



Supporting Growth and Jobs in Europe





Investing in Innovation, Growth and Jobs Building Europe's Knowledge-Based Economy

Like most businessmen, I know Europe faces some big challenges. But I also believe firmly that Europe has what it takes to be a growing and dynamic leader in the fast-moving global knowledge economy.


Europe's people and businesses are embracing technology and its benefits at historic rates and in the past five years technology has contributed more than 40 percent of European growth. Europe has world-leading research institutes and universities, global technology leaders and vibrant home-grown industries in design, technology, manufacturing and engineering that are innovating in exciting and world-beating ways. Nearly 80 percent of Europeans have mobile phones and Europeans over 65 are one of the world's fastest growing web communities.

At Microsoft we support the European Union's Strategy for Growth and Jobs and we believe that the private sector should also step up to help deliver results for Europe. So we are building a new generation of practical partnerships to help Europe meet its most important goals.

In this publication you will find examples of our partnerships in action across the European Union. Our core aim is to enable people to access and use technology to realise their full potential and contribute to Europe's future: in education, in research, in small and large businesses, in the public sector. We and our partners would welcome your feedback and interest in future collaboration.

At Microsoft we, along with many others, are committed to invest, innovate and grow in Europe. As a company we believe in the future and invest in the future. We believe Europe's future is strong and we will be a committed partner to help realise it.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' and 'C' intertwined.



"Innovation is the heartbeat of our industry, and if we aren't innovating fast enough, big enough, and new enough, we won't succeed. It's the same for Europe. By innovation we mean R&D and science obviously, but at Microsoft we also mean innovating to help solve some of the big challenges in our societies - including growth, employment and inclusion."

Steve Ballmer, CEO, Microsoft Corporation

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Building Europe's Knowledge Economy



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Our pan-European Initiatives



The European Union's relaunched Strategy for Growth and Jobs calls on the private sector to partner with governments to help deliver a more vibrant and innovative Europe. Microsoft, in partnership with many others, is investing more in research and innovation, the growth potential of SMEs, and skills training to help Europe respond to the challenges of globalisation and an ageing population.





"The goals of the Lisbon Agenda, to harness technology for social and economic progress, are goals that Microsoft shares. We recognise our responsibilities as a corporate citizen, and we are listening carefully to our government partners and working hard to support their efforts with responsive technologies and programmes. We are committed to continuing and furthering these efforts."

Bill Gates, Chairman and Chief Software Architect, Microsoft Corporation

Skills For Employability



"The most important phase of the European Union's Growth and Jobs Strategy is underway and the spotlight is firmly on delivering results. Partnerships between the Member States and the private sector can also make a major contribution to Europe's competitiveness as a region and for its citizens. I welcome the creation of the European Alliance on Skills for Employability. The Alliance is a leading example of how innovative business to business collaborations, working with different stakeholders, can provide opportunities to the European unemployed. Access to skills training, content provision and certification can help older workers, people with disabilities and the young to face the challenges of unemployment and the changing workplace and so contribute to Europe's prosperity.

I commend this initiative as it represents one of the best practices in this field."

Vladimir Spidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunity, January 2006

As a leader in information and communication technology (ICT) innovation and developing productivity tools around the world, Microsoft is committed to help address the greatest challenge facing Europeans and their governments: unemployment and the ageing population.

As the EU Strategy for Growth and Jobs recognises, partnerships between business, government, the education sector and local communities are critical to invest in more and better skills programmes as part of delivering more and better jobs in Europe, especially for the unemployed, older workers and people with disabilities.

Microsoft's 21st century Skills for Employability initiative builds on a number of our programmes and partnerships across the EU:

Our flagship Unlimited Potential (UP) programme offers the skills training that people need to transform technology into powerful tools for change. Through enhanced access, improved training and new curriculum, we, together, can improve the lives of individuals, communities and nations. To date, Unlimited Potential has supported more than 2,000 community technology centres in all parts of the EU25.

Other programmes supporting this initiative are:

Our Partners in Learning programme, which supports primary and secondary schools to increase access to technology and skills in the classroom. To date we have signed Partners in Learning agreements with 22 EU governments and provided certified ICT skills training to over half a million teachers in the EU.

Our ICT Academies programme has, to date, supported more than 2,000 accredited academic institutions to provide half a million students with a premium education on the latest Microsoft technologies.

We are also a founding member of the European Alliance on Skills for Employability, launched in January 2006. Other Alliance partners are the e-Skills Certification Consortium, Cisco, European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Foundation, EXIN, Randstad, FIT, State Street Corporation and CompTIA. Together the Alliance partners will invest funding and expertise to help bring technology skills, competencies and training to 20 million people across Europe by 2010.

Open and Collaborative Innovation

The basic technologies of computing, such as processing power, network capabilities, and storage and graphics, are continuing to grow at amazing rates, and software is key to transforming these new capabilities into empowering products and services.

We know that innovation is the heartbeat of our industry. It is also clear that innovation is increasingly central to Europe's future success by driving competitiveness, job creation, and overall living standards.

That's why we have taken an open and collaborative approach to innovation working with academic, industry, and government partners to produce technologies that serve society, business, and the ICT industry.

We invest in pure and applied research and development (R&D) in multiple areas with a particular emphasis on security and interoperability. Our R&D-related facilities in the region support more than 1,000 staff and cover the key stages of software development, from the earliest concept to product implementation.

We have a range of partnerships with universities and local governments across Europe and are participating in collaborative projects under the European Union Research Framework Programme. The Microsoft European Science Initiative aims to accelerate fundamental innovations in science and computing through the pursuit of novel avenues of research by Microsoft and key research bodies across Europe.

Some of these investments are yielding benefits today with software breakthroughs in critical areas such as security, reliability, mobility, and health. Others will transform the way we use computers years from now. But they all stem from our investments in research and innovation, our optimism about the future of computing, and our commitment to push the state of the art forward.



Technology in the Public Sector



“Our policy has been based on the fundamental idea that ICT is a teaching tool, not just a subject in itself, and that all of our teachers have the opportunity to use the most modern ICT equipment in their teaching.”

*Richard Galvin, Director of
the European School of Mol*

The European Schools have a distinct role in the fabric of the European Union as a public institution founded by the original six Member States in 1957. The mission of the European Schools is to provide a multilingual, multicultural and multid denominational education for nursery, primary and secondary level pupils. In a Union of twenty-five Member States, and with thirteen schools in seven countries, the technology and language demands on the European Schools have changed immeasurably since their foundation.

