

Press Release

LAUNCH OF THE DIGITAL INCLUSION BRAND



10 AM Thursday 11 December, Palexpo AGORA Hall 2

How do we know when we have crossed the Digital Divide?

A brand that will give international recognition to all projects working on the Digital Divide may be the first step.

The Digital Inclusion brand was developed as a result of the recent Salzburg Seminar in Austria and attended by 55 high-level IT experts from 30 countries. It will give instant recognition to the 100 000's of projects which have the key aim of building self reliant members of the Information Society across the world.

The branded projects will provide an internationally recognizable basis for people to share experiences across the Digital Divide that exists across cultures and countries.

The World Summit on the Information Society being held in Geneva this week is not only about recognizing the Digital Divide but also about developing processes for achieving Digital Inclusion.

Many of the countries attending the WSIS have recognized that the next wave in the ever increasing impact of the Internet is the social appropriation of the technology for cultural and societal benefit. The new mobility and the ever increasing use of Internet technologies are seeing much more effort being directed to people's needs in culture, community and governance.

However, many governments and business services have been slow to recognize this trend. They have not yet developed programs and policies which will meet the emerging needs of society because they have been stuck in a time warp which only recognizes short term economic returns.

The Digital Inclusion brand will provide a rallying point for the efforts of the civil society who comprise more than 75% of the 10 000 people expected to attend WSIS. The Civil Society Declaration at WSIS signals a very powerful shift of emphasis in where Internet technologies will take people in the next three years as the United Nations prepares for the next Summit in Tunis in 2005.

The Salzburg Seminar team behind the Digital Inclusion brand will bring together leading experts to ensure that the brand will be in global use well before the Tunis Summit.

It will be used to sheet home to government service agencies, the private sector and funders that much more continuing effort and funding need to be placed into projects which have people as the major focus.

For further information contact the Digital Inclusion Institute contact@digitalinclusion.net or Dr Shahram Amiri and Dr Wal Taylor who can be contacted through the Civil Society Directorate (022 730 6354; 076 577 3742) and who are staying at the Novotel Hotel in Geneva (phone 022 909 900) during the WSIS