Widening levels of technological engagement

Lessons from the Adult Learning@Home project

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'Adult Learning@Home'

- One of the first large-scale social research projects to focus specifically on ICTs and adult learning.

- Based on a detailed survey of 1101 adults in England and Wales

- Follow-up interviews with a subset of 100 of these,

- Year-long case studies of 25 technology-using individuals and their families

Research Questions

- Who, amongst particular adult populations, has access to what forms of ICT within their home, the workplace and wider community sites?

- What do adults within those populations use ICTs for and how does technology fit with the everyday lives?

- What are the social, economic and cultural contexts underlying adult's (non)engagement with ICTs?

- How were adults using ICTs effectively for formal and informal learning activities?

- To what extent do ICTs interrupt or reinforce existing patterns of participation in lifelong learning?

Research Findings

- Who, amongst particular adult populations, has access to what forms of ICT within their home, the workplace and wider community sites?

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Regulating Change?

- Carefully defining the role of government and policy

- Facilitating individual opportunities rather than coercing collective outcomes

- Facilitating everyday 'effective' access to ICTs

- Encouraging all forms of ICT use

- Making ICTs relevant to people's everyday lives

- Focusing on the key non-technological issues underlying social exclusion

- "There are plenty of places you can go and learn but I basically haven't got an interest in it … I'm glad I don't have to learn anymore!"

  [female, 54 years]

- "When I was in school – or even now – I'm not one for reading books. If I read something I get impatient …it doesn't seem to sink in. I forget things easy. But on a computer, because of the things you've learnt, I suppose it's like watching the television. If you watch a programme, the next day you can tell a friend everything that happened on that programme. But if you've read it in a book, you forget. I don't know what it is. I suppose on the computer I've remembered everything [that I have learnt].

  [female 46 years old]

- "I've learnt to use computers properly now … but I've got nothing to use them properly for"

  [male, 35 years old]

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