Given the geographical and linguistic spread of both the schools and the pupils, the European Schools are at the forefront of distance learning where the teacher and student are not necessarily in the same classroom. A teacher might be giving a lesson in Polish, with the students participating in five schools in three countries. Hence ICT has become an essential tool for communication and collaboration for the whole European Schools network, where information and ideas can be shared and discussed.

Technology has played a vital role in making this connection and these learning processes possible. Having chosen the Microsoft platform for the basis of their eLearning strategy, pupils at the European Schools now use Tablet PC, video conferencing facilities and interactive white-boards, while teachers can share content and best practice through the Learning Gateway. They have also received training and certification through Microsoft's Partners in Learning programme.



Skills for Employability

The European Employment Strategy calls on the private sector to help address the challenges of unemployment and the ageing population through partnership between governments, the education sector and local communities. Microsoft and its partners share the goal of delivering more and better employability skills training, especially for the unemployed, older workers and people with disabilities.

Unlimited Potential

Microsoft knows that access to technology is a key component to digital inclusion. It is equally critical to provide ICT skills training, tools, and guidance to those historically underserved populations – such as at-risk youth, refugees, senior citizens, and people with disabilities – as well as mid career professionals who need to sharpen their skills or gain new ones.

Our Unlimited Potential grants support innovative partnerships that bring new skills to those who need them.

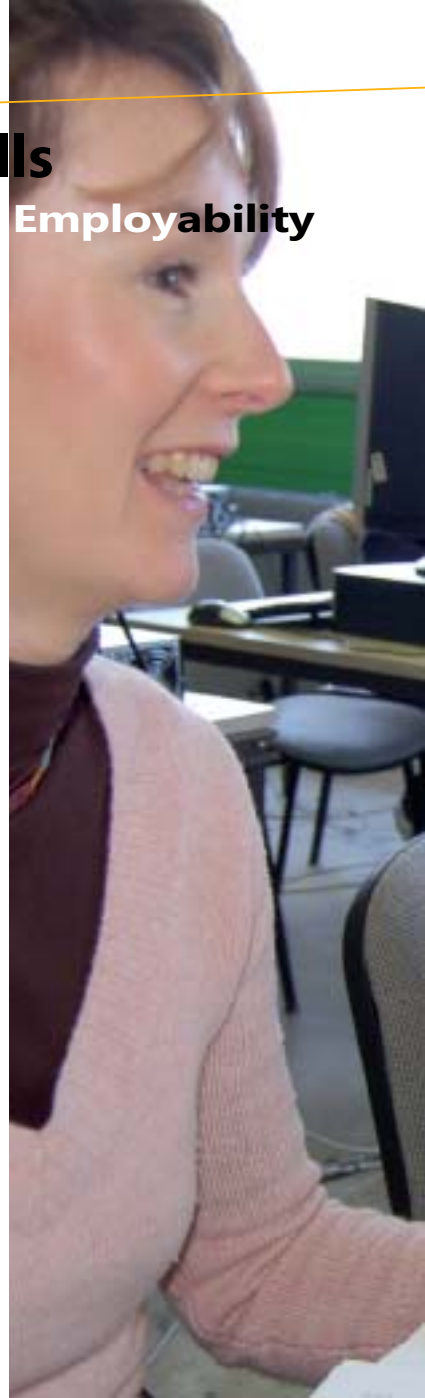
Our support includes:

- UP training grants
- Software donations to Community Technology Centres
- UP Community Learning Curriculum in local languages and Digital Literacy Curriculum
- Microsoft Authorised Refurbisher programme for recycled PCs
- Telecentre.org to provide support services to local telecentre managers worldwide
- Employee volunteering

Since the establishment of the Unlimited Potential Programme in 2003, more than 250,000 people were trained and over two million people were reached by this initiative in all countries from EU25.

Behind every partnership there is the potential to help someone acquire skills to overcome economic and social exclusion.

Behind every employment statistic is a person looking for a training opportunity, a new or better job to provide for his or her family.





"For nations and economies around the world, a skilled workforce is essential. Unlimited Potential supports community technology centres by helping to provide the technology skills and tools people need to participate in society and the local economy."

Pamela Passman, Vice President, Microsoft Global Corporate Affairs

Pan-European

The European Alliance on Skills for Employability



José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission (5th from left), with the European Alliance on Skills for Employability, January 2006

"The European Alliance on Skills for Employability is a specific contribution to support the EU action plans on promoting ICT as a relevant competitiveness factor. It is also intended to have a remarkable social impact by targeting underserved communities with concrete support actions."

Antonio Herrera, President of eSCC (The e-Skills Certification Consortium), January 2006

The Netherlands

Computerwijk - Taking participants one step closer to employability

The Computerwijk project was set up in 2004 by the Eigenwijks association of three local municipalities in Amsterdam to help local residents overcome isolation and enhance their opportunities for continued education and finding a job. Operating in mainly deprived areas of the city, the project is largely focused on the needs of the immigrant and elderly populations.

Through an interactive computer programme called Dubbelklik, the project will help 2,000 people with little education and limited knowledge of the Dutch language in a simple but effective way to master computer skills and basic language skills. The programme offers more advanced ICT training on the basis of the UP Digital Literacy Curriculum in eight centres throughout the Slotervaart, Osdorp and Geuzenveld areas of Amsterdam. It is expected that up to twenty-two centres will be up and running by the three year mark.

The project is important for the community as a whole because through supporting access to ICT skills and language training it is hoped that more links will be established between neighbours.



"Computerwijk is for many of these participants a step closer to employability. It goes beyond learning basic IT skills. It is also about personal development and social reintegration in the Dutch community. The feeling of achievement motivates participants to continue education, find a job or entrepreneurship."

*Wilma Borgt,
project leader Computerwijk
(association Eigenwijks)*

Portugal

Technology, Innovation and Initiative - Providing textile workers with skills for the future



"Programmes such as Technology, Innovation and Initiative (TII) that aim to improve the skills and knowledge of the unemployed workers by training them in IT clearly to improve their re-employment prospects either in the same industry or other industries where these skills are required. These were the basic principles that led CITEVE to embrace the challenge led by Microsoft Portugal and partner with them in what we expect is the first of a series of other relevant partnerships to the performance of the national textile industries."

Helder Rosendo, General Manager, CITEVE

The Technology, Innovation and Initiative programme (TII) is a pioneering project to provide workers in Portugal's textile industry with new skills and qualifications to enhance their long-term employability prospects.

