

CARISNET – Strengthening the Caribbean ICT Stakeholders Virtual Community (CIVIC)

Discussion Paper – “Parameters for the ICT Clearing House to support the strengthening of CIVIC”

A. Background

One of the objectives of the CARISNET project is to create a clearinghouse which would provide information on Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) and ICT related policies, initiatives, skills, resources and opportunities which exist within the Caribbean.¹

ICT4D activities can be broadly defined as those activities which incorporate the use of ICT in initiatives which would achieve all aspects of human development. The Millennium Development Goals provide a framework for conceptualising development. The clearinghouse will therefore provide information on the use of Information and Communication Technologies in development initiatives in the following thematic areas: Health, education, agriculture, private sector development, good governance, social cohesion and security, disaster management and culture. Other themes will be added by partners.

This document discusses the following parameters of the ICT Clearinghouse: -

1. Objectives of the CIVIC Clearinghouse
2. Functionality of application to support the Clearinghouse
3. Linkages with other Clearinghouses

This document is intended for the CARISNET project partners and their associates. It is not intended as technical specification for the software to support the Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse will be hosted in the project website at <http://www.carisnet.org>.

This version of the document was prepared after consultation with members of CIVIC between 7 and 22 July, 2005. The list of respondents and their availability to assist with data gathering is in Annex B to this document.

B. Objectives of the CIVIC Clearinghouse

The CIVIC Clearinghouse will be created to support the creation and dissemination of knowledge and ideas about ICT4D within the Caribbean. The Clearinghouse will support

¹ The term ‘Caribbean’ in this project refers to the following countries :- CARICOM Territories, Cuba, Dominican Republic, British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, USVI, Netherlands Antilles, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyane Française, Puerto Rico, Montserrat

the exchange of information with other clearinghouses and databases that have information on ICT4D related projects in the Caribbean. This will depend on whether the other clearinghouses provide such services.

The Clearinghouse is one of the tools designed within the framework of the CARISNET project, in order to facilitate networking between organizations and individuals working on ICT for development initiatives in the region. The clearinghouse will operate in an open and transparent manner through mechanisms such as clearly stated policies for inclusion of content; transparent and accountable administration. The input of information into the Clearinghouse will be completely decentralised to the users who register.

This database will include: -

- Description and links to National and regional projects and initiatives in the Caribbean which provide an enabling environment for ICT4D
- Description and links to National and regional development projects in the Caribbean region which incorporate ICT to achieve development goals
- Description, full text or links to National and regional ICT4D related Documents, Studies, Publications, etc,
- Agenda section: upcoming ICT4D activities in the Caribbean (workshops, conferences, public events, call for proposals, etc)
- Directory of Caribbean ICT4D stakeholders (both persons and institutions)²
- A marketplace for ICT4D ideas for partnerships, and other
- products such as job vacancies, etc
- ICT4D Success stories and best practice cases from the Caribbean

Guiding principles

All content which is submitted to the Clearinghouse must be pertinent to the use of ICTs in the development of the Caribbean. The Clearinghouse will not host content which has specific copyright or other legal exclusions without the necessary permissions. Content which is deemed offensive to any CIVIC member will be removed by the Administrator on verification. All content on the clearinghouse will be available under a Creative Commons License.³

C. Functionality of the application which will support the Clearinghouse

The Clearinghouse, accessible through the Internet should:

- be easily searchable,
- allow intuitive navigation,

² Including CIVIC members.

³ Link to CCL

- organized by country, sector, type of resource, type of activity, and other categories
- be interactive allowing registered users to enter or modify their data,
- contain clear instructions for data formatting and validation
- be easily accessible to all Internet users

Adding/Removing Content

All registered users can propose content which would be approved/edited by editors or administrators. Registered users can suggest changes to the content which they have submitted.

User levels

Administrator/Editor

There will be an Administrator/Editor user level which provides access to manage the database, and to approve content according to guidelines.

Registered User

Any user could register online. A password would be generated for them which would allow them to then propose content to be added to the clearinghouse.

All content will be accessible to any visitor to the Clearinghouse.

Multiple language Interfaces

The clearinghouse will have multiple language interfaces and will allow posting of information in English, French and Spanish. At the time of writing this document, it has not been decided whether the content will be translated into different languages simultaneously unless the users decide to post the content in that format. The languages will be English, French and Spanish in the first instance. It is likely that other languages such as Kweyol/Creole and Dutch will be used in the interfaces to the Clearinghouse.

