Digital Inclusion Ecosystem

6 solutions to close the digital divide

1. Awareness campaign

The first solution aims to place digital inclusion clearly on the agenda. The true size of the digital divide and the groups affected by this divide are insufficiently well known among the general public. So an awareness campaign is to be organised for companies, authorities and individuals.

The awareness campaign will include a mobilisation aspect so that members of the public can contribute to the solution by collecting funds for social organisations that work in the field of digital inclusion.

The campaign target group is varied. A media campaign is to be organised to reach the general public, but specific channels and messages for the business world and the social organisations are also being defined.

2. Strengthening existing initiatives

There are already a great many valuable digital inclusion initiatives, but they are scattered and often small scale. So the ecosystem plans to support and strengthen these projects.

These are organisations that support people with limited digital access or knowledge. They often lack funds, equipment and volunteers. The ecosystem's solution involves creating a platform or a tool to support them and help them grow.

This platform is to involve cooperation between government, social organisations and companies. It is a community where organisations and associations support one another, share best practices and enter into dialogue with one another. Members can go there for help and advice, to find the right training or volunteers and to look for partners in the digital inclusion chain.

3. A mobile solution for target groups that are difficult to reach

To reach some of the Belgians who risk digital exclusion as well as possible, the range of support options available has to go to them. The mobile solution that the ecosystem is proposing makes it easier for aid organisations to help target groups that are difficult to reach take the first steps towards digital autonomy.

In concrete terms, the Digital Inclusion Ecosystem is to develop a box that is easy to transport and that contains the necessary hardware, an internet connection and charging facilities as well as support material suitable for the target group. The box can be transported by bicycle or in a small van, depending on the area covered by the aid organisation.

The aid organisations can use the box for their day-to-day work with those who are most difficult to reach, but also during specific actions that they undertake aimed at their target group.

4. A local access point for everyone

Local contact points and initiatives to help people with few digital skills are often insufficiently well known among the public. For this reason, the ecosystem proposes a solution consisting of two aspects:

First of all, the position of local digital inclusion official is created. This person sets up a local ecosystem in cooperation with the local authorities. This ecosystem is a combination of all existing and future digital inclusion initiatives. The official acts as the central contact point, takes care of the dynamics and ensures that the issue is clearly visible.

Secondly, a desk is set up that is easily accessible in a public space, such as in a supermarket or in the town hall. Volunteers from various organisations in the ecosystem man the desk. They answer questions about the use of digital means and give advice on the various digital inclusion initiatives that exist.

5. 'Digitally inclusive by design' index

The Digital Inclusion Ecosystem aims to help public and private organisations become more digitally inclusive by design. So it is to develop an index or global standard that enables them to assess how digitally inclusive they are and that encourages them to gear processes and tools, such as websites, apps, helpdesks and call centres, better to the digitally vulnerable.

The index has many advantages: it enables organisations to draw up guidelines and a development plan; a label can be applied for that shows that the organisation is digitally inclusive and end users have an idea of the organisation's level of digital inclusion. Best practices will be rewarded by means of an annual award.

6. Updating digital skills simply and using automating means

People with few digital skills are sometimes prevented from taking the first step owing to stigmatisation or shame or due to an insufficient, unknown or expensive range of solutions.

The ecosystem aims to reach people via a television channel and show them how to take the first steps towards digitalisation. The channel is linked to a web page that is very accessible and easy to use. By entering the postcode, the user obtains an overview of the various digital courses and support in the neighbourhood.

This solution is aimed at people with few digital skills, who are open to learning more, but also at ambassadors such as grandchildren who want help their grandparents.