Removing barriers to digital inclusion

Engaging stakeholders in rethinking policies and services
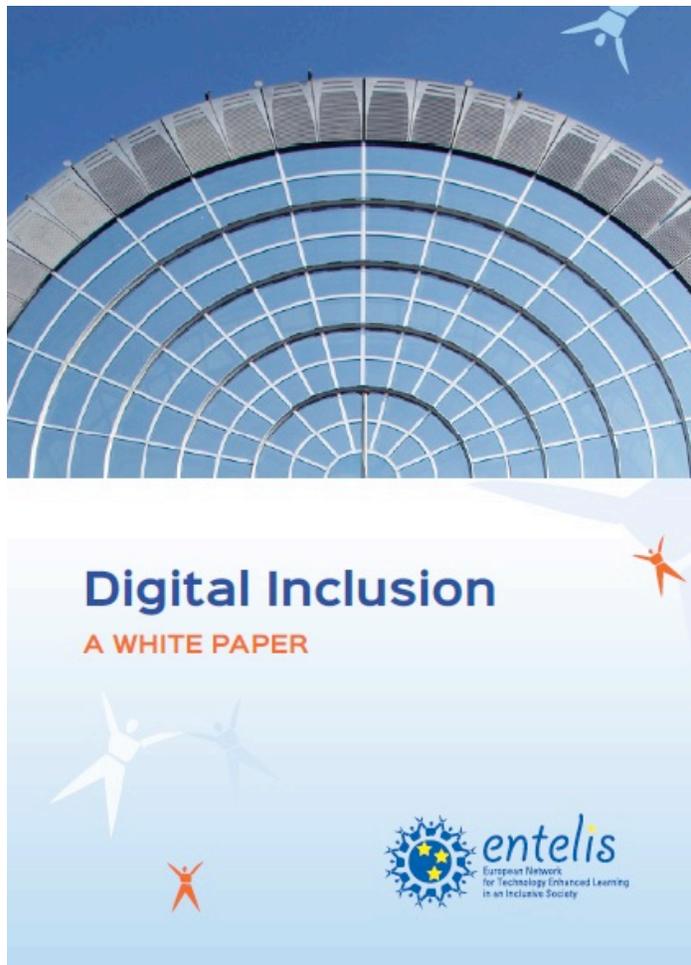
Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf

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Secretary-General of the Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organizations (CH)

Barriers to digital inclusion (1/2)

Study of the ENTELIS network
www.entelis.net

Society – Community – Individual

Policy domain

- Failure of existing policies and legislation to effectively cover essential aspects of ICT/ICT-AT for persons with disabilities.
- Lack of policy that systematically addresses the digital divide with adequate resources.
- Lack of priority given to ICT-AT education and in education.
- Assitive technology is by many considered a cost and not an investment.

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Cultural, **financial** and **accessibility** related barriers

Barriers to digital inclusion (2/2)

Society – Community – Individual

- Lack of user-centred and user-driven approaches.
- Lack of competence in supporting people matching their needs with the available solutions.
- Educational systems are not fully prepared to support learners with disabilities in developing their ICT and ICT-AT skills.
- Lack of independent advice and knowledge centres.
- Lack of collaboration among stakeholders at all levels and between levels.

Study of the ENTELIS network
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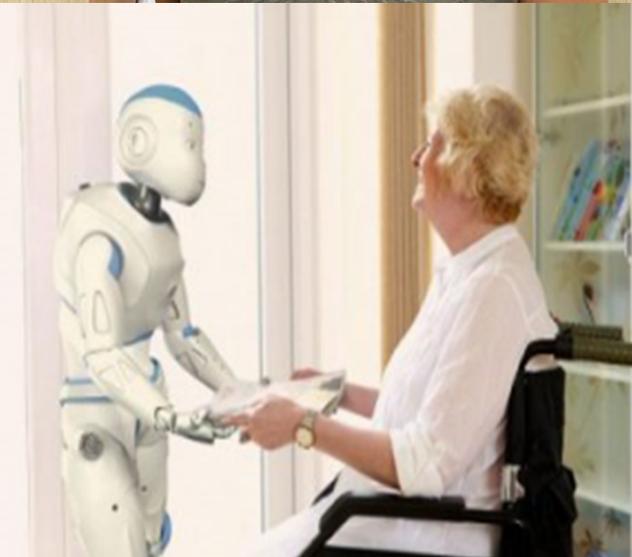
Good practice 1

TRIPS

Lack of user-centred and user-driven approaches?

Not exactly true!

In January 2021 co-design workshop were held in 7 EU languages. People with disabilities, accessibility & ICT experts and transport sector representatives, worked together on future inclusive public transport design concepts and mobility solutions.

https://trips-project.eu/

Good practice 2

Emilia Romagna's Regional Centre for Assistive Technology

Supporting the choice of technology!
Helping people to make technology work for them

Lack of independent advice and knowledge centres??

Not exactly true!

Part of Public Health Service Infrastructure

Independent Advise – Support – Follow up

Multiprofessional team (25)

Different areas of AT

In- & Outdoor Facilities

SERVIZIO SANITARIO REGIONALE
EMILIA-ROMAGNA
Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale di Bologna

Good practice 3

GAATO

A global alliance of non-profit associations whose core interest is in Assistive Technology

Not exactly true!

MISSION

We believe in a world in which all people can access the assistive technology they need.

We work towards equitable and reliable access to assistive technology through collaborative **research**, **policy advocacy**, **education** and **awareness raising**.

www.gaato.org
Contact: secretary@gaato.org

Need for coherent and coordinated approaches

4 core recomendations

- Research! We need data on the impact of the digital divide and of digital empowerment
- Sharing of good practice
- Co-production of innovative strategies
- Development standards and good practice guidelines for Assistive Technology Service Delivery systems and for the use of technology in Inclusive Education

Challenge

There is a big fish within reach and it is called: «digital inclusion»

Let's wade into the water and catch it!

Thank you

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Main references
- E.-J. Hoogerwerf et. al. (2016). Digital inclusion. A white paper.
- ENTELIS network: Manifesto «Towards full digital inclusion»
- E.-J. Hoogerwerf, K. Mavrou & I. Traina. The role of Assistive Technology in Fostering Inclusive Education. Routledge 2021

Relevant websites
www.gaato.org
www.aaate.net
www.at4inclusion.org
www.trips-project.eu
www.entelis.net
www.enil.eu

Want to do something?

Read and Sign
the Bologna Declaration!
on www.aaate.org

A warm thanks to
ENIL for inviting me