Portugal's clothing and textile industries are being significantly affected by increasing global competition, with an estimated 47,000 people, 15 percent of the total workforce, already unemployed. Launched by Microsoft and The Technological Centre for the Textile and Clothing Industries of Portugal (CITEVE), TII is a three-year initiative that will equip at least 3,000 unemployed workers with the ICT skills needed in the local economy. In parallel, CITEVE, together with the Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (The Institute for Employment and Professional Training of the Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity), will work with local companies and unions to help the trainees find new jobs or start new businesses.

TII training will be provided at four community technology centres providing technology and skills training in a welcoming, open-access environment. The expert staff will lead three daily sessions, teaching a curriculum based on material developed for the Unlimited Potential programme and tailored to suit the specific needs of local employers.

The impact of globalisation and change is often felt most acutely by the least qualified workers. And as Portuguese companies adapt, by moving into research and development, design, logistics and distribution, ICT-proficient workers are increasingly in demand. Through TII the partners hope to help the newly unemployed to develop marketable skills, opening up a wealth of new and exciting employment opportunities and careers.

Denmark

Ældremobiliseringen - Unlocking the potential of senior citizens



Since 1992, Ældremobiliseringen has been working to improve the welfare and provide opportunities for elderly people in Denmark. This work encompasses programmes where pensioners help other pensioners in their local area, with activities ranging from holding gym classes, buying groceries, providing companionship, to making a morning “check in” phone for vulnerable pensioners.

They have also initiated a successful technology programme, which includes the Senior Internet TV and running computer classes for the elderly all over the country. Microsoft partners with Ældremobiliseringen in 50 of the 100 computer schools for the elderly. These schools teach basic computer programmes and provide personal and technical support to the students. Microsoft’s critical input to this project comes through the “Train the Trainer” initiative which helps raise teaching standards, thereby improving the computer skills of the elderly.

Slovenia

MISSS - Raising employment prospects for disadvantaged communities



One of the main challenges for a small country like Slovenia is raising the employment prospects for disadvantaged communities such as immigrants, young people, and those with disabilities. Microsoft is working closely with MISSS (Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia), in tackling the problem of youth unemployment and social exclusion in Slovenia.

MISSS is engaged in raising employability among deprived groups through access to technology and skills training. It operates a network of seven Community Technology Centres throughout the country, which it hopes to expand with a further three centres shortly. The aim is to use ICT skills training as a means to help individuals achieve personal development goals.

"I've been searching for work for two years. I had practically no computer skills.

After finishing the course, I've come up with an idea to start my own company, where these skills will help me do my job."

Irena P., Unlimited Potential course participant, 2005

With the project underway since 2005, participants are gaining new skills and developing existing knowledge. Several young people have used the training and the facilities to help with applying for jobs; others have formulated ideas for setting up their own company.

The projects have benefited both young and older people. Tina Sterk, 31, is a social services graduate who joined the Unlimited Potential study group last year. After finishing the course she successfully applied for a position with a drug-rehabilitation NGO, which was accepted. Another attendee in Brezice, Mrs Telika, who is a retiree, focused on internet-related skills, which she has used to set up a homepage for her artwork.

Belgium

Interface3 - ICT skills training supporting women into employment



"The trainees are pleased to be part of the programme. Daily, we receive comments on how participating in the classes has helped them eradicate their anxiety around IT, reinforcing their trust in themselves and in their ability to be productive. We want to thank Microsoft for giving us this opportunity to help so many women, and are looking forward to offering this unique opportunity to many more women, since demand is so overwhelming."

Anne-Catherine Devolder, CEO Interface3

A lack of ICT skills, particularly for immigrant women, can be a severe handicap in the search for high-quality employment in today's job market. Basic ICT qualifications are often a condition for recruitment to the dominant services sector, and yet low-cost or free training opportunities are scarce.

Interface3 was set up in Brussels in 1998 to help bridge this digital divide. The programme aims to support women who are unemployed, new to the country and without qualifications, to acquire the skills and confidence they need to overcome their disadvantage.

With Microsoft support, Interface3 offers a wide range of ICT skills training courses designed to enhance access to employment and professional development, encourage use of the Internet to access information and services, and develop communication skills and autonomy.

The key to the programme's success is flexibility. Interface3 offers individualised coaching and problem-solving in small groups matched with collective training and assessment around real-life, work-based situations. On offer are basic ICT starter courses designed to equip trainees for new opportunities in the labour market. And to increase the number of women in ICT jobs, Interface3 provides more specialised programs in Network Administration and Web Design.

Training takes into account the practical constraints that many women face: the need to juggle the requirements of family life and the care of children. In addition, the course also focuses on developing participants' social skills, self belief and empowerment – in an effort to counter the low levels of self-confidence often related to long terms of unemployment.

Spain

Red Conecta - Boosting individual self-esteem and community involvement



As part of a nation-wide effort to increase digital literacy among the 22.8 million people in Spain who have not had access to technology, the Esplai Foundation initiated the Red Conecta (Connect Network) programme in 2001. Red Conecta is delivered through a network of 53 community technology centres, both directly through the Esplai Foundation, and also through a network of local NGOs.

Together with the Ministry of Industry and other industry partners, Microsoft has helped Red Conecta reach over 30,000 people in the last three years through the Conecta e-inclusion project. This programme helps young people, women and immigrants learn how to use computers while boosting their self-esteem, enhancing their level of community involvement, and preparing them for possible job opportunities.

As well as the basic digital literacy course, it will host workshops for job searching and provide training and resources for presentation skills and writing job applications.



Also through the Red Conecta programme, Microsoft is involved in the Conecta Joven project which trains young people to teach basic computer skills to adults who have never used a computer. The aim is to position 800 young people throughout Spain as promoters of the information society and to help develop their social skills and community awareness.

Czech Republic

PCs Against Barriers - Providing skills for employability for the mobility-impaired



"Learning IT skills opened up a whole new world for me and showed me that cutting-edge technologies can be a precious aid to help people with disabilities create their own opportunities and regain access to the professional world."

*Martin Kovar, Co-founder,
PCs Against Barriers*

PCs Against Barriers is an innovative project, founded in 1996, to provide people with disabilities with ICT skills training. Founded by the Charta 77 foundation, with support from Microsoft, the programme combines physical rehabilitation activities with skills training.

Since its inception, the programme has provided ICT skills training to hundreds of people, many of whom had not previously used a computer. Many participants have since gone on to fulfilling careers and some have started their own businesses. This combination of physical rehabilitation and skills training is helping people with recent disabilities so that they can continue to have full and active lives.

In addition to skills training, part of the work of PCs Against Barriers involves providing computers to partner organisations that hire programme graduates, as well as equipping programme participants with personal computers, enabling the most mobility-impaired to work from home.

