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DigiSkills: Network for the enhancement of digital competence skills

D4.1 "Implementation and Validation Plan"

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Lead Participant:	Ellinogermaniki Agogi
Authors:	Argiris Tzikopoulos (EA)
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0.1. About this document

The aim of this document is to explain the DigiSkills implementation process. More specifically, the goal is to apply and test the DigiSkills collected good practices through a wide range of experimentation of activities during the implementation period. Through the activities to be carried out in this process, the participating teachers will evaluate the collected best practices and indicate the more effective approaches, using pre-selected indicators. Those best practices to stand out shall be used as the basis for various activities of local, national and transnational character, such as contests and training sessions, as well as in other parallel events. The goal is to directly engage teachers in the specific implementation actions; overall, the implementation phase is divided in two main sub-phases (A and B). The number of participants to be reached in each phase and in each country is explicitly documented. Also, a set of different types of activities is defined; these can be used by the partners as a guide towards the organization of the implementation actions and the engagement of the pre-defined number of participants. This document aims to identify the work plan, the time schedule and the expected outcomes.

0.2. Version

Version	Date / Contributor	Summary of Changes
0.1	September 10, 2013; Argiris Tzikopoulos,	First draft version
0.2	October 15, 2013; Argiris Tzikopoulos	Initial version for partners' input
0.5	October 19, 2013, DigiSkills Consortium	Partners feedback
1.0	November 25, 2013; Argiris Tzikopoulos	Final version


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0.3. Table of contents


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1. Introduction

1.1. Scope

This deliverable presents the design and specification of the implementation action plan.

1.2. Audience

This report is addressed to all the consortium partners.

1.3. Structure

Chapter 1: Contains an overview of this document, providing its scope, the definitions used and its structure.

Chapter 2: describes the objectives of the implementation process objectives of the DigiSkills project.

Chapter 3: provides a short description of the implementation activities of the DigiSkills project, on a local, national and international level.

Chapter 4: focuses on the time plan of the implementation activities of the DigiSkills project, offering an overview of the teachers' numbers to be reached in each country.

Chapter 5: explains the purposes, the structure and the making of the implementation report.

2. Objectives

2.1. Project Justification

The consortium, by building on the extended expertise of its members in the field, will implement a foresight process to map and through consecutive cycles of reflection to propose effective methods that will support the modernisation of SE, HE and AE and the development of teachers' and students' digital competencies, and will stimulate demand according to Action 68 of the Digital Agenda for Europe. The project team will review scientific evidence from Europe and beyond and educational stakeholders' views and aspirations to identify and analyse the emerging trends, opportunities and challenges in education and eLearning, that will act as the most significant drivers of the modernization of the SE, HE and AE pedagogy in the mid-term future. The project team will provide the widest and most inclusive understanding and framework for the subsequent stage of experimental fieldwork. The aim of the DigiSkills network is to help learning communities acquire and reinforce such skills and knowledge so that they make best use of the new opportunities offered by the digital content that is available on the web. The project aims to achieve that through the collection, implementation and testing of a series of participatory engagement activities that will improve the uptake, sharing and reuse of innovative teaching and learning practices.

ICT is present in different teaching and learning environments, both as access stations to networks, and as tools for information or data analysis and processing. ICT starts being used in broadly common ways across disciplines to maximise learning outcomes (tools for analysis, development and processing), and for specific roles in the learning process. ICT also encourages the development of competences and the application of relevant knowledge in simulated situations, while at other times it permits assessments, or self-evaluations, to diagnose aptitudes. ICT also provides efficient tools for drawing up reports, portfolios and presentations of research results and projects, etc. Students and teachers are able to communicate with their peers, have access to quality digital databases and archives, and publish in digital educational academic magazines. Working networks - with other education institutions and research centres- are becoming the norm in many cases. In this context, eLearning could play an important role in supporting communications and knowledge management through shared databases, access to unique digital educational resources and archives, advanced instruments and tools.

In general, the project aims to improve SE, HE and AE teachers practice in all areas of their work, combining ICT skills with innovations in pedagogy, curriculum, and institution organisation. It is also aimed at SE, HE and AE teachers' use of ICT skills and resources to improve their teaching, to collaborate with colleagues, and perhaps

ultimately to become innovation leaders in their institutions. In addition, train technically competent staff (such as ICT personnel or teachers of Informatics) about the ways they can select some of the existing, easy-to-use, and free-of-cost software tools that various organisations around Europe offer, in order to set up their own learning tools (on their institution or regional level) and to interconnect it with existing infrastructures. The overall objective of the project is not only to improve classroom practice, but also to both raise the awareness of educational community across Europe on the need for innovative teaching and learning practices and learning to learn skills. The innovation of the proposed network lies within the connection of best practices from various European countries on school/universities education and training, open to wide teacher and students communities who will then effectively provide digital competencies.

