Circular Head Community Development Project Growing Digital Citizenship

Information and Communications Technology Expo

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1.0 Introduction

In 2010, Smithton, in the Circular Head Region was chosen as one of the first places in Australia to be connected to the National Broadband Network [NBN]. However, NBN uptake and connectivity in the region has been relatively slow and is currently underutilised. The overarching purpose of this project is to capitalise on the potential of the NBN utilising an asset based approach. Conversely, this proposal also employs a community capacity building approach towards growing the digital citizenship necessitated to encourage the community to embrace the NBN.

The opportunity exists to highlight benefits and potential to the community through the hosting of an Information and Communications Technology [ICT] Expo in Circular Head. The general aims and objectives of the Expo are as mentioned in the first proposal for this unit:

It would provide a forum for encouraging the community to better learn to use and integrate ICT to create new uses benefiting life and work, further weaving technology into the fabric of daily living. An objective being to develop the knowledge and skill base required to take full advantage of available technologies, such as the NBN, to drive change and renewal. Enhancing self-sufficiency, capacity to learn, and strengthening civic engagement in new ways. It is hoped that increasing awareness and promoting ICT could stimulate development of community enterprises and niche projects, empower people through access to services, information and technology, and increase potential for new employment and new ways of 'doing'.

This project expands on 'Proposal 1 - Community Development' developed earlier in this unit.

2.0 Project Background and Prior Experience

To put this project in context, on March 25, 2000, the 'Taste IT – Give IT a Try' Information Technology Fair was held in Smithton. It was the first Fair of its kind held in Tasmania, implemented under the Partnership Agreement between the Government of Tasmania and The Circular Head Council (DPC, 2011). One of the schedules under the Partnership

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Agreement was 'Enhanced IT & T Opportunities'. To achieve the outcomes of this schedule a strategy was developed for Circular Head to undertake the Tasmanian Community Network [TCN] process; the Fair was part of that process.

The State Government hosted the Information Technology Fair with the project management co-ordinated by the Circular Head Business Enterprise Centre [BEC]. I was employed by the BEC for a three month period as coordinator for this project. The event was to provide the Circular Head Area with a showcase of the various uses of computers and information technology available in the new millennium and the benefits they could bring to the region. Dial up Internet access was becoming more affordable and several Internet Service Providers had commenced access provision in the region. The event was successful in building links between people in the community and technology available at the time, and also resulted in increased uptake of IT courses at the local TAFE centre.

Comparisons can be drawn between the relative newness of dial up Internet access to the region in 2000 and the newness of NBN to the region at present. The IT Fair in 2000 was received positively by the community. Current circumstances lend themselves well to a similar event for somewhat similar purposes.

2.1 Lessons Learned from Prior Experience

Documented issues and lessons learned from the 'Taste IT' Fair (Maguire, 2000) included: difficulty securing commitment and interest from some of the desired stall holders due to an expressed lack of confidence in regard to the event being held in a remote region; sponsors and stall holders needed around three to four months to navigate the hierarchy of communication, channels of approval and communication protocols to seek approval to participate from senior partners and stakeholders; all stall holders need to bring additional power cords, power boards and network cables; visual planning methods are needed during implementation to avoid misunderstandings surrounding concept and structure of the event; clearly documented procedures for communication between parties concerned in the planning are needed to avoid unnecessary repetition of tasks and the assumption that others are aware of outcomes; a fee should be charged to stall holders as a way of ensuring commitment is not

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waivered at the last minute; technical requirements of stall holders needs to be ascertained as early as possible;

We were also fortunate enough to have an added attraction for our Fair, which helped in the promotion. We were able to offer a public lecture by a leading academic from the University of Berkeley in Southern California. Under the University of Tasmania's cultural program, Professor Hubert Dreyfus, a world leader in the field of Cognitive Science, was supplied through the University's philosophy department, to deliver a lecture timed to coincide with the Fair. The lecture, on the Philosophy of the Internet, was presented the evening before the Fair at a dinner event and proved a great way to gain publicity and kick start the event.

