

European Congress on E-Inclusion: ECEI09   
**'Technology and Beyond'**  
**in Public Libraries**  
Brussels, 22-23 October 2009



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# Congress Report

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27 OCTOBER 2009

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE CONGRESS

The first European Congress on E-Inclusion 2009 ([ECEI09](#)) was held at the Flemish Parliament in association with the Flanders Government, [the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [Bibnet](#) and the [NAPLE Forum](#). Over 200 delegates attended covering public, NGO, academic and private sectors with delegates from public policy, technology procurement, library services, delivery partners and technologists from across Europe, together with champions of the library sector. Twenty-four European countries were represented.

The Congress provided a two-day platform to raise the profile of European public libraries as essential components leading the development of the European Information Society, both as places where citizens can learn about and use the technology, but also as agents developing and managing knowledge services accessible and relevant to all citizens.

The programme addressed the future of public libraries within an ever expanding digital environment, looking at new roles and challenges for libraries, and at the kind of technology, services and investments needed to build and sustain libraries that will make the Information Society accessible to all. Healthy and empowered communities will need citizens who have the competence and confidence to use ICT tools to access and engage with public services. This will be essential for full participation in society. In many countries public libraries are already becoming vital bridges between citizens, knowledge and information. The Congress explored how these roles can be developed and promoted across Europe for the benefit of all; how public libraries are able to respond to the changing public needs and behaviours and how Information Society services can best be developed in the age of Google and Web 2.0.

### **Delegates were invited to:**

- Explore the role that public libraries should play in delivering access to technology and the 'Information Society' to the EU's communities
- Debate the role of technology and other services being used in public libraries to promote greater accessibility and inclusion to services
- Learn about the evaluation work required to demonstrate the impact of investment decisions
- Consider how public libraries can respond to the changing public needs and behaviours and how library information services can best be developed in the age of Google and Web 2.0
- Understand how public libraries can actively support European policy and E-inclusion agendas and
- Network and learn from best practice

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**THURSDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER**

Congress Chair: Dr Bob McKee, Chief Executive, CILIP

### **PLENARY SESSION 1: SETTING THE SCENE**

**Joke Schauvliege**, the Flemish Minister for Environment, Nature and Culture, opened the Congress with a forceful speech addressing many of the issues at the heart of the Congress agenda. She stressed the commitment of the Flanders Government to the crucial role of public libraries in the developing information society and the need to ensure that new technologies such as the Internet and e-books are at the core of public library services. However, just as television did not lead to the death of radio, so the right balance will need to be found between the new media and the book. The Minister also underlined the importance of holding an international debate so that a truly European information society can develop. Finally, she reminded delegates that the future of libraries will continue to depend on people as much as it will on technological innovation. Librarians must continue to “...*turn the library into a warm and welcoming place where information and stories intertwine.*”

**Chris Batt** explained how the Congress offered new opportunities to explore the future of public libraries and technology. First, an international Congress provided a wider range of experience than past conferences addressing technical challenges and solutions. Second, the emphasis of moving ‘beyond’ the application of technology recognised that the future value of public libraries depends on understanding citizens’ changing needs, building relationships with other institutions and gaining new status in information society policy. Third that inclusion is, again, much more than just providing technology for users. The value chain must extend from the user to the online content. He set these issues in a short review of developments in the UK across the past 25 years (available on the Congress website). He said that as the Internet reached further into the lives of citizens, librarians must become strategists rather than technicians: developing a broader, longer-term vision.

**Jessica Dorr** (Senior Programme Officer, Global Libraries, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) described the background to and the current activities of the Global Libraries programme. Begun as a mechanism to support the development of public libraries in the United States, it has extended into a programme delivered now in continents and countries around the world. A range of examples were provided showing how the creation of public library learning centres has helped the transformation of people’s lives and this was demonstrated clearly in a short movie – Strong Libraries Build Strong Communities – based around the Global Libraries programme in Latvia.