Microsoft is a long term partner of the PCs Against Barriers project, providing access to technology and skills training in 14 facilities throughout the Czech Republic. Since 1996, over 2,900 people have been trained through the project. In 2006, the project will open a further 2 centres and make further improvements to the quality of the training, including participating in the Microsoft IT Academy programme.

Malta

ACCESS - Supporting ICT skills and business development in Malta



The ACCESS complex was launched in 2002 to address the social inclusion needs of Cospicua, Senglea and Vittoriosa, the areas with the highest unemployment and lowest female employment in Malta. From the outset, it was hoped that ACCESS would become a resource centre for the whole community, addressing a variety of needs, including access to technology and skills training.

As part of the Maltese Government's objectives to raise ICT knowledge and participation among the whole community, ACCESS proposed the development of a Community Technology Centre in Vittoriosa where local people who have not yet used technology could get access and training. Microsoft provided support for the launch – including software and training grant – and will continue to back the project as it is rolled out to ten centres across the region. Additionally, ACCESS has set up two mobile training units specifically for small and medium sized businesses with training for both employers and employees.

Each centre will deliver access to the Internet, employment and business-related services, programmes for persons with special needs, technology programmes specifically for women, an advisory programme on security, and over the counter help for eGovernment services.

"ACCESS was set up to bring together under one roof, a variety of services aimed at enabling social inclusion through the necessary support and prevention initiatives.

This project has created another reason for a number of government entities, partners and NGOs to work together in delivering training to individuals seeking to acquire or upgrade their IT skills."

Dolores Cristina, Minister for Family and Social Solidarity

Hungary

Equipping teachers and ICT staff for the future

As part of a drive to boost ICT literacy and improve teachers' ICT skills, Hungary's government has partnered with the private sector to increase the use of technology in schools and universities. This includes an agreement between Microsoft and the Ministry of Informatics and Communication to provide the country's secondary schools with Microsoft server software.

A key challenge faced by the partners was to provide teachers and ICT staff with the necessary skills and qualifications to take advantage of the new software. Working closely with the Ministry, Microsoft equipped an ICT Training Truck with 25 HP workstations loaded with the server software and staffed it with a carefully selected team of experienced teachers, chosen for their ability to pass on their knowledge of applying ICT skills in an educational environment.

In May 2004, the ICT training truck began its tour of the country, training more than 350 teachers and support staff, thereby forming a core group of knowledgeable experts who could in turn pass on their skills to colleagues in their own school, and in schools nearby. As well, in 2004 and 2005, several days of training were held at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics for a further 500 teachers and IT staff each year. Feedback on the training has been extremely positive and teachers have expressed high levels of satisfaction. But more importantly, in just a few months, schools throughout Hungary have been equipped with the server software skills that will help create a more stimulating and engaging learning environment for pupils and teachers alike.



"I now feel confident to take the IT skills I have learnt and begin to make use of them in the classroom."

Peto László, Teacher, Hungary



Access to Finance for Small and Medium Enterprises



The EU Strategy for Growth and Jobs identifies promotion of entrepreneurship and skills, improving access to markets, cutting red tape, improving growth potential and dialogue with stakeholders as the success factors for Europe's 22 million SMEs. Microsoft and its partners are working to improve SME access to skills, EU funding and technology solutions that ease the administrative burden.



"The European economy depends on SMEs, and it depends on effective research and innovation. We have not successfully joined these two together in the past. We must do so now."

Arnaldo Abbruzini, Secretary General, Eurochambres - The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry

France

SOS PC Assistance - Helping provide better support to small businesses

Paris-based SOS PC Assistance, set up in 2003 by entrepreneurs Sylvain Fievet and Sven Lung, strives to create a national network of qualified ICT technicians to support SMEs with their technology needs. Typical customers include accountants, medical practices, and lawyers, some with as few as two PCs but all with a common need for critical ICT support.

As a young company looking to expand, SOS PC Assistance faced the enormous tax and social costs of helping unemployed people get a foot back on the career ladder. The company required additional funding, so it turned to the EU Grants Advisor for help.

Through this initiative, they were successful in securing a grant for the recruitment and training of three previously out-of-work ICT specialists. Says Fievet: *"Of the two employed in Paris, one was seeking to return to work after studying for a Master's degree and the other was entering employment for the first time."* The third new starter, employed in Marseilles, had 15 years' experience, but needed to refresh his technical skills after a period of unemployment. Following training, he is now a trainer for up to 60 existing staff.

"The EUGA programme has helped us to grow and meet the need for our services", says Fievet. *"We're also improving our internal business processes with the new knowledge we're gaining of enterprise resource planning technology. Put together, this is a win-win situation for us and is delivering on the EU vision expressed in the Lisbon agenda."*

Heralded by the French press as a dynamic new player in the world of ICT, and with 300 ICT technicians on its books, the newly expanded SOS PC Assistance is making a unique contribution to the growth of the knowledge-based economy in France.



"As a young company, tax and social costs were handicapping our business, if we took on unemployed people, but the EUGA programme has helped us to grow and meet the need for our services."

Sylvain Fievet, General Manager, SOS PC Assistance



Germany

Unternimm was - Turning innovation into jobs



"The high-tech sector has a key position in the development of Germany as a business location. Thus, the federal government welcomes international technology companies taking responsibility in Germany and committing themselves to the creation of new jobs in the domestic technology sector."

*State Secretary Georg Wilhelm Adamowitsch,
Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology*

Together with 11 federal states and partners from politics, industry and academia, Microsoft is supporting unternehm was, a new project to help young entrepreneurs in the high tech sector.

The major challenge for technology entrepreneurs in Germany does not only come from accessing funding or with business planning, but with building the right customer and partner networks, and with developing sales and marketing expertise. Unternehm was supports workshops and networking events for start-ups and entrepreneurs and provides selected start-ups with access to sales and marketing know-how through in-depth support.

The programme operates at a regional and national level, with regional founder initiatives and networks facilitating the contact with the companies. At a national level unternehm was is supported by an expert advisory board, which gives advice to the initiative and develops recommendations for politics and industry regarding supporting young companies.

Microsoft and its partners give access to technology and training for interested start-up companies through discounted hardware and software. Start-ups that have been chosen for the mentoring programme receive additional support, e.g., by contacts to Microsoft employees and to the Microsoft partner and customer network.

Since the start of the project in April 2005 over 500 founders have benefited from the programme by taking part in workshop sessions on technology, sales and marketing.

Portugal

Urban Community of Lezíria do Tejo (CULT) - Helping business navigate local government

The Urban Community of Lezíria do Tejo (CULT) is a regional association of 11 Portuguese municipalities spread out over a largely agricultural region. Much of the work of the municipalities relied on paperwork. Straightforward procedures such as obtaining a building permit involved multiple visits to the town hall, where the applicant would usually be handed more paperwork to complete.