2.2. Project Objectives

DigiSkills aims to serve as an accelerator of the sharing, adoption, usage, and re-purposing of the already rich existing eLearning resources. First of all, it will demonstrate ways to involve SE, HE and AE communities in innovative teaching and learning practices through the effective use of eLearning resources. It will promote community building between numerous educational institutions of Europe and empower them to use, share and exploit unique resources from a wealth of educational repositories, within meaningful educational activities. In addition, it will demonstrate the potential of eLearning resources to meet the educational and quality needs of these communities, supported by DigiSkills Inventory a social platform where teachers, students, parents and other community members will be able to discover, acquire, discuss and adapt eLearning resources on their topics of interest and also use e-assessment tolls. Finally, it will assess the impact and document the whole process into a DigiSkills Best Practice Guidelines that will include guidelines for the design and implementation of effective resource-based educational activities that could act as a reference to be adopted by stakeholders in education.

Its basic aims can be summarized in the following:

First, to develop a detailed and systematic methodology to define the criteria for identifying the best practices (as identified in each partner) and then operate as the frame for the collection and formation of exceptional teaching and learning approaches with the view to provide/collect innovative teaching and learning practices.

Second, to design and develop a web-based Inventory, which will include a collection and categorization of best practices that can support learning community and where users

will be able to find, exchange and adapt innovative teaching and learning practices and exchange ideas and best practices (termed as the DigiSkills Inventory).

Third to establish a constantly-expanding network of SE, HE and AE communities informed on the necessity of innovative teaching and learning practices and trained in effective use of ICT in teaching. This network shall operate in an independent way, with teachers supplying the educational material and ultimately being responsible for the preservation and further enhancement of the inventory and through Web2.0-based approaches and tools.

Fourth, to collect and develop innovative, relevant and multilingual content that will support the proposed approach, which will be described and stored (in the form of learning objects) in the Inventory's repository of content.

Fifth, to develop ICT literacy skills and ensure the access to and use of innovative teaching and learning practices by the users under the umbrella of community building. Community building is critical component that will enable their success in learning programs by reducing isolation, mentoring success, transforming experiences of exclusion to ones of inclusion, offering encouragement and hope, and fostering group dialogue and peer learning from secondary to higher and adult education communities.

Additionally, to carry out a set of pilot sessions with a number of representative user groups (teachers, students, parents, policy makers, adults returning to higher education, learners entering the workplace) in order to enrich/ localize/ adapt content to current needs and evaluate the proposed approach.

Finally, to perform an extended dissemination and validation of the project outcomes in a wide network across Europe, and to circulate effective teaching methods through networking with relevant projects, networks and initiatives. This way, it will be certified that the collective knowledge on innovative teaching and learning practices will be used after the 3-year circle of DigiSkills. The "Guide of Good Practice", to be composed for this network, supports the deployment of ICT educational content through constantly increasing access and re-usability of related resources, tools and lessons (WP7). This will produce a set of policy recommendations, which will be deployed at regional, national and transnational level (i.e. EU agencies, National Governments and Administration)..

3. Implementation Activities

In the framework of the proposed project a very specific set of teachers' training activities will be implemented in the DigiSkills participating European countries in school environments, in science and environmental education centres as well as in teachers' training centres. These activities are based in successful initiatives that have proven their effectiveness in developing practitioners of ICT. The proposed implementation approach is the result of combing research, practitioner experience, passion about ICT use in education and a range of strategies chosen and applied per each case based on the particular needs, unique goals, strengths, resources, barriers and specifications. Pursuing maximum efficiency of the DigiSkills implementation process, these training programmes resort to a blended learning delivery model. This is arguably the optimal model for professional development since it brings together an ideal balance of flexibility and competence. The implementation activities that will be realized provide an opportunity for teachers to understand the implications for themselves and for their learners in the classroom for the adoption and adaption of ICT-based approaches for applying environmental teaching models. To ensure high quality and quantity of implementation activities, all consortium members will work together. Besides, although environmental issues are of global interest, the implementation of related educational actions is a complicated and multivariate issue. However, special care has to be taken to ensure that for the pre-specified local priorities, the prescribed teaching methods, the tools and the required experimental infrastructure exist. Today, even within the EU, great regional disparities continue to exist due to economic, historical, ethnic and religious factors. It is clear that addressing all countries and regions through a single paradigm would be oversimplifying and counterproductive. Hence, a careful consideration of the local in which the implementation actions are to be applied should be taken care of. For this purpose, the DigiSkills partners have worked together to give an overview of the role of new pedagogies and technology in the educational curricula of their countries of origin, of education. These findings are presented in the D2.3.