2.3 Project Justification

Recent research from the ABS Business Longitudinal Database (ABS, 2011) indicates businesses connected to broadband are more likely to be innovative "The analysis finds a strong relationship between ICT intensity and innovative activity at the firm level. Businesses which use sophisticated types of ICT are significantly more likely to undertake innovation of any type. The more intense ICT users are likely to undertake more types of innovation, more novel innovations and are more likely to develop the innovations internally." Internet use and increases in consumer shopping online continue to rise. In 2008-2009 nearly three-quarters of Australian households had internet access, with two-thirds of Internet users using the internet to make online purchases. "Just under \$143 billion dollars' worth of internet orders were received by Australian businesses in 2009-10, up 15% on the previous year" (ABS, 2011c). Reasons attributed to online purchase decisions were convenience (74%), lower prices and wider availability of products and services. Trends are expected to continue, particularly in light of the NBN rollout (NBN, 2011b).

One of the high ranked trends in the Horizon Report (Johnson et. al, 2011, p.3) was "people expect to be able to work, learn and study whenever and wherever they want". One of the highest ranked challenges noted in the report was "Digital media literacy continues its rise in importance as a key skill in every discipline and profession". The report also highlights technologies emerging into mainstream learning that will have widening impact (p.4), such as; electronic books, mobiles, augmented reality, game-based learning, gesture based computing and learning analytics. Among the recommendations of the report of the

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Government 2.0 Taskforce, Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0 (Australian Government, 2009), are; using technology to increase citizen engagement and collaboration and encouraging public servants to engage online. Fast Internet access now seems to be a community necessity.

It is my observation, as an Information and Communications Technology Teacher in the local community, that Internet usage rates in the Circular Head Region are already high and growing. NBN would simply improve the way the community already operates, value adding to existing practices, and opening doors to new possibilities due to the higher bandwidth and improved speeds.

3.0 Community Development Process and Approach

Utilising an asset based approach the focus would be on identifying and bringing together the community capital required to host the Expo. The Expo would bring people together with skill, knowledge and expertise to showcase a range of existing and potential digital innovations, demonstrate use of smart phones, provide insight into business solutions, technology enabled environments, products and services and provide information on aspects of Information Technology use and infrastructure.

The objective of the Expo would be more akin to a community capacity building approach, providing a platform for networking and skill acquisition. The aim being to develop the knowledge and skill base required to take full advantage of available technologies to drive change and renewal. Participants would be able to engage in a variety of activities and be able to view live demonstrations of technology in action. Information would be provided on cyber safety, cyber bullying, gaming, Internet and society, web design, developing a web presence, social networking, collaborative consumption, buying and selling online, digital security, online banking, use of technology in teaching and learning, audio and video technologies and gaining qualifications in ICT. The accompanying diagram depicts the community development process [Appendix A] for the ICT Expo.

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3.1 Community Analysis – A Snap Shot

This community analysis draws on statistical 'secondary data' and direct information. A 'snap-shot' of the local community of place is as follows: The Circular Head community is characterised by employment in industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, timber, aquaculture, natural resource production and tourism (Local Government Board, 2006, p. 2). Challenges within this region include poor training culture, undervaluing of education, barriers to training and negative perceptions of key employment industries (p. 61). The North West Regional Training Demand Profile (Skills Tasmania, 2008) lists Circular Head as a region with; disproportionately high numbers of people in low income brackets (p. 16); one of the largest proportions of Aboriginal Tasmanians (p.18); factors affecting education participation (p. 24) such as the socio-economic profile, perceived value of education, availability of education and training, level of economic activity, financial barriers; the region with the lowest proportion of post-secondary qualified people (p. 50); Circular Head was identified by ABS modelling [SEIFA index] as one of the most disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic and educational characteristics (p. 3).

