

An Evaluation of the Computers in Homes (CiH) Programme in Porirua

Tony Assadi

Whitireia NZ

Tony.assadi@whitireia.ac.nz

ABSTRACT

Computers in Homes Porirua (CiH) operate in conjunction with the National Computers in Homes project and under E-Learning Porirua Trust. It offers one of the projects funded by the 2020 Communications Trust with the aim to provide leadership in ICT and deliver programmes that address issues of digital literacy, skills and inclusion in ICT. The CiH programme provides recycled computers and six months free Internet access to families who are socially and economically disadvantaged. They are also provided with a 10-week training course which is operated in schools and community centers. This research aims to evaluate the impact of the CiH programme in Porirua using semi-structured interviews with graduates and their families. These interviews will be undertaken after the end of the six month free Internet access period, which is provided to CiH students and their households upon graduation. This poster is the preliminary publication for this research before the commencement of data collection phase. The aim of this poster is to help initiate dialog and discussions with others in the research community.

Keywords

Digital Divide, Digital Literacy and Community Initiatives in low Decile Communities

1. INTRODUCTION

Computers and the Internet have had a significant impact on our life in recent years and have influenced the way in which we live and process information today. We use computers and the Internet to manage our everyday activities, our social and business interactions, educational and professional advancement, health, travel and communications at many levels.

Over recent years there has been an emphasis in New Zealand on making the internet accessible to as many people as possible through a Digital Strategy that originated in the early 2000s. With the support of the New Zealand government, community initiatives have been developed throughout the country to help reduce the gap in ICT for communities that may be disadvantaged.

The Computers in Homes (CiH) Programme is one initiative offering a free home internet scheme in New Zealand. CiH, launched in New Zealand with Ministry of Education funding as a pilot in 2000, is a partnership between public and private sectors to refurbish computers donated by private organisations, offer them to schools in low decile communities, and guide the schools in distributing them to families most in need, with training and support.

This preliminary study aims to expand on the existing research by looking at post-graduation issues and the support provided to students after completing the CiH programme in Porirua. This study is particularly focused on finding out if, what and how graduates and their family are using the computer and the internet after free internet access

stops. This will help to extend the body of knowledge in current research and to establish how the digital divide can impact on the individual and community ICT capabilities.

2. Methodology

Semi-structured, face to face and phone interviews will be undertaken with participants. An interview sheet is designed and will be used as a guide. A convenience sample will be used. Potential participants will be contacted by telephone and asked whether they would be willing to take part.

3. Results (or Findings)

This research is current in literature review and data collection phase. It is anticipated that up to 30 graduates will be interviewed, selected from a population of 150 graduates. Non-probability purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) will be used in this study to help select cases that will best enable the research questions to be answered and thus meet the study objectives.

4. Conclusion

The digital divide is no longer a simple divide in the access to technological resources, but a multidimensional problem that includes a set of complex factors such as resources, gender, income etc. Although several case studies and project evaluations have been conducted related to similar projects and access to computers in New Zealand (Craig, 2010; Craig & Williams, 2011; Crump, 2004; Crump & Logan, 2008), the extent of long term ICT uptake for CiH graduates and their families in Porirua is still not clear.

Outcome from this study will specifically apply to the Porirua context. This study will serve as an important tool to test the validity of findings, using data and information that is specific to CiH in Porirua by integrating the unique requirements for learners in the Porirua community that participated in the CiH Programme. This could also be used in other parts of the country.

5. References

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