The special conditions and identified needs that apply in each participating country will define the modus operandi of each consortium member's implementation plan. This regards the educational scenarios to be implemented; more specifically, each partner has collected the requirements and views of the respective country's teachers. These also include a set of good and effective practices. In addition to that, each partner may have access to good practices developed in the past, which can be accordingly updated and used. Therefore, each partner is expected to address their country's teacher needs and requirements by offering them access to relevant training and material. That said, the numbers of teachers to be trained in each country are explicitly defined and ought to be

met, through a combination of the following defined activities. For more information on the identified good practices in each country please consult D2.5.

In addition to that, the institution responsible for the overview of the implementation process will be also responsible for the coordination of all implementation activities, for the close cooperation with the Quality Assurance Manager to measure the qualitative aspects of the Implementation activities, as well as with the Dissemination and Exploitation Managers for the proper involvement of the interested associated partners and third parties in the project activities. The collaboration with the associated partners' network is crucial, as they can act as mediators disseminating the DigiSkills approach. In addition to the central coordination of all implementation activities by the Implementation process coordinator, one organization per country will be responsible for the localization and the local management of project resources and activities, also carried out by the other partners in the same country. This plan for implementation of the DigiSkills project serves as an invitation to the broad environment teacher community to participate. The implementation activities are organized in three main categories depending on their scale: local educational activities, national educational activities and international (large scale) educational activities. There is an additional category of activities; that of other actions, that are to be organized in parallel with the two main implementation phases. This document serves as a practical guide of action for the whole period of large scale pilot implementation on the field.

Overall, the majority of the DigiSkills implementation activities are to be carried over an eight-month period, divided in two main training phases that are to be enriched with a set of additional activities. More specifically, a partner from each participating country will organize two experimentation actions, each one corresponding to one of the two separate phases. During Phase A, the participating teachers are expected to familiarize themselves with the concept of good practices and the suitable evaluation process. This way, they will be prepared to test and evaluate the collected good practices. Feedback on the good practices will be collected and shall lead in the selection of those practices that stand out. Regarding implementation Phase B, the network of teachers that have participated in Phase A and more teachers from other partners and associated partners networks, will gather in a new round of activities to select the most outstanding best practices that will be circulated by DigiSkills at the end of the 3-year cycle of work. Overall, approximately 1800 teachers are expected to participate in the training/implementation activities of both phases A and B. Overall, a pre-specified number of teachers will be engaged in each of the participating countries.

3.1.1. Local Level Implementation Activities

Each of the DigiSkills partners was asked to provide feedback on the use of teaching methods in their country, on education and of the use of ICT-tools. This input was put in one collective document that serves as a map of the localized needs of the DigiSkills partners. It is up to this that specialized training activities will be organized in each participating country, whether nationally or locally. What would be suggested in this point is that all partners try to achieve collaboration with the Ministries of Education to ensure the maximum numbers of participants, and also to verify that the proposed DigiSKills activities meet the local/national objectives. The local implementation activities planned include:

a) Demonstrations and training activities in schools / training centers: during these activities, teachers will have the opportunity to get familiarized with the concept of good practices and with specific exceptional educational scenarios, in order to select the most outstanding best practices that will be circulated during the third year. They will also exchange ideas and experiences with experts and teacher trainers.
b) Workshops: the workshops are crafted to provide powerful and transformative experiences by immersing participants in the process of ICT use for promoting learning. A primary focus of the facilitator's work will be to use hands-on investigation, reflection, and group discussion to foster an understanding of the essential features and structure of ICT in education, which participants can take back and share with colleagues in their schools and projects. These experiences serve as a framework for designing strategies that can support the creation of classroom environments for students' based activities.

3.1.2. National Level Implementation Activities

The national training activities to be organised will include:

a) National workshops taking the demonstrations, training activities and workshops, on a national level; they will be open to teachers, experts, career counsellors and educators.