Organisation of Entities

The ICT Clearinghouse will manage information on the following entities :-

- 1) Projects which are related to enabling ICT4Ds in the Caribbean
- 2) Projects which utilise ICT to achieve the MDGs in the Caribbean
- 3) Documents, research papers, newsletters, etc related to ICT4D
- 4) Market place for new projects to be developed and implemented in the region
- 5) Events – call for proposals, meetings, conferences, exhibitions in the Caribbean, or with relevance to the Caribbean
- 6) Institutions working on ICT4D projects in the Caribbean
- 7) Individuals working on ICT4D projects in the Caribbean
- 8) Success stories /Case Studies (though in a different format) of projects implemented in the region

Proposed Datasets for the specific entities (except Success Stories/Case Studies)

The following data sets are proposed for specific objects in the event that the model of separate datasets for each model is chosen. (The technical specification document will have more details for the database management)

The interface to the site will be available in English, French and Spanish. Content can also be posted in Creole and Dutch.

1. Projects which provide enabling environment for ICT4D

Managing Organisation

Project Name

Project URL

Project Document

Brief Description (objective)

Contact name, email

Contact Phone/Fax

Affiliated Organisations

Funding Agencies

Target Beneficiaries

Start Dates – end dates

Activity type

Project Budget

Current status

Contact: Regular postal address

Country/countries involved

2. Projects which incorporate ICT for achievement of Millenium Development or other development goals

In addition to all of (1) above

Sector(s);

Description of ICT components

Relevant Millenium Development Goal/s

3. Documents, Papers, Resources

URL	(Author's organisation)
Type of Document (Article, Journal, Paper, etc)	Description/Abstract
Title	Language
Title of Journal (If article is part of a journal)	Content types
Author	

Topics/Focuses Document (if necessary, downloaded from/uploaded to a library in the CARISNET site) Publisher	Source , (organization, etc) Date Keywords/descriptors Subject MDG/s if appropriate Focus country/countries if appropriate
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4. Market place for new projects, jobs, etc

Name of Proposing Organisation /Individual

Description

Related documents

URL

Sector

Focus MDG if applicable

Focus country if applicable

5. Events

Title URL Description Keywords, Region/Country of Focus, Organiser,	Type of Institution of the organisers, Name of Co-ordinator, Institution of the Co-ordinator, Main language , Date, Location
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6. Institutions

Name URL, Description, Category/Sector Keywords	Region/Country of focus Name of Coordinator Email address Mail address
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7. People

Name Email Address Work Institution	URL CV/Resume (put as document) Keywords of Interest Geographic area of expertise
Main Languages	Nationality

Database structure design

There are different ways of designing the underlying database structure to support the various entities. There could be a template which has several generic fields, one of which would be “type of content” or “keywords”. Another *model* is to design different formats for each of the entities to support the different fields of information. This will be discussed in detail in the Technical specification. The idea is to provide a friendly user interface which will enable easy input, access and retrieval of information.

D. Linkages with other clearinghouses

Annex A to this document summarises the existing clearinghouses and databases in which people could put information related to the use of ICTs in the development of the Caribbean.

The clearinghouses which have been analysed are :

- Digital Dividend Clearinghouse – <http://www.digitaldividend.org>
- Development Gateway- <http://www.developmentgateway.org>
- MISTICA - <http://funredes.org/mistica/english/clearinghouse> and <http://funredes.org/mistica/metastitio/>
- Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA) Projects Database - http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/proy_bsq.php?lang=eng
http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/proy_bsq.php?lang=spa&o=NA
http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/proy_bsq.php?lang=fra&o=NA
http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/proy_bsq.php?lang=por&o=NA
- Global Knowledge Partnership – Latin America & the Caribbean database of ICT4D institutions - <http://gkplac.org>
- ECLAC/CEPAL database – <http://www.cepal.org>
- Wikipedia – <http://www.wikipedia.org> – The wikipedia does not store information as in the other databases, but provides a resource to connect information about development projects in the region.

Annex A to this document has the details of the clearinghouses.

Their functionality is outlined below.

Objects	Digital Dividend	Development Gateway	MISTICA	GKPLA C	ICA	ECLAC
Projects	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Documents	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Ideas for new projects	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Events	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Institutions	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Individuals	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Multiple Languages	No	Yes	Mostly Spanish	Yes	Yes	Yes

None of these clearinghouses suggest that they will export data to other clearinghouse. The managers of the MISTICA clearinghouse and the GKPLAC database have indicated that they could share data with the CIVIC clearinghouse. Requests to the Digital Dividends, ICA and Development Gateway have gone unanswered.

The managers of the ECLAC database welcome new content. The Wikipedia allows information to be added by users.

AIDA/Development Gateway has a procedure to harvest data.