**Barbro Wigell-Ryynänen** (Ministry of Education, Finland and NAPLE Board member) and **Gerald Leitner** (Secretary General, Bucherverband Österreichs and President of EBLIDA) updated the Congress on the background to and outcomes of the joint conference held in Vienna in May 2009. NAPLE has been exploring the possibility of a European White Paper on public libraries, EBLIDA looking particularly at the urgent need to address a range of copyright issues relevant to public libraries. These include the harmonisation of copyright across Europe and how best to deal with orphan works. The May 2009 conference examined these issues with an international audience and concluded with the launch of the [Vienna Declaration](#) that made four recommendations to strengthen the role of public libraries in Europe: i) the European Commission to prioritise a White Paper – Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society; ii) the Commission to create a European Knowledge Centre for public libraries to be based at EBLIDA; iii) the Commission to fund projects to develop the European public library infrastructure; and iv) abolish copyright barriers in support of the creation of the

European knowledge society, considering the meaningful rights of rights holders, while allowing reasonable exceptions for the work of libraries.

## PLENARY SESSION 2: PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

**Professor David Nicholas** (Director, School of Information Studies, University College London) reported on the wide range of research undertaken on Internet user behaviour by [CIBER](#). A very large database has been created on how users behave in Cyberspace using deep web analysis. Behaviour paradigms are changing as more and more people use the Internet and social networking. Librarians need to recognise that 'the future is now'. SMS is now a major tool for communication and information exchange and simply counting web visits is frequently no indicator of user popularity. Study of library websites has shown that up to 90% of visits can be from robots rather than information-seeking humans! The research has produced other facts that challenge current perceptions. For example, while there may be a belief that the Internet is most popular with younger people, one of the largest user groups of Google is academic historians. Furthermore, attention spans are shrinking. Google engenders 'smash and grab' with power browsing as the norm – "*why read a book when there is an abstract?*" Librarians will need to understand the wisdom of the crowd and find ways of raising the brand value of their services.

**Jan Braeckman** (Director, [Bibnet](#)) described the debate on the future role of public libraries that Bibnet is now leading. Media are changing, peoples behaviours are changing and that means public libraries must respond. There remains inequality of domestic access to the Internet that must be overcome, but at the same time the Internet is becoming "...*the place to hang out*" for many social groups. Lanham's work (LANHAM, J. The Economics of Attention) suggests that the core mission of the public library should be giving access to knowledge. This mission must correct market failure and support an inclusive society through providing access to diverse collections of knowledge. The public library provides an environment that is symbolic of community need to meet and connect. In consequence public libraries have to change their strategies, offering accessible technology, building competencies and skills, partnering with education services to build information literacy and mobilising individuals and communities. Librarians must become experts in working with people.

**Luca Martinelli** (Policy Officer, Information Society and Media, European Commission). [Europeana](#) is a major component of the i2010 Digital Libraries Initiative. Its scope, embracing many different types of institution, makes it much more than just a digital collection of library resources. The EDL Foundation in The Hague supervises Europeana. The Commission has recently issued [consultation documents](#) on the next steps for Europeana and on copyright in the knowledge economy. With regard to the former, proposals include approaches to increasing the quantity and scope of content since at present some media types and some countries are not well represented. Issues concerning copyright will include dealing with licences enabling the inclusion of 20<sup>th</sup> century resources and supporting cross-border access. Submissions are encouraged on both of these consultation documents, not least since Europeana is much more than just a time-limited project. It must be a major agent for the creation of a European knowledge society. The deadline for submissions is 15<sup>th</sup> November.

**Helen Milner** (Managing Director, [UK online centres](#)) reminded the audience that the majority of UK online centres are public libraries and they therefore have a key role in supporting equality, aspiration and intention for all citizens. Finland has recently made a commitment to make access to broadband for all a human right. UK online centres has undertaken research to examine what people are doing with the technology, to try to answer the question; "*does the Internet improve lives?*" This research showed that uses include keeping in touch with family and friends, gaining access to goods and services, pursuing hobbies and as a means of finding employment. Extrapolating from this research suggests that if all UK citizens accessed the Internet only once a year, it would save the Government £900m. Strategic actions now included targeting key groups that are currently not using the Internet.

Those in social housing are typically less likely to use the Internet so work is being undertaken to co-ordinate the various agencies working with social housing to provide a range of targeted services. Libraries are essential in these developments since they provide safe places for people to learn.