3.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Data is a starting point for working out who stakeholders are... community values, issues of concern, census data, community and business directories, observations, population trends, workforce trends, educational attainment, population groups, reputation, influence, strength of networks. Stakeholders may include people that have an interest in a decision, people who influence or can influence a decision, and those affected by it:

- Residents / Individuals / Rate Payers
- Groups of individuals, organisations, sporting groups, interest groups, support groups,
- Educational Institutions
- Business community / Developers
- Government Agencies Federal, State and Local
- Media
- Councillors
- Council staff

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- Members of Parliament
- Visitors / Tourists
- Those with expertise
- Communities of interest
- Infrastructure authorities
- People who have already expressed interest in matter
- Sponsors

Stakeholder analysis should determine who has an interest, estimate concerns, consider influence, anticipate level of involvement and identify ways to achieve involvement. A 'snap-shot' of the community, based on secondary data and what is already known, forms the basis of a preliminary stakeholder analysis [Appendix B]. Subsequently, a participatory values based analysis could then be conducted to identify the sub-communities within the community of place to more accurately identify communities of interest and capacity to participate. The stakeholder list needs to be reconsidered as the development process continues and more is understood about the community and the resources (NPS, 2002).

Stakeholder analysis can help define ways to engage those identified (ODI, 2009);

- High power high alignment keep satisfied
- High power low alignment engage closely and influence actively
- Low power high alignment keep informed
- Low power low alignment monitor

3.3 Stakeholder Engagement

The purpose of community engagement is to reflect aspirations of the community, encourage community input and ownership, generate better outcomes through collaboration, reduce misconceptions and misinformation, deepen understanding, encourage the community to generate ideas, identify issues, ensure commitment, build relationships, reduce conflict and misunderstanding, assist those within the community to understand viewpoints of others, to clarify roles, to clarify promises [level of involvement, level of decision making, what is being delivered] and to share responsibilities.

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The process of engagement should build credibility, build capacity by providing opportunities for reflection and co-learning, and tap into local knowledge. The six C's of successful community engagement (DSE & DPI, 2004) are:

- Capability: the members are capable of dialogue.
- Commitment: mutual benefit beyond self-interest.
- **Contribution:** members volunteer and there is an environment that encourages members to 'have a go' or take responsibility / risks.
- Continuity: Members share or rotate roles and, as members move on, there is a transition process that sustains and maintains the community corporate memory.
- Collaboration: Reliable interdependence. A clear vision with members operating in an environment of sharing and trust.
- **Conscience:** Embody or invoke guiding principles / ethics of service, trust and respect that are expressed in the actions of the community.

These may be used as targets or filters to measure quality of functioning within the community. Engagement is about developing partnerships. Circumstances to make these partnerships work include; effective and constant communication, creating a safe environment in which to encourage open and honest dialogue, understanding 'givens'- those aspects that are not negotiable, exchanging ideas openly, fulfilling commitments to promote trust, setting realistic timeframes, having fun, valuing needs and addressing fears. "Talk and talk and talk until the talking starts" until shared values are unearthed and the underlying beliefs that fuel individual views are acknowledged (Boully et al, 2005, p.15). Talk with the purpose of reframing framing to achieve understanding and democratic consensus (Friedman, 2008).

3.4 Engagement Tools and Techniques

To maintain enthusiasm for the project it will be important to celebrate each step to maintain momentum, support individual 'drivers', spread 'positive rumours', have a variety of ways for involvement and allow flexible commitment opportunities and breaks when needed (Queensland Government, 2008). Governance and management of the project will be facilitated through a combination of partnerships, small working groups and influential individuals selected on the basis of desire to mobilise, capacity, motivation and enthusiasm

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(UTAS, 2011). Management will follow a flexible cycle of monitoring, reflection, evaluation and adjustment where needs arise.

