**

14.00pm **KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS and debate**

Contact:

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ECEI10 WORKSHOPS

BRIEFING NOTE

PURPOSE AND FORMAT OF THE WORKSHOPS

The purpose of the workshops is to explore present public library activities through case studies of good practice and debate the future contribution of public libraries to the Digital Europe agenda within the topics of the five workshops. Key areas for discussion and for report back to the Plenary to be held just before lunch will be:

- Future skills required for those working in public libraries
- Priority roles and their social impact with the Digital Europe agenda
- Key technologies that will support the public library mission
- Opportunities for and threats to the future of Europe's public libraries
- Priorities for action over the next five years

The workshops will last for two hours and will consist of a series of short case study presentation (c10mins each) followed by small group discussions (groups of three) and collective discussion to identify common themes and priorities.

It is proposed that the workshops are divided into two equal parts, each part following the same format:

- 30mins case study presentations
- 15mins small group discussions
- 15mins workshop plenary discussion

The workshop chairs will be expected to keep to time and to provide feedback to the final plenary session of the morning with responses that address the issues listed above.

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP THEMES

European policy for public libraries: what will it say, what can it do?

This workshop will build on the work of NAPLE/EBLIDA to create a policy for public libraries that could be adopted and promoted by the European Commission. There are clearly many similarities in the priorities and services across European public libraries and a policy might encourage wider sharing of experience and collaboration, raising standards and increasing citizen opportunity across Europe. A policy might also raise awareness of the important role of public libraries in other EU policy areas such as learning, inclusion, poverty and economic development. At the same time to be effective the policy would need to gain the support of a wide constituency of policy makers and professional and will thus need to provide agendas that were acceptable to a majority. The workshop will, therefore, be an ideal opportunity to debate the scope and purpose of the policy.

New approaches to e-inclusion; technology and content.

Worldwide, public libraries are now recognised as essential tools in skilling citizens for the Knowledge Society. There continue to be a number of highly successful programmes, epitomised by the work of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, that underline the value of public libraries of agents of change. This workshop will review a range of project developments and also consider the important 'next step' of helping citizens to discover, amid the complexity of the World Wide Web, high quality content to learn and develop.

Public libraries building new partnerships for the future

Europeana and other collecting institutions. The major EU supported project Europeana has demonstrated the added value that can be achieved by the aggregation of content from institutions such as museums, libraries and archives to present to the user material from a diversity of institutions (and countries) harvested to meet their particular need. This is the first step towards sustained convergence of collecting institutions. This workshop will consider how collecting and learning institutions can work together through projects such as Europeana Local and the OCLC study, Beyond the Silence of the LAMs.

Public libraries in an increasingly competitive market

Google, Amazon, e-books, iTunes. How far can the traditional service model of the public library continue in the face of competition from major global institutions such as Google, Wikipedia and Amazon? Will services such as iTunes and iBooks undermine the core business of the public library? As the boundaries between public and private goods and between different public institutions blur, how can the public library find a unique and defining role? This workshop will debate a strategic challenge that must be faced by every public library Europe and beyond.

Working with communities: social networking, communities of interest, crowdsourcing.

Most public libraries now offer a range of services online 24/7? Does it make sense for there to be greater regional, national, even international collaboration to share developments? Twitter and blogging are being used to engage with communities one-to-one and collectively and there are examples of some libraries (e.g. [Oxford University Libraries](#)) and museums ([Powerhouse Museum](#)) using crowdsourcing techniques to add value to services and to build communities of interest. This workshop will provide the opportunity to review current project and debate new directions.