(In the evening lively delegate networking took place at the Congress dinner at the [Bozar Centre](#).)

## FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER

### WORK STREAMS

The morning was taken up by three work streams on the following topics and questions to address:

1. **Creating inclusive digital environments** (Chair: Stef Steyaert, Manager, Participant bvba)
  - a. What are the different models used for the exploitation of public libraries as agents of digital inclusion?
  - b. What are the emerging technologies that will support public libraries' role in digital inclusion within the communities they serve?
  - c. What are the implications for these new activities for the future of the public library service?
2. **Measuring social and economic impact** (Chair: José-Marie Griffiths, Professor of the [School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina](#))
  - a. What are current approaches to the evaluation of public library impact and how are they being applied?
  - b. What studies have been undertaken to assess specifically the performance of e-inclusion services within public libraries?
  - c. How have these evaluative tools affected the wider municipal, regional or national policy agendas?
  - d. What should be the future approaches to the evaluation of public libraries within the context of increasing direct access to networked services within communities?
3. **Enhancing knowledge, innovation and society** (Chair: Chris Batt, [Chris Batt Consulting](#))
  - a. How should the public library plan for these changes?
  - b. Will there be a time when the traditional model of the public library is replaced by something different?
  - c. What might be the future roles of the library worker and the manager in a landscape of increasing knowledge convergence?
  - d. What actions are already being taken, what research should be done?

Each work stream had two sessions and each of the sessions included short presentations on service innovation, research and priorities for the future followed by debate to establish a set of priority issues for each of the three work stream topics. All of the presentations are available on the [Congress website](#) and the outcomes of the debates are summarised below in Plenary Session 3.

### PLENARY SESSION 3: WORK STREAM FEEDBACK

**Jens Thorhauge** (Director General, [Danish Agency for Libraries and Media](#)) introduced the feedback from the work streams with a presentation on policies for the future development of public libraries in Denmark. He began by asking what do people agree on and what should be the mission for the public library in 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He suggested that at the heart of the future mission should be building bridges to e-inclusion. Libraries should reach out to people in whatever might be their current life situation offering value-added information. He highlighted a range of roles some new, some current. The library space must continue to be for all that is informal, relaxing and encourages encounters. Services should be 24/7, self-service and innovation should be people orientated. Communities are becoming more fragmented and as a result services must be available in wider contexts and supporting more complex learning and community activities. How should public libraries cope with all the chance

around them? His answer was: to respond effectively to the obvious needs of the community, address national agendas, be aware of the new economic realities and most important understand who are the socially excluded. E-access is not the solution to exclusion, but it is a step toward a solution.

The Scandinavian model of library service deals with such issues through organised classes, national campaigns in libraries and targeted programmes at all levels. It has also provided service and competence development programmes for library workers. This model has made it possible to show just how good public libraries are as partners in bridging the digital divide.

**Work stream feedback:** each chair was invited to bring back from their work stream a short list priority issues. These were:

Work stream 1 – creating inclusive digital environments (Stef Steyaert)

- Be visionary – Do start to plan the future just with what you already have. Widen the net to look at areas such as urban regeneration as the means of deciding future priorities
- Market yourself by saying what you do – sell the service, not the library concept
- Invest in common systems – reducing overheads (wifi for example)
- Encourage formal and informal learning as a part of the library service
- Train, train, train the staff
- Go outside the walls of the library

Work stream 2 – Measuring social and economic impact (José-Marie Griffiths)

- Undertake national impact studies
- Consider and redefine the library brand and brand identification
- Effective dissemination and marketing of research results – presenting in the right ways to different communities
- Learn the language of the stakeholders
- Start work on the areas that are difficult – incomplete indicators are better than nothing; joint working between US and Europe would provide a convergence between US focus on economic value and European priorities of social value
- Share research as widely as possible

Work stream 3 – Enhancing knowledge, innovation and society (Chris Batt)