Engagement techniques were selected based on the guiding principles of inclusiveness, reaching out, mutual respect, integrity, affirming diversity and adding value (Queensland Government, 2008, p. 11-12). Keys to success are securing motivated people willing to 'drive' action and developing community 'allies' that can help. Ask people how they would like to be involved. Initial engagement activities will seek to discover talents and skills of individuals and businesses in the local community, resources available in local organisations, resources available in the Polytechnic. Engagement Techniques for this project (Appendix A) were selected as follows:

Tool/Technique identified in Appendix A	Justification for selection (DSE & DPI, 2004)	
Preliminary Stakeholder Engagement Analysis	To determine who might be involved to begin with, their power and alignment and level of interest in the project (direct or indirect)	
Briefings	To inform stakeholders of proposal and provide an opportunity for questions	
Partipatory Stakeholder Analysis (Clip Or Matrix)	To identify further opportunities using local knowledge and understanding, identifying different stakeholders, building relationships, discovering connections	
Information Contacts	To provide informed contacts from which information can be obtained about various aspects of the project quickly, able to convey accurate information	
Surveys	To ascertain community interest in the project, determine what community would like achieve through the project, to determine expertise, knowledge and skill in the community in relation to technology	
Stakeholder Interviews And Meetings	To meet with key stakeholders to gain understanding of views, to elicit opinions and uncover concerns	
Email And Electronic Flyers/Bulletins	To provide easily scanned details in a format that can be kept, carried away, and referred to. An easy method for raising awareness of the Expo	
Focus Groups	To discover key issues and concerns, to gauge community opinions	
Social Networking - Twitter	To encourage interaction in a cost effective way without limitations of time and space. Empower through contributions and encourage sharing of ideas	

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Tool/Technique identified in Appendix A	Justification for selection (DSE & DPI, 2004)	
Brainstorming	To canvas options and develop ideas, to build rapport and develop unity between participants	
Stakeholder Review	To keep track of changes in community members, emerging issues and associated values, identify new or changed interest and levels of power/alignment	
SWOT Analysis	To uncover strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. To determine internal elements that can be controlled and external elements that are beyond control	
Capacity Assessment	To assess the capacity of individuals in terms of skills, knowledge, know how, task management, time management, expertise, responsibility, engagement	
Community Profiling	To involve the community in developing an understanding of the diversity within it to ensure inclusiveness. To enable engagement strategies to be better tailored to needs of the people involved.	
Website for promotion of information and suggestions	To allow information to be accessed at any time, can reach large numbers, easily accessible, caters for those that don't participate in social networking, allows for multimedia elements and collection and provision of feedback	
Needs Analysis	To determine the needs at stake in relation to the project, to determine project deliverables and milestones	
Infrastructure and Asset Analysis	To determine what facilities exist, are available and can be accessed, determine financial requirements and equipment needs	
Brainstorming and Gamestorming (2011)	To generate ideas. Using games to brainstorm in new ways, allowing more creativity, engagement and experimentation	
Social Networking – Facebook	To leverage on a platform widely used in the community, to enhance face to face engagement, to increase accessibility to information, to encourage involvement and generate discussion and enthusiasm	
Newspaper Inserts	To promote the Expo and provide information to a large majority of people in the geographic area through the local Circular Head Chronicle	
Media Release	To provide wide awareness of the project to the community, broadcasting key information, promoting the Expo to a wider audience	
Workshops	To plan, make decisions, overcome issues and difficulties, deliver reports, solicit suggestions and opinions, collaborate to reach agreement	
Workgroup	To provide greater information sharing, planning and coordination of the project	

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Tool/Technique identified in Appendix A	Justification for selection (DSE & DPI, 2004)	
Technical Assistance	To make technical information and expertise available to participants, to develop the infrastructure needed to host the Expo, to link stakeholders with experts	
Partnerships	To empower stakeholders, encourage joint participation, to collaborate based on mutually understood values, to encourage local ownership	
Prioritisation Matrix	To produce a view of priorities that can be measured, to assist in defining hierarchy of importance in regard to issues	
Task Lists and Schedules	To identify what needs to be done by whom and the sequence of what needs to be done in consideration of timeframes and constraints	
Periodic Celebrations	To maintain enthusiasm for the project, to spread positive rumours' to generate success and deepen evels of engagement through fun	