The discussions on interconnectivity will resume when the decision is made on the final database design. At the minimum, the CIVIC Clearinghouse will provide links to other databases so users could add their content in them.

Annex A - Summary of existing Clearinghouses which manage information about the use of ICT in development

Introduction

The CIVIC Clearinghouse will manage information about the use of ICT in the development of the Caribbean region. The purpose of this document is to present the design and associated procedures of the various clearinghouses, and to make recommendations for interconnectivity where relevant. The main features of the clearinghouses which are analysed are that registered users can add information, while any user can access the information, at no cost.

This document will be updated when the responses to the questionnaire have been received.

Framework for analysis

Each clearinghouse/database is analysed by the following characteristics :-

- 1) Owners/Managers
- 2) Objective of database/clearinghouse
- 3) Kind of content managed, available languages, and associated data fields
- 4) Amount of information on ICT in the Caribbean as at June 2005
- 5) Procedures for adding and removing content

The clearinghouses which will be analysed are :-

- A. Digital Dividend Clearinghouse
- B. MISTICA
- C. Development Gateway
- D. Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA)
- E. Global Knowledge Partnership – Latin America and the Caribbean
- F. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

A. Digital Dividend Clearinghouse – <http://www.digitaldividend.org>

Owners/Managers

The Digital Dividend Clearinghouse is managed by the World Resources Institute (<http://www.wri.org>)

Objective of Clearinghouse

“The Digital Dividend Clearinghouse is an innovative online platform tracking social enterprises that use ICTs to deliver critical tools and services to underserved communities in developing countries. Its twin goals are 1) to serve as a knowledgebase for those

interested in developing sustainable business models to bridge the global digital divide, and 2) to facilitate networking among those stakeholders.

The Digital Dividend clearinghouse accepts projects which are “Digital dividend” initiatives, ie, IT-based or enabled projects geared towards communities at the bottom of the economic pyramid or that are otherwise underserved - projects, such as providing connectivity, services, or enabling digital tools, which have potentially significant social, economic, or environmental benefits.”

Kind of Content/languages/datasets.

The Digital Dividend Clearinghouse keeps information on projects and on ideas for new projects. The main language appears to be English

The following data are stored for projects:

Managing Organisation

Project Name

Project URL

Brief Description

Contact name, email

Contact Phone/Fax

Number of users

Affiliated Organisations

Funding Agencies

Start Dates

Activity type

Sector

Project Needs

The following data are stored for Ideas :

Organisation

Description

Documents

URL

Amount of Information on Caribbean in June 2005

There is a listing of 34 projects for the Caribbean.

Procedures for Adding content

Users can register and add content for projects and ideas for new projects. The Digital Dividend organisation has editors which will assess the inputs and who finally approve the postings.

B. MISTICA Clearinghouse – <http://funredes.org/mistica/english/clearinghouse>
and <http://funredes.org/mistica/metastio/>

Owners/Managers

The MISTICA clearinghouse is a part of the MISTICA project.

Objective of database/clearinghouse

The objective of the MISTICA clearinghouse is to provide organised access to information available on the Internet about the social impact of ICTs in Latin America and the Caribbean . This includes information about the Information Society in the region.

Kind of content managed, available languages, and associated data fields

The interface to the Clearinghouse is currently in Spanish. The following types of objects are available for reference :-

Bibliografía (Bibliography), Meta (I am not sure what this one is), Persona (People), Institución (Institution), Proyecto (Project), Evento (Events)
are stored in the MISTICA clearinghouse. The data on each object is listed below.

Datum	Bibliografía (Bibliography)	Meta (?)	Institución (Institution)	Proyecto (Project)
Title/Name	X	X	X	x
URL	X	X	X	x
Description	X	X	X	x
MainTheme	X	X	X	x
Transversal Theme	X	X	X	x
Keywords	X	X	X	x
Region of focus	X	X	X	x
Coordinating Institution	x (of author)	X	-	x
Collaborating Institutions	-	-	-	x
Funding institutions	-	-	-	x
Type	-	-	-	x
Start Date (date of publication)	-	X	-	x
End Date	-	-	-	x

Language	X	X	-	x
Principal author/director	X	X	X	-
Editor	X	X	-	-
Email address	-	-	X	-
Mailing address	-	-	X	-

For People

Name, email, address, Work institution, Membership in Mistica, URL, Description, Main themes, Cross Themes, Keywords, Region of Focus, main languages

For Events

Title, URL, URL of the products, Description, main theme, Cross Themes, keywords, Region of Focus, Organiser, type of institution of the organisers, co-ordinator, Institution of the co-ordinator, date of publication, main language

Amount of information on ICT in the Caribbean as at June 2005

There were 3 entries for the Caribbean .