- Define the future roles of public libraries and their staff – community centres, librarians as strong leaders to drive change; raising awareness of the value of knowledge and information; matching skills to community needs
- Build new partnerships – work at all levels from local to international; engage with universities, have the courage to go for non-traditional partnerships
- Exploit knowledge resources – more analytical skills; create conditions for learning and to resolve real-life issues; provide guides and technological skills support
- E-books – a metaphor for the urgency for Europe-wide co-operation; a new ethos of copyright exemptions; new business models with commercial partners keeping service mission

Key points arising from the subsequent debate

- Going outside is a major theme of all discussions. This can be both the transfer of services into new locations and the staff being much more focused on activities and organisations operating outside of the public library but sharing similar goals
- Get across to the European Commission the message about the importance of the European public library movement
- Say what public libraries do rather than what they are
- Be clear about the differences between formal and informal knowledge
- The public library is a place of connection – for people to learn and understand themselves as a community
- The librarian should be at once facilitator, coach and catalyst
- Delegates were asked to provide a mission statement for the public library in no more than five words

## PLENARY SESSION 4: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

**Ian Clifford** (Steering Committee Co-Chair, [Telecentre Europe](#)) identified a number of issues that should influence the future planning of European public libraries. These include the recognition that the idea of the Internet as a single concept is inappropriate in the planning of public libraries involvement in networked services. It is important to understand the particular needs of audiences and design services accordingly. Libraries and other telecentres have been and will continue to have a vital role in the advancement of digital inclusion, but there needs to be effective evaluation of that role to demonstrate the scale of impact achieved. Ian suggested that Google might extend its engagement with libraries ([Google Books](#), working with [JISC TechDis](#)) and urged the delegates to approach Google with their ideas.

**Mikus Ozols** (Chairman of the Board, [Telia Latvia](#)) described the development of the advanced infrastructure for public library ICT that now covers the whole of Latvia. All services are free to everyone and it is the biggest cultural/social/educational project in the country and had the full support of leading politicians. Alongside the hardware there is a National Digital Library that includes copyright materials that can be consulted digitally with the public library. The future vision will be based on creating high accessibility to knowledge and information for all users, new service offers nationally and countrywide solutions to greatest cost efficiency.

**Sir Eppo Van Nispen tot Sevenaer** (Chief executive, [DOK Library Concept Centre](#)) presented a comprehensive and highly entertaining conclusion to the Congress, summarising the key issues that had been presented and debates. Public libraries must be very confident about their future role in the knowledge society since there are now so many other channels of access to knowledge and information. Libraries must also understand the changing user behaviours – where once there was a limited range of media now that range is immense. Yet change has been going on for a long period and even back in the '60s home access to shopping, etc was being imagined. In planning for the future of public libraries, librarians will need to be very clear about what makes their services a unique and essential component of public provision. How should that message be presented? If public libraries did not exist how might the case for their creation be made today. Future success is rooted in the ability of library staff to position the public library in the future knowledge society and some of that will depend on taking more risks, considering and testing ideas that may just seem at least a little crazy.

The presentation provided an ideal conclusion to a lively and successful Congress and the Chair closed the programme, thanking the organisers, the speakers, the hosts and most of all the audience.

## **European Congress on E Inclusion 2009: 'Technology and Beyond in Public Libraries' Summary of Feedback**

*"I thought the conference was a great event – interesting mix of people and presentations and all really well organised and presented in a professional way (I know how difficult it can be to get this right!) So it was a pleasure to take part and also to meet you.*

*Thank you for organising what turned out to be the best event I've been to in a long time!"*

**Joanne Yeomans, EBLIDA**

*"Congratulations on such a great event! We were really impressed by the richness of content as well as with smooth organization of the Congress."*

**Ugne Rutkauskiene, National Library of Lithuania**

*"It was really a very fine and successful experience to organize this together with you and your team. I received a lot of congratulations, during the conference and afterwards from all the members of the board. Many thanks for all of you."*

**Jan Braeckman, Bibnet**

*"I wish to congratulate you for the very professional manner in which you organized the conference at the Flemish Parliament. It was a good opportunity for each of us to see the experience of others and the presence of the colleagues from the States brought a specific information."*

**Florin Rotaru, Metropolitan Library of Bucharest**

*"We are very proud and happy to be part of the conference in this year. For us it was a chance for the first time in our life to see real international science world. Of course we will work with You and we have idea what we can do on next conference in next year."*

