Digital (and) Poverty: Access, Skills and Understanding

#digitalpoverty

#digifamnetwork
**Today’s schedule**

13.00  Welcome and Introduction: Professor David McGillivray, UWS

13.10  **Tackling Digital Exclusion: The Latest Evidence**  Prof David McGillivray, UWS and David McNeill, SCVO

13.30  **Digital Strategies for Tackling Poverty in Renfrewshire**  
Paul Cameron, Digital Participation Officer, Renfrewshire Council

13.50  Facilitated group discussion (1) and refreshments

14.30  **Mobile cultures' use of digital technology and new media for living and learning**  
Dr Pauline Duncan and Maureen Finn, STEP, University of Edinburgh

14.50  **A digital world for all? Examining Digital Inclusion and Behaviours across Demographic Groups**  
Anna Grant, Policy and Development Officer, Carnegie UK Trust

15.10  Facilitated group discussions (2)

15.45  Final comments

16.00  Close
Tackling digital & social exclusion

Digital (and) Poverty workshop

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8 out of 10 people use the internet daily, but these statistics hide a deeper digital divide

11% of adults have never used the internet

Older people, low income households and people with disabilities are amongst the most likely to be excluded
Internet uptake has stalled

Have all those that...

• want to be connected;
• can get a connection; and
• can afford the cost

done so?
What are the barriers?

Confidence and motivation

Access and affordability

Basic digital skills
21% lack basic digital skills
Why it matters

Source: Just Economics (2017), Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit
What we know

Having *access* is no guarantee that people are able to access the associated social and economic benefits.

People end up being doubly disadvantaged by being offline and/or without skills – contributes towards the ‘poverty premium’.

Online households save up to £744 per year (around £200 for the lowest income households).
Ambitions to deliver more public services online, particularly welfare, risks further disenfranchising people who already face multiple forms of social exclusion.

Those most in need of support from public services – are amongst the least likely to be online.

Access to support is least available where it’s needed most – and taken up by those who are more proficient.

CAB surveys (2013/16) reveal just over half the respondents (54%) had internet at home, 36% had never used the internet; 11% hardly ever did so (Beattie-Smith, 2013).
Focussing on ‘use’ as a metric of digital engagement is not all that useful (especially see Helsper, 2012 & Helsper & Reisdorf, 2016).

Better to look at ‘whether the nature of their use [of ICT] enhances their life’ (Helsper, 2012:13).

It can’t be assumed that once ICT use has been begun it will be maintained unproblematically (Olphert & Damordan, 2013).

Bach et al (2013) propose a ‘digital human capital approach’ which links the digital with local community and culture.
What works in tackling exclusion

Piercy (2016) suggests 3 avenues for successful interventions with hard-to-access populations:

• **Peer support**: a wide variety of approaches but tutor/mentee relationship is common to all

• **Home access**: a potential response to clear evidence that home-based internet access improves skills and builds confidence.

• **Shared practice**: focusing on cross-organizational collaboration to foster informal environments for skills learning and exchange within specialist service settings.
What works in tackling exclusion

Interventions need to be considered as part of a broader approach to tackling social exclusion.

Motivation is unique to each individual – need to find the ‘hook’ and facilitate repeated, informal face-to-face & one-to-one support.

Smartphones are not a silver bullet.

‘Hyper-local’ and embedded approaches to skills development are critical.
Conclusions

Promoting **digital inclusion** in hard-to-reach populations requires a multi-faceted approach.

**Digital inclusion** needs to be meaningful and consistent with users’ overall needs and motivations.

**Digital participation** requires development of digital capital and understanding.

**Leadership and mentorship** are important.

Greater understanding of the long-term impacts of **digital inclusion/exclusion** is needed.
We are on a mission, to give everyone in Scotland the basic digital skills they need to do their jobs, live their lives and confidently use different digital services. To do this, we need your help...
What’s the issue?
Basic Digital Skills
Research

Get involved
Sign the Charter
Resources
Affordable Broadband Campaign

Get support
Digital Champion Training
Funding
When you sign Scotland's Digital Participation Charter, we ask you to commit to five key pledges - allowing Scotland to work together and skill up our digital nation.

1. **Skill Up**
   - Ensure staff & volunteers have the opportunity to develop basic digital skills

2. **Support Staff**
   - To help others learn basic digital skills and embrace digital tools

3. **Support Scotland**
   - Contributing resources and practical support for Scotland in whatever ways you can

4. **Back the Basics**
   - Support a common language based on digital participation and basic digital skills

5. **Come Together**
   - Share what you are doing and its impact
Most importantly...

What can you commit to doing to support digital participation over the next year?

• Enable the internet to be accessible and affordable?

• Build motivation and confidence of your staff and/or service users to go online?

• Develop the basic digital skills of your staff and/or service users?
Resources

Need help to get online and develop your own basic digital skills?
Find support near you and online ➔

Want to help others develop their basic digital skills?
Get support to be a digital champion ➔

Want to understand the latest research and evidence on digital participation?
View links to recent reports and publications ➔

Want to promote Scotland's Digital Participation Charter?
Download our brand guidelines and logos ➔
Developing Digital ‘Capital’: Exploring evidence-based models of digital inclusion (Ref: PHDMCS1801)

University of the West of Scotland | School of Media, Culture & Society | Glasgow | United Kingdom

Dr N Jenkins
Prof D McGillivray

Funded PhD Project
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Breakout Qs (1)

1. What *access* and *use* constraints exist for vulnerable groups, especially those living in poverty, when utilising digital technologies and environments?
2. From evidence or experience, what interventions work best in addressing these access and use constraints?
3. What are the new digital challenges to look out for on the horizon?
Breakout Qs (2)

1. What can we do to more effectively involve end users in the design and development of digital services to account for the complex effects of poverty and disadvantage?

2. How can ‘evidence’ of successful digital inclusion practice be shared effectively between academics, policy makers and practitioners?

3. What can we do to ensure that those delivering digital services and learning interventions are well prepared to support ‘digitally savvy citizens’, across the life course?