In an effort to overhaul the bureaucratic process within the 11 municipalities, and also to streamline academic, business and tourism services in the region, the Ribatejo Digital project was launched. This project launched a region-wide data-exchange hub, as well as a portal where people can access municipal, tourism, and business information and services.

"A couple of years ago, most municipalities weren't even using software applications for these kinds of services. Now 95 percent of municipal services are automated," says Antonio Torres, Executive Administrator, CULT. He added, *"This allows not only for the delivery of services over the Internet, but also enables back-office restructuring, which further reduces the wait time for a service to be delivered."*

This project marks a significant step in the steady process of modernisation in the region. The aim is to provide a catalyst for many organisations, from local businesses to community groups, to further implement more complete services for businesses, consumers and tourists.



"Reform of the public administration is needed throughout Portugal to gain competitiveness and improve quality of life."

Antonio Torres, Executive Administrator, CULT

Ireland

IP Ventures - Delivering technology opportunities for SMEs and start-ups



"Enterprise Ireland helped connect us with Microsoft to access this technology for our products. This level of support is exactly the kind of help that small and medium-sized enterprises need to get a real foothold in the industry."

Vikas Sahni, CEO of Softedge-Systems

In January 2006, Microsoft announced an expansion of its innovative IP Ventures programme to include close collaboration with governments and public sector development agencies. IP Ventures licenses internally developed and commercially viable technologies which are spun out to allow governments to work with local start-up and venture capital community to encourage new business growth and deliver innovative technology to new markets.

Collaboration with Enterprise Ireland, along with unique IP Ventures technology from Microsoft Research, has helped Softedge-Systems, a Dublin-based software product company, realise rapid growth and quick time to market. Softedge-Systems provides user-friendly, cost-effective software products that allow non-technical users to create multimedia documents and/or content. Through IP Ventures, the company has produced Interactive Image Cutout, an image-editing technology that allows users easily to manipulate and move objects in pictures and photographs.

Poland

Computer Service Support - Supporting SME skills development across Poland



"Polish people have gained a great opportunity to take their personal drive and ambition onto the next level in terms of productivity, and make Poland an increasingly important partner in the EU."

*Witold Ozimek,
Training Division Director, Computer
Service Support, Poland*

Keen to take full advantage of its entry into the EU, Poland is developing a major new sector around ICT, and in particular ICT training. Computer Service Support, headquartered in Warsaw and with 12 ICT training centres across Poland, is just one organisation working to bridge the skills divide.

Launched in 1993 with a team of just three people, the company has grown substantially as Poland's business sector has recognised the importance of technology in the development of productivity and economic prosperity for all. Nevertheless, only 2-3% of companies with fewer than 500 people are making any investment in training at all.

All too often, funding is the barrier that prevents SMEs from obtaining the up-to-date and relevant ICT skills that will help them compete in the global marketplace. The EU Grants Advisor initiative has made possible access to finance such as ICT skills training is available at significantly discounted prices. Computer Service Support has put together a marketing campaign for its latest courses providing basic ICT skills as well as specialist tools to boost business productivity and a range of knowledge worker courses. The campaign will comprise newspaper advertisements in the local press, telephone selling, and e-mailing thousands of target companies contained on their database.

The promotional drive is also backed by the EUGA consortium members from both public and private sectors. Microsoft Poland is promoting the courses on its Web site and is e-mailing 25,000 SMEs across the country with promotional messages. The partners hope that in this way more than 50,000 Poles who work for SMEs will receive subsidised training by 2008.

Spain

Tech Loan - Helping small business access EU funding for investment

Spain was one of the first countries to pilot the EUGA initiative through Banespyme, a programme established by Banesto Bank, Microsoft, Telefónica, HP and Intel to raise awareness amongst SMEs about EU funding opportunities. One Banespyme initiative is Tech Loan. A 200 million scheme financed from EU structural funds and supported by the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Tech Loan offers interest free loans to SMEs to fund investment in ICT.

In the first six months of its operation, 15,000 SMEs in Spain benefited from Tech Loan. More than 80% of the companies received the loan in less than two weeks: 75% stated they would invest further in ICT solutions, a third indicating they would not have made the investment without the loan.

One beneficiary is Quota, a market research company. In 2005 Quota acquired new office premises and needed to invest in furniture, technical equipment and a robust and reliable voice and data network. When Quota investigated its funding options, its trusted banking partner, Banesto Bank, suggested Tech Loan. Jesús Perán López, Managing Director, Quota has seen first hand the benefits this technology has made.

"Compared to other financing options for this investment, the technology loan programme provided many advantages, as we weren't required to pay any interest on top of our loan. Because the programme is designed so that we deal directly with the bank, our choice of technology was not influenced by any of the industry stakeholders involved in the consortium. We were able to invest in the technology solution best suited to our needs."



"Thanks to the public-private partnership a great deal of companies have benefited from the Banespyme initiative in just six months. This would have been much more difficult had this cooperation not existed."

Francisco Ros, Secretary of State for Telecommunications and Information Society, Spain



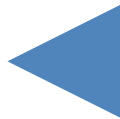
EUGA

Fast Facts at January 2006

10,000 + grants
identified in technology and
growth related categories

EUGA launched in
18 countries

60 local consortium members
participating





Open and Collaborative Innovation



One of Europe's key goals is to invest 3 percent of GDP in research by 2010, investment that is crucial to drive sustainable growth and knowledge economy jobs. Since European leaders called for the private sector to put research at the heart of business, Microsoft has intensified its research and innovation partnerships with academia and industry in Europe. This work is open and collaborative, encompassing projects within the EU Research Framework Programme, joint research with leading European research centres, and expansion of our own innovation facilities in Europe.



"Collaboration with Microsoft EMIC in European research projects provides the right innovative atmosphere that is needed to turn scientific visions into practical reality. We are esteeming this partnership based on skill, openness, and passion as a valuable support, helping to foster European excellence in R&D."

*Dr Michael Boronowsky, Managing Director, Centre for Computing Technologies (TZI),
Universität Bremen, Germany*



HomeNote

Abi Sellen, senior researcher at Microsoft Research Cambridge, is designing new devices to enrich communications in the home. Using simple, off the shelf technology, her team develop new gadgets based on studying what people do in everyday life.

The latest invention is HomeNote, a digital Post-It note to help busy families stay in touch. Unlike a mobile phone, HomeNote is fixed to the wall and can receive text messages from mobile phones or be scribbled on with a stylus for shopping list and reminders.