**Jarosławska Dorota, Warsaw University**

*"I really enjoyed the conference and I found the presentations thought provoking. They moved on my thinking. Thank you."*

**Diana Edmonds, London Borough of Haringey**

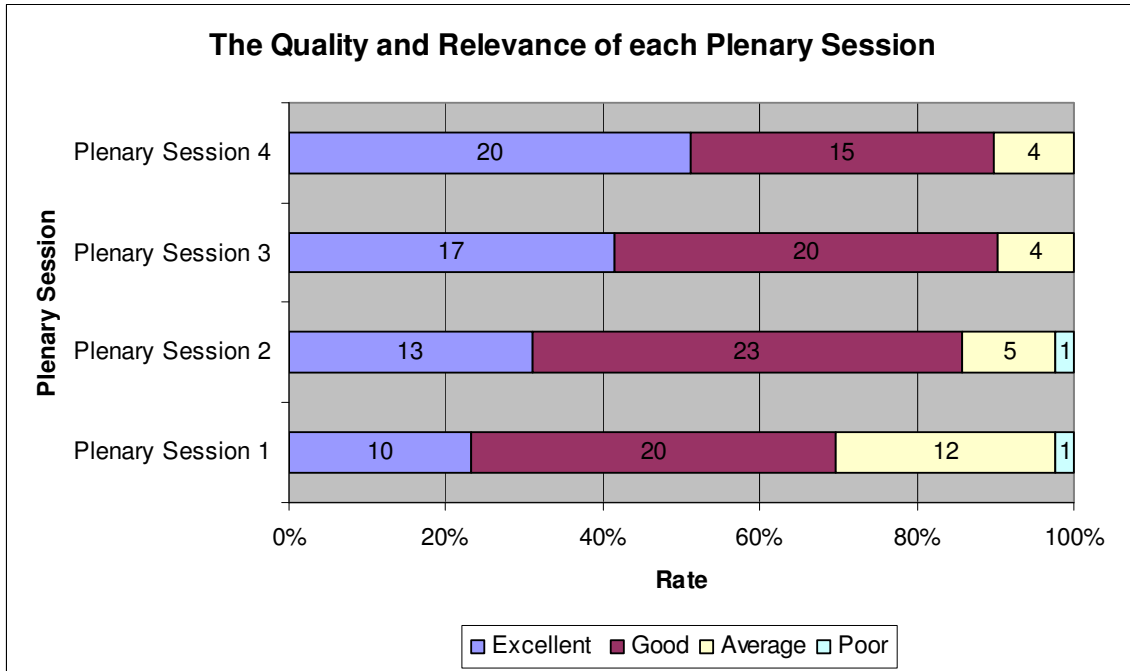
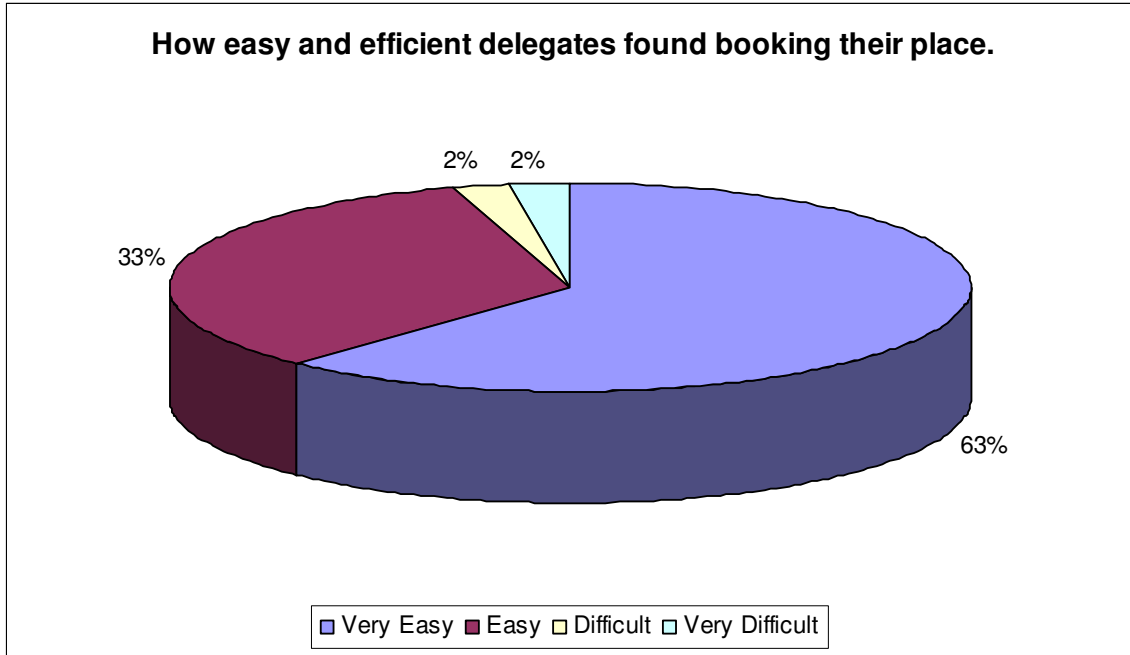
*"Very high quality of diverse participants = very good conference. Well done."*

