

COMMUNITY INFORMATICS

A special area of technologies application and interest to AISE is Community Informatics (CI).

Community Informatics encompasses the social appropriation of information and communication technologies for local benefit, self determination and social inclusion in decision making.
(Statement from the Community Informatics Research Network (www.ciresearch.net))

CI is the application of information and communications technologies:

- To enable communities to introduce processes to their objectives and overcome "digital divides", and ensure "wiring" for greater connectivity and possible outreach to distant communities and regions; and
- To find new ways of using the connectivity of the Internet to create value and achieve economic, social/cultural and environmental outcomes for local communities.

Why does AISE regard CI as an important part of its activities? CI is seen as an important means of:

- Serving community needs which include:
 - The need to enhance and *develop community and social enterprise development processes* using Information Society Technologies (ISTs);
 - The need for *access to technical training* and consequent greater usability of a chosen technology application in a community;
 - The need for greater local *sustainability* of social enterprises;
 - The recognition that access is about entry but also *access throughout the whole period of development* of an enterprise initiative.
 - Acknowledgement that *virtual and spatial communities can develop together* in supporting community social objectives and economic outcomes.
- Designing ways of using ISTs to enhance the quality and coverage of social enterprise services for social entrepreneurs and their communities.
- Building bridges across the 'Digital Divide' to narrow the difference between rural and urban communities;
- Developing sustainable 'models' for community public space on the Internet;
- Developing strategies and techniques for the introduction of local E-Commerce;
- Creating local, national, and global democratic practices in a world of Electronic Citizenship;
- Using the Net to support development of developing world countries; and
- Supporting communities using the Net to be producers as well as consumers to be contributors as well as consumers of global culture.