3.1.3. International Level Implementation Activities

The international level educational activities that are planned by the DigiSkills consortium to take place over the life of the project can be classified into the following major types:

i. one transnational webinar to ensure the results and activities of the work group reach an audience beyond that of the network partners. This webinar is to take place in middle time of implementation phase so as to enable participation of all participants,
ii. international workshops and training schools, that will focus on the selection, adaptation and implementation of best practices in formal contexts,
iii. Contests for teachers that will promote the use of new approaches in the classroom for teaching with use of technology. It is expected that at least one contest on the best activities will be organized (during the school year 2014-2015) in the participating countries by the partner institutions. Alternatively, each partner can collaborate with an institution that is already holding such a national contest, using and/or expanding the DigiSkills associated partners' network. In order to ensure the large participation of teachers, preliminary planning steps need to be taken so that the structure of the contests can be developed and fully formulated through vital collaborations with other key organizations such as for example the Ministries of Education, Science Centers & Education Centres,
iv. a transnational workshop, indicating the end of second year and addressed to teachers, partners and affiliated partners, that will constitute the final evaluation stage of the selected best practices and motivating the participating teachers will be able to contribute their own good practices,
v. other special days targeting teachers of secondary education (primarily).

3.1.4. International Workshops and Training Schools

Apart from and parallel with the implementation activities (local and national), the consortium will also organize a series of other events. These events can be in the form of contests, workshops, online seminars, training schools. The eligible candidates for participating in these events are:

a) school education staff (teaching and nonteaching) including teachers, head teachers, school managerial staff, counsellors or career advisors, and more,
b) staff working in any sector of adult education, including teachers/trainers in adult education and the trainers of such teachers/trainers, heads and managerial staff of organisations providing adult learning opportunities, counsellors or career advisors, staff in local/regional authorities dealing with adult education, other education staff at the discretion of national authorities.

To maximize attendance at the training activity it is important that the objectives and methodology sections of the training description make clear how the training is targeted towards these groups.


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4. Implementation Report

The implementation report will draw together data from work package partners and from all associate partners that participated in the implementation plan. The report will draw on the following:
Data gathered from the Experimentation of Good Practices Data gathered from the Webinar Simple case study reports based on a template Data gathered from the Activities and Events The results of the Validation Phase – Merge of Good Practices Questionnaires designed specifically to identify lessons learnt.
To give a more specific and holistic overview of the completed DigiSKills activities, the implementation report will include:

a) Reporting on Implementation Activities (Local and National Level): This reporting will document the Implementation Activities at local level. Each facilitator of the implementation action is expected to provide information about the activity to the Implementation process coordinator (Ellinogermaniki Agogi). This information will be collected/documented in two ways: first by completing a simple form (template) where the facilitator must indicate basic information about the activity such as the date, location, number of participants, mailing list and type of activity (teachers training, workshop, contest etc.) and secondly by composing a small-sized report and attaching all relevant material (dissemination material handed to participants, educational material produced specifically for the activity, photos and/or videos taken during the event) in a folder on the BSCW server.

b) Reporting on Implementation Activities (International Level): This reporting will document the Implementation Activities at international level. Every partner involved in the implementation process of an international activity is expected to contribute to this report. The leading part for forming these reports (along with the final editing) is a responsibility shared between mainly of the implementation process coordinator and the partner for delivering the Interim & Final reports (that is Ellinogermaniki Agogi).

For the preparation of the Implementation report, the implementation process coordinator will work closely with the evaluation and quality assurance coordinator, to ensure that all aspects have been appropriately covered, and also to avoid overlapping of the Implementation report and of the Implementation evaluation reports.


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5. Workshop Reporting Template

Each workshop organizer will summarize the workshop results into a report that will be later integrated into the final deliverable. This report should contain the following information:

Workshop Title:	
Organizing Partner	Add name of the organizing partner
Aim	Add the aim of the Workshop
Venue	Add Place, City and Country
Date	Add date of the workshop
Participants	Add number of participants and information for them (e.g. 9 Teachers: 5 Physics, 4 Music Teachers)
Duration	Add duration time of the workshop
Activities	Add what activities took place and the workshop program
General comments	This should provide the detail on all the issues that were raised in the workshop and the general consensus of opinion. It should also provide useful quotes that were made by the participants (3 to 4 pages).
Summary	Summarize all relevant and critical issues discussed with the participants (1 page)
Photos	Add 5-6 photos from the workshop

Annexes	Add any extra information that should be collected