"We've tried it out with five families," says Abi. "Dads use HomeNote to stay in touch with the kids. Teenagers reassure their parents that they will be home soon. And Mum lets the family know their dinner is in the fridge."

The Whereabouts Clock

'Are the kids still at school?' 'Has Dad left work yet?' 'Shall I get the dinner on?'

For most households it is important to know where members of the family are. Microsoft Research is testing new technology, the Whereabouts Clock: a device that will let the family see information about their loved ones "at a glance."

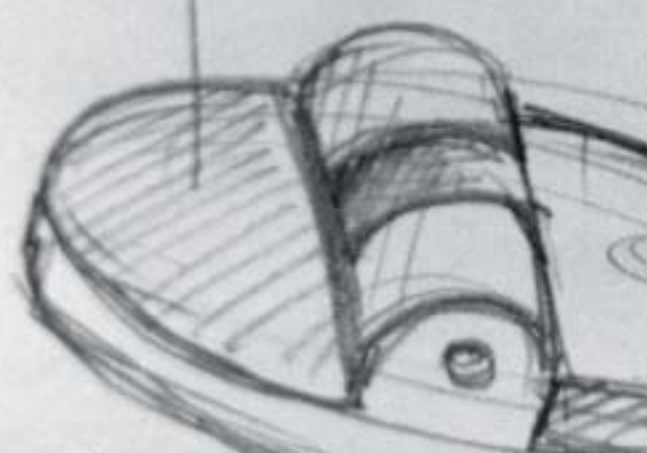
The Whereabouts Clock works by using mobile phone data. When a family member's phone is on, it automatically transmits SMS messages to the Clock when they move from one registered zone (such as "home") into another (such as "school"). Small icons bearing the photo of each family member's face float from zone to zone depending on their location.

Still in the early stages of development, a Whereabouts Clock for the office is being tested to evaluate its robustness, reliability and practical usefulness.





colour



Germany

Smeagol Lab and wearIT@work



Smeagol Lab puts the “fun factor” into science

A unique partnership between private companies, universities and schools, and funded by the European Microsoft Innovation Center (EMIC), Smeagol encourages schools to pursue research in the classroom, helping to explain how technology affects our everyday life. Students get “hands-on” experience testing and developing embedded networks during their physics lessons, producing new ideas for consumables and toys using digital technology.

“There is a definite focus on the fun factor” says Goetz Brasche, EMIC’s spokesperson and supervisor of Smeagol. *“One of the projects we are working on is the Mars Rover, an independent robot built with Lego that can measure temperature and light, send video data and communicate with a base station.”* Together with Sebastian, a sophisticated teddy bear, the Mars Rover can transmit images over the Internet from inside a house to the owners on holiday. And Sebastian can also be used to discretely monitor small children, ensuring their safety.

wearIT@work: wearable computing technology

WearIT@work is a unique global partnership between EMIC and 25 universities, government bodies and private sector companies to develop wearable computing. These small, yet powerful portable computers – easy to use and comfortable to wear – are helping employees cope in our increasingly interconnected world.

In today’s work environments, lack of access to information or computing power can limit productivity and efficiency. This project is designing clothing and accessories that will allow mobile workers to access their computers from any location, allowing them to carry out complex tasks in less time and with less effort. Four industry-specific pilots are underway in the manufacturing, health care and maintenance sectors and the emergency services.

Italy

Microsoft Research - University of Trento Centre for Computational and Systems Biology



Microsoft Research and Italy's University of Trento have partnered to set up a new cutting edge science and technology centre focused on the converging areas of ICT, biotechnology and medicine.

It is envisaged that this unique enterprise will lead to new scientific discoveries that carry the potential to profoundly impact society and medicine: a better understanding of serious and common illnesses, the identification of new therapies or the development of advanced vaccines.

Researchers will develop new software tools that will allow biologists and life scientists to gain a unique insight into the complex processes involved in biological systems. They will use this knowledge to develop new drugs, define new medical therapies and assist with environmental protection.

The centre will make its results freely available for the benefit of the global scientific community through publications and conferences which it is hoped will become a unique asset at a national and international level for computational biology.

"Technological innovation is perhaps the greatest challenge facing today's developed economies, our country in particular. This initiative represents a significant step in research and industrial development right at the intersection of two areas with enormous potential, those of life sciences and digital technology. It will have important fallout for science, industry and employment. The fact that a large multinational company in the field of innovation has chosen Italy and the University of Trento in which to establish a centre of excellence is once more proof that our country has the qualities necessary to compete successfully in future challenges."

Lucio Stanca, Italian Minister of Innovation and Technology



Technology in the Public Sector



One of the EU's key objectives is to improve the uptake of e-government to deliver more efficient public services and improve the connectivity of citizens and their governments. Through partnerships between local and national governments and agencies, the private sector can help to enable support for organisational process change and development of new skills to implement technology solutions effectively. The aim is to provide more open and transparent public services that give a more personalised and relevant service to each citizen and deliver value for money to the taxpayer.



"Microsoft is committed to be part of a dialogue with the public sector, industry and academia across Europe to drive initiatives that we believe will result in positive social and economic development. We look forward to continuing this exciting work across Europe to develop innovative programs and ICT solutions that are designed to improve services for citizens, increase ICT access and create economic opportunity."

Gerri Elliott, Corporate Vice President, Worldwide Public Sector, Microsoft Corporation

Finland

IP Ventures - Building sustainable, local economic development



"Sustainable, local economic development is a foundation of the Microsoft partner ecosystem and a core reason for our commitment to value and promotion of intellectual property."

Brad Smith, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Microsoft Corporation

Microsoft and SITRA

Building on the European launch of the IP Ventures programme, Microsoft and the Finnish National Fund for Research and Development (SITRA) hosted an Access to Innovations forum in January 2006 to generate awareness of licensing and funding opportunities for innovative companies in Finland.

Senior executives from 17 Finnish firms took part, bringing together expertise in the mobility, digital media, security and gaming fields.

SITRA has committed to support the longer-term roll-out of the IP Ventures programme in Finland, and will continue to facilitate licensing agreements with innovative SMEs in Finland.

IP Ventures programme

Microsoft invests billions of dollars each year in R&D, employing 700 of the best and brightest computer scientists and engineers around the world. The result of this effort is a large portfolio of innovations, many of which have significant commercial potential.

Our IP Ventures programme licenses and spins out these leading-edge technologies to entrepreneurs, start-ups, and corporations as a way to both recoup a portion of our R&D investments and encourage new business investments and economic development. In January 2006, Microsoft announced the extension of this programme to include close collaboration with governments to facilitate relations with local start-ups and the venture community to deliver innovative technology to new markets.