**Techgroup Global**

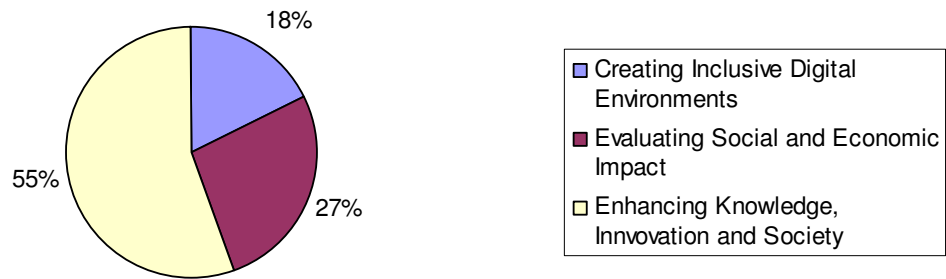
*"I feel the conference went very well. Your team did a great job."*

**Carolien Coenen, CJSM, Flemish Parliament**

## Feedback Forms

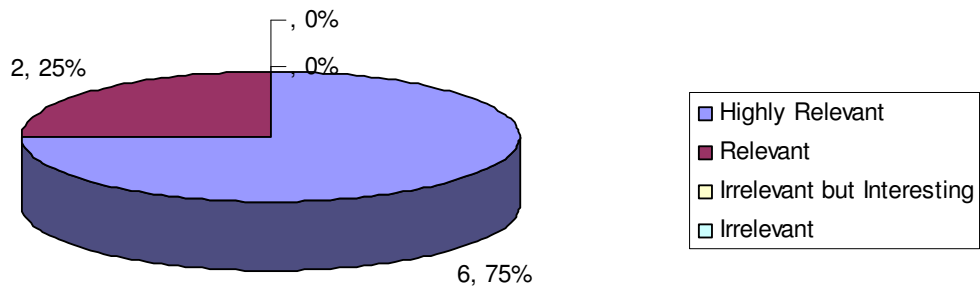


### Percentage of Attendees for each Workstream

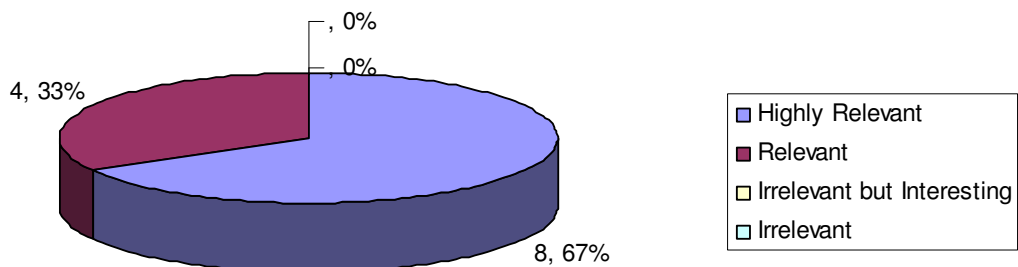


These individual pie charts show the figure and the percentage, due to different amounts of delegates attending each workstream. Without the actual figures as shown in the pie chart for enhancing knowledge innovation and society, one delegate can be seen as 4%, which is unfair as this sounds a lot more than the actual figure for people believing the workstream was irrelevant but interesting.