Procedures for adding and removing content

Registered users can suggest content which is edited for application. Users can add keywords and categories.

C. Development Gateway – <http://www.developmentgateway.org>

The data base is AIDA .

Owners/Managers

The Development Gateway is hosted by the Development Gateway Foundation and there are several Country Gateways which provide information in a variety of languages and on different topics related to development, including ICT.

Objectives of the Clearinghouse/Database

To share information and knowledge for development

Kind of content managed, available languages, and associated data fields

There are postings in several languages.

URL

Title

Description

Language

Content types (Users could select more than one from a range of about 40 types)

Topics/Focuses (Users could categorise content in more than one Topic/Focus area)
Regions/Countries (Users could select more than one)

The associated AiDA (Accessible information on Development Activities) - <http://aida.developmentgateway.org/> provides information on ICT projects which are provided by OECD and other donor countries. There are mechanisms to provide information to the AIDA database.

Amount of information on ICT in the Caribbean as at June 2005

There is some amount of information available on larger projects and resources within the region.

Procedures for adding and removing content

Registered users can post information which is edited by category editors. Requests to delete information are made to the editors.

D. Institute for the Connectivity in the Americas --

http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/proy_bsq.php?lang=eng
http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/proy_bsq.php?lang=spa&o=NA
http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/proy_bsq.php?lang=fra&o=NA
http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/proy_bsq.php?lang=por&o=NA

Owner/Manager

This projects database is managed by ICA.

Objectives of Database/Clearinghouse

This database aims to provide information about ICT projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, and delivers content in the four more spoken languages in the region (Spanish, English, French and Portuguese).

Kind of Content/Languages/Data set

The database stores the following information on projects.

Project Name
Type
Country/Region
Start Dates
End Date
Organisations
Contact Name

Email
Phone Number
Mailing address
Website
Category (pre selected)
Abstract
Funding Sources

All project summaries are available in four languages.
Amount of Information on the Caribbean at June 2005
A simple search returned about 60 projects for the Caribbean region.

Procedures to add Content

There is an online questionnaire
http://www.icamericas.net/icadoce/pry_nvo.php?lang=eng&o=NA (in four languages)
through which users can submit project information, which is later indexed in thematic categories and subcategories and entered into the database by ICA staff.

E. GKPLAC

The Global Knowledge Partnership –Latin American & Caribbean Directory at
<http://gkplac.org>

Owner/Manager

The site was developed by the Global Knowledge Partnership and is managed by a consortium of groups from Latin America & Caribbean

Objectives of Database/Clearinghouse

This database aims to provide information about organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean which work in ICT4D

Kind of Content/Languages/Data set

The database stores the following information on Institutions .
General Information (contact details, etc)
Projects
Services
Contact details for co-ordinator

The interface is available in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Data is only available in the language in which it is input.

Amount of Information on the Caribbean at June 2005

A simple search returned four institutions in the Caribbean region

Procedures to add Content

Users could register and be given a password. There is an extensive online form through which users could enter data which is immediately available. There is no moderation of the posts.

F. Economic Commission for Latin America & the Caribbean (<http://www.cepal.org> and the Caribbean Sub Committee <http://www.eclacpos.org>

Owners/Managers

The managers of the databases are the staff of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Caribbean Sub-Regional Headquarters based in Port of Spain.

Objective of database/clearing house

The databases contain publications or links and references to publications which are produced by ECLAC or the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee.

Kind of content managed, available languages, and associated data fields

The content on the ECLAC website is available through Spanish, English, French and Portuguese interfaces. The ECLAC POS site is available in English. There are no specific data sets. The catalog meta data is the standard for reference to retrieve publications from the Libraries in Santiago Chile .

Amount of information on ICT in the Caribbean as at June 2005

A simple search of ICT in the website revealed about 35 documents which were developed by the UN. Documents from other sources are not posted on the website.

Procedures for adding and removing content

Content is added and deleted by staff of ECLAC.

Annex B – List of CIVIC members who gave feedback on the database structure

Name	Email	Country/Organisation	Willing to work on data gathering
Taran Rampersaud	cnd@knowprose.com	Trinidad/Other	Not indicated
Maritza Hee Houg	heehoung@tstt.net.tt	Trinidad	Not indicated
Nancy George	ngeorge@jamweb.net	Jamaica -	Yes
Hilkiah Lavinier	hilkiah@yahoo.com or hilkiah.lavinier@gmail.com	Dominica	Yes
Deirdre Williams	dwilliams@salcc.edu.lc	St Lucia	Yes
Reina Raveles	reinaraveles@yahoo.com	Suriname	Yes

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