Enterprise Ireland and SITRA were the first government agencies to support the programme.



France

Firefighters - Developing emergency management solutions and cutting response times



"Syntia will be life critical for the people we serve. Each time we respond rapidly and effectively help someone in trouble, we will validate our choice of Microsoft technology."

*Lieutenant-Colonel Gilles Berthelot,
Director of Information Systems, Firefighters of Paris*

Receiving on average 1,200 calls to floods, fires and medical emergencies a day from the French capital's 6 million citizens, the Firefighters of Paris must communicate and operate with utmost efficiency. Committed to using best available technology the Firefighters are creating Syntia2, an integrated response management solution based on Microsoft technology. A life critical application, Syntia2 will enable record low response times of less than a minute from call pickup to dispatch, integrate critical information systems and communications and enable the Firefighters to use their resources for best impact.

For people trapped in a burning building every second counts. Syntia, first implemented in 1993, allowed calls to be taken, teams dispatched and critical information gathered. But the rapid development of technology meant an upgrade was required.

Using the latest Microsoft development tools, Syntia2 is a web-based emergency response management solution with enhanced capabilities. It offers the Firefighters an integrated emergency response infrastructure that will help them surpass service levels and be optimally prepared for any alarm situation, any time. And by integrating with existing systems, dispatchers can verify what training and skills the Firefighters have and determine who is available and best equipped to assist.

The streamlined architecture and easy-to-use set of development tools will allow further developments and efficiencies that will help the Firefighters accomplish their most urgent goal: to further improve their service to the public and save lives.

Portugal

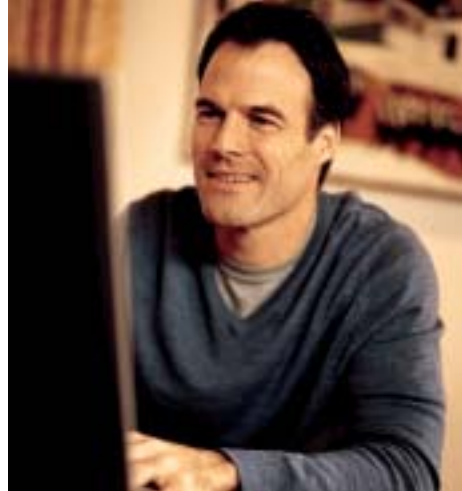
Vale do Sousa - Laying the foundations of the information society

Comprising six municipalities located between Porto and the northern interior, about half of Vale do Sousa's 330,000 citizens are under the age of 25 – one of the youngest populations in Europe. With youth unemployment a major issue, local and regional government is promoting a knowledge-based economy and information society in an effort to modernise local industry, improve qualifications and increase job opportunities.

Supported by EU funding, the Vale do Sousa Digital e-government project aims to simplify and improve the quality of public services through the development of regional portals for citizens, businesses and tourists, promoting the region to the outside world and ushering in high-speed Internet broadband connectivity.

The Vale do Sousa Digital team spent three months working with the municipalities, local businesses and community groups to develop a roadmap. The first step was to re-engineer the back office processes of 25 key services creating a central point for the analysis and delivery of the large amount of data needed by politicians and management for local decision-making. The services were streamlined into five or six Web-enabled services ranging from enquiries for building, digging and land remodelling permits to applications for licensing commercial establishments. And a single front-office point of contact was established, allowing citizens, businesses and tourists to access regional and municipal information and services simply and electronically over the Web, telephone and wireless devices.

Vale do Sousa Digital is helping to ensure a greater diffusion of information technology among municipalities, local businesses and private citizens: laying the foundations of the information society across the region.



"We have a very entrepreneurial private sector but local government is one of the things that has held it back. Companies must submit applications and obtain approvals for almost everything. With re-engineered and simplified processes, we can stop being a roadblock to the private sector in the region."

Jose Pedro Vincente, project manager, Vale do Sousa Digital

Portugal

Citizen's Portal - Allowing citizens to access public services anytime, anywhere

"We all worked together and at times I really couldn't remember if somebody was employed by Microsoft or by Accenture or by one government ministry or another. We were a team. This partnership way of working, with public and private sector pulling together until the job is done, when it works, it works very, very well."

Anabela Pedroso, coordinator of the Citizens Portal project, UMIC

Portugal has spearheaded the adoption of e-government in recent years, making popular public services and information freely available over the Internet. But initiatives were fragmented and with information scattered across hundreds of different departmental Web sites, accessing electronic public services remained difficult.

When the government's Innovation and Knowledge Society Unit (UMIC) designed a new e-government action plan, it focused on establishing an interactive, online Citizen's Portal: a one stop shop to bring its services closer to citizens and businesses. Working in partnership with Accenture and Microsoft, UMIC developed the Portal in only four months. Standardized on Microsoft Windows Server System, it brought together 730 citizen services from 120 government departments into one efficient, integrated, service searchable in the local language.

Attracting up to 5,000 visitors a day, the Portal is a new model for government-citizen interaction and one of the most visible projects of the e-government action plan. It allows citizens to access public services anytime and anywhere, in a fast, simple and secure manner. By making more public services available online, costs have been reduced and administrative efficiency improved. And the Portal acts as a catalyst for further e-government development, helping to break down the silo mentality of government and accelerating a culture of collaboration and partnership, both between ministries and with the private sector.



Austria

Ministry of the Interior - Using technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness



"With Windows Server 2003 R2, we've been able to eliminate two days of lost productivity per month for two to three IT staff members. Similarly, we've eliminated one to two days per month of lost productivity for entire branch office staffs that used to be hobbled by failed servers."

*Wolfgang Müller, Project Lead,
Austrian Ministry of the Interior*

The Austrian Ministry of the Interior provides law enforcement and police and border control services for the people of Austria. Relentless in its drive to streamline bureaucracy and use technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness, in 2001 the Ministry migrated to the Microsoft Windows Server 2003 operating system, whittling its 1,500 servers down to 500 and creating a single communications infrastructure for its entire organisation.

The move eliminated dependence on outside partners, automated many management tasks and reduced personnel costs leading to savings for the taxpayer of 7.26 million over five years.

In 2005, the Ministry targeted another area for improvement: the replication of software between the central data centre and the 1,200 branch offices. Power or hardware failures during routine updates had become a major headache for ICT staff as files would become corrupted or disappear. And police productivity would be affected as officers had no access to the data they needed to do their jobs.

By installing Windows Server 2003 R2, which features technologies that simplify and strengthen file replication and management of branch office servers, the Ministry has been able to replicate without fear of interruption. And the software offers additional advantages. When a remote server fails, it re-directs users to the closest available server allowing ICT staff to undertake repairs behind the scenes without interrupting user productivity. It gives staff a much better insight into the files stored on the servers and future storage needs. And it helps to conserve expensive bandwidth by reducing the time taken for replication across the network, improving the efficiency of operations across the organisation.

Scotland

E-Petitions - Pioneering citizen participation in the political process

The Scottish Parliament was established in 1999 on the principles of sharing power, accountability, access and participation, and equal opportunities. In particular, Scottish parliamentarians felt it was important to develop a culture of genuine consultation to encourage citizens to participate in the political process.

"We were well aware of the democratic deficit," says George Reid MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament. One of the most important means of addressing the deficit in citizen participation is through petitions to Parliament. The Public Petitions Committee, which considers petitions to Parliament, was tasked with looking at how technology could be applied in this critical area of democratic participation.

The Public Petitions Committee entered a partnership with the International Teledemocracy Centre (ITC) at Napier University, Edinburgh, to design, develop and manage an electronic petitioning system. Together with BT, the partnership implemented a solution using Microsoft® Active Server Pages, and structured around Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000 database.

Following a successful pilot period, e-Petitioner was formally launched in 2004 making the Scottish Parliament the first statutory body to formally accept online petitions. This system allows all citizens or organisations to raise an e-petition, and places no restriction on the number of signatures required for a petition to be considered.

Already around one-third of the petitions are lodged electronically. One e-petition calling for the poet Robert Burns and his legacy to be placed at the heart of Scotland's culture and tourism policies collected 1,810 signatures – about 1,000 from Scotland but also 260 from the U.S., 144 from Canada, 142 from England and the rest from 35 other countries ranging from Brazil to Poland.



"We believe that politics is far too important these days to be left just to the politician and that greater engagement with citizens would not diminish representative government but rather strengthen it by stretching the public space."

*George Reid MSP,
Presiding Officer of
the Scottish Parliament*

Belgium

Launching a test-bed for the future of mobile applications

i-City is a project led by a consortium of government, academic and business stakeholders including the Flemish Government, University Hasselt and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. The project aims to build a 'test bed' for the development of broad mobile applications and technologies. This unique platform, built on Microsoft's Connected Services Framework, provides the largest mobile 'test bed' in the world, where users can test mobile applications in real life situations.

Based in Hasselt and Leuven, Belgium, i-City brings institutions and experts together to form study groups to generate ideas for the development of mobile applications. At the end of 2005, participants from the Healthcare study group considered applications for the medical sector that would improve the quality of life for patients in the area. The resulting solution allowed heart patients to be monitored constantly via a PDA, meaning the heart patient can remain mobile.

The i-City platform is the first of its kind in the world and will enable mobile applications to work throughout the wireless linked network. This will be tested initially by 4,000 test users in Hasselt, but it is hoped it will provide a model for the development of mobile applications across the region.



"This is a unique environment where digital applications of the future which are currently being developed can be tested on a large scale, with support from IT professionals and academics. The i-City citizens and academics are coming together to form a living lab for mobile applications."

Frank Bekkers, General Manager of i-City

Photography

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Photography

Front cover:

Photo shows high-tech start-up team SmartProjector, which is sponsored by the Microsoft High Tech Founders Initiative unternimm was

Our Pan-European Initiatives:

Main photo shows participants at Interface3 in Belgium; small photo shows beneficiaries from a Microsoft-supported ICT training programme.

Employability: Representative from the Norwegian tax directorate team

Innovation: (from top): Researchers and students of Microsoft Research Cambridge; Microsoft Development Centre, Denmark

SMEs: The launch of the EU Grants Advisor initiative

Technology in the public sector:

European secondary level pupils

Skills for Employability:

Photo shows UP beneficiaries at the CDR (Centre de développement rural), Belgium

Pan-European: Photo shows José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission (5th from left), with the European Alliance on Skills for Employability, January 2006

The Netherlands: Participants of a Computerwijk programme

Portugal: Researchers at CITEVE

Denmark: Beneficiaries of Ældermobilisieringen programme

Slovenia: MISSS participant

Belgium: Participant of Interface3's skills training programme

Spain: Red Conecta

Czech Republic: Martin Kovar, co-founder and former director of PCs Against Barriers

Malta: ACCESS project participants

Hungary: Participant of the programme

Access to Finance for SMEs:

Main photo shows participants of the Association for Youth Promotion in Romania; small photos show participant of the EUGA programme

France: EUGA programme

Germany: High-tech start-up team SmartProjector, which is sponsored by the Microsoft High Tech Founders Initiative unternimm was

Portugal: Participants of the Ribatejo Digital project

Ireland: Photo shows (from left to right) Frank Ryan (Enterprise Ireland CEO), Vikas Sahni (CEO Softedge Systems), Tom Parlon TD (Irish Minister) and Joe Macri (General Manager Microsoft Ireland)

Poland: EUGA programme

Spain: EUGA programme

Open & Collaborative Innovation:

Main photo shows researchers and students of Microsoft Research Cambridge; small photos show participants of the wearIT@work programme

UK: Abi Sellen, senior researcher at MRC, and sketches of the HomeNote programme

Germany: Smeagol programme student

Italy: Microsoft Research Centre at the University of Trento

Technology in the Public Sector:

Main photo features the fire brigade of Paris; small photo shows members of SITRA centre in Finland

Finland: Members of SITRA

France: Fire brigade of Paris

Portugal: Vale do Sousa Digital

Portugal: ICT access to a citizen's portal

Austria: Members of the Austrian Ministry of the Interior

Scotland: Scottish Parliament

Belgium: i-city platform



Contributing to Growth and Jobs in Europe

In 2005, companies offering products that run on Microsoft software or that service or distribute such software

Employed almost **2.8 million people**
almost 35 percent of European ICT employment

Generated **US\$ 107 billion in company and employee taxes**

Earned **US\$ 7.68 for every US\$ 1 earned** by Microsoft

And of this revenue, some of the hardware revenue, much of the software revenue, and most of the services revenue, was earned by local European companies.

In 2005, Europe's ICT sector as a whole

Employed **7.9 million people**

Generated **US\$ 300 billion in tax revenues**

And is forecast to add **1.5 million new jobs** between 2006 and 2009,
60 percent of those in software-related activities.

International Data Corporation (IDC) study, "The Economic Impact of IT, Software and the Microsoft ecosystem on the EU, Croatia, Norway and Switzerland", April 2006.



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