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is hoped this project would develop social capital by linking the community to knowledge and resources outside of the region (UTAS, 2011). The development process cannot begin without first understanding the community, the 'sub-communities' within it, and who the key leaders and opinion shapers are. Engagement is crucial to the process. Effective engagement can warn of emerging issues, build understanding and relationships, uncover a range of possibilities, and encourage ownership and use of local knowledge (Victorian Government, 2011). When the community is empowered, engaged and has a sense of ownership over the process there is potential for development. Through a participatory development approach the community's capacity for change and resilience is increased (Maguire & Cartwright, 2008).

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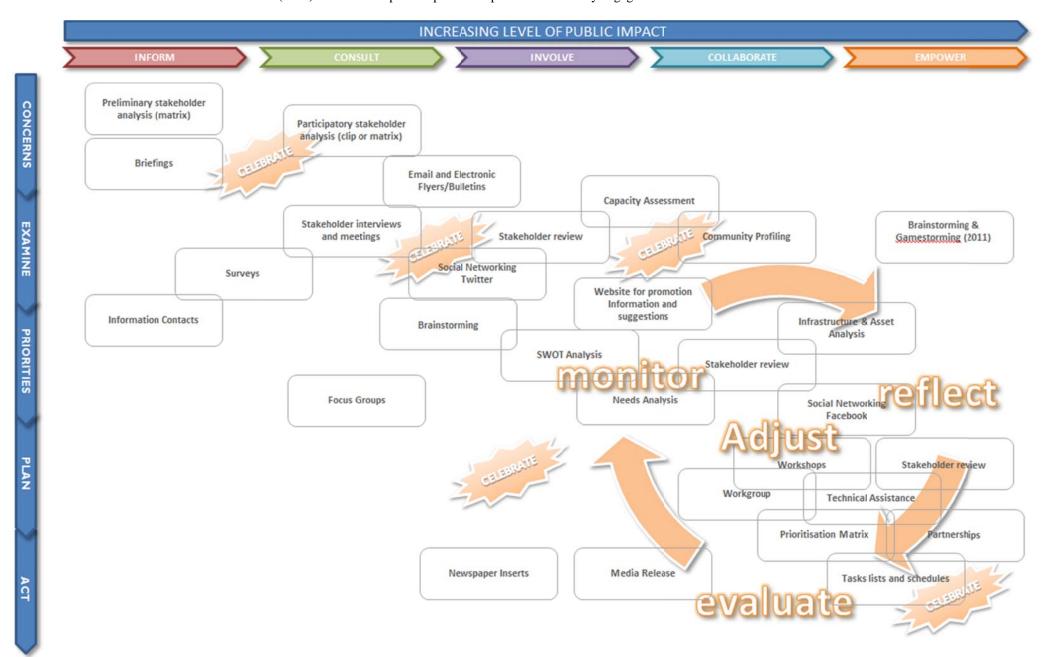
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Appendix A – Diagram depicting the Community Development Process

The IAP2 (2011) Public Participation Spectrum represents community engagement as a continuum of activities



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Appendix B – Stakeholder Analysis

	Tourism operators Business operators Farmers	high alignment	Display participants Demonstrators and facilitators Technology experts	Tasmanian Polytechnic Smithton High School Insurance/liability
low	 CHAC - indigenous Emmerton Park Youth MOPS People with disabilities 	Technology enthusiasts Parents UTAS	Teaching staff Students Public figures	NBN Circular Head Christian School
oower	Circular Head Council Online Access Centre Library	Special interest groups CH Progress group CHETCC		Local technology businesses Individuals with expertise Exhibitors
	Sport and recreation groups Multi-cultural groups	Community support network Rural Health Banks (online banking)	I low alignment	Sponsorship and donation sources such as software companies

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