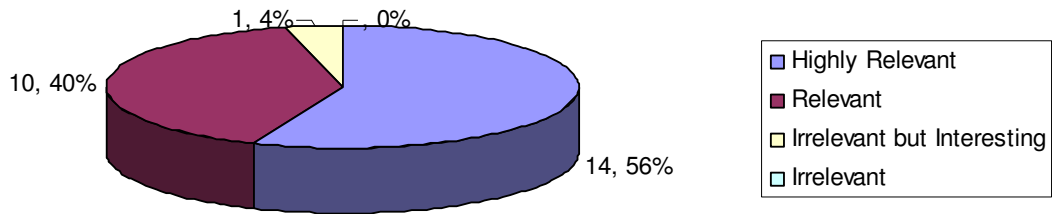
#### Creating Inclusive Digital Environments



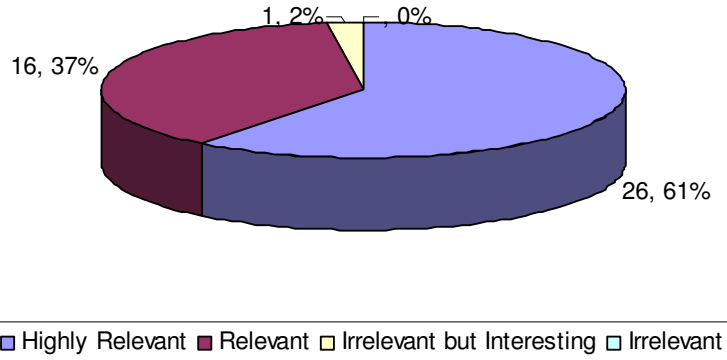
#### Evaluating Social and Economic Impact



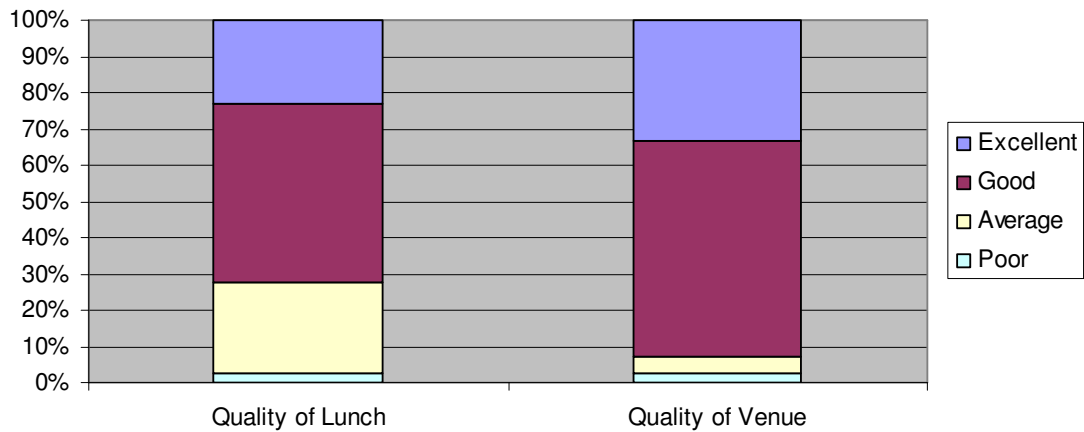
Enhancing Knowledge, Innovation and Society



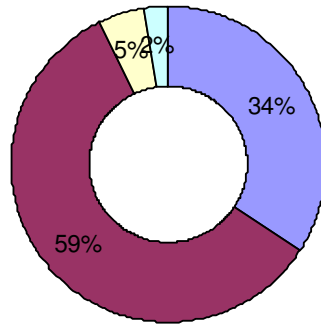
Overall opinion of Workstreams



The overall opinion of the Lunch and Refreshments, and the Flemish Parliament as a Venue



Overall Quality of Day



■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor

