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ICT COST Action 298

Participation in the Broadband Society

Descriptions are provided by the Actions directly via e-COST.

The main objective of this Action is to create new knowledge about users' creativity and to

facilitate their empowerment in a broadband information society. This knowledge is crucial

in order to strengthen the European Research Area. Moreover, this requires an examination of

the factors that can both constrain and enhance users abilities to shape and use ICTs,

nowadays also referred to as information society technologies and services (ISTs).

The term 'broadband' in this Action refers to an aggregate technology comprising several

technical solutions (such as IPv6, xDSL, broadband ISDN, Bluetooth, UMTS, wireless and

satellite networks, DVB-T, IP datacast, etc.). These have been introduced with the promise of

providing users with communication that is faster, easier and offers a higher quality of

service. The extent to which such benefits have been realised remains something to be

assessed. From this Action's perspective, the 'broadband society' refers to a possible, but not

inevitable, substantial transformation of the experience of telecommunications based on these

technologies allowing information and communication technologies to be used everywhere,

all the time and by everybody. Given the widespread aspirations of Governments and

companies to achieve this goal, the extent to which any such transformation has occurred

needs to be evaluated in a balanced manner.

The technologies mentioned above have resulted mainly from technological and institutional

imperatives. To what extent have potential users managed to find ways in which such

technologies can be useful, worthwhile and attractive? It is certainly known from previous

research that this can require those users to be creative in terms of fitting ICTs into their

activities or using them to find solutions to the everyday problems that they already

encounter. But how much is being demanded of those users, what considerations have a

bearing upon whether these technologies actually find a place in their lives and what new

issues, or indeed problems, can these ICTs themselves create, especially if they really are

'disruptive technologies'? Ultimately, users may well decide that their existing solutions

Information and Communication Technologies COST Action 298

Description

▶ Parties

▶ Management Committee



General Information*

Chair of the Action:

[Dr Bartolomeo SAPIQ](#) (IT)

Vice Chair of the Action:

[Dr Tomaz TURK](#) (SI)

DC Rapporteurs:

■ Mr Graham WORSLEY

Science officer of the Action:

[Mr Ralph STUEBNER](#)

Administrative officer of the Action:

[Ms Aranzazu SANCHEZ](#)

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Memorandum of Understanding

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Progress Report

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Poster

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Websites*

Action website:

<http://www.cost298.org>

Domain website:

<http://www.cost.eu/ict>

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Publications

▶ [The Good, the Bad and the Unexpected](#)

▶ [The Social Dynamics of Information and Communication Technology](#)

▶ [Innovating for and by Users](#)

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suffice, in which case these new technological options may find only a modest place in their

lives. Whatever strategies users employ for assessing and dealing with such innovations,

more has to be learnt about these social processes, including how they apply to the up and

coming generation of new information and communication products and services. It is only

by gaining this knowledge that it can be hoped to empower the user further in their

relationships to technology and through this hope to increase the quality of their lives.

The Action's specific objectives are as follows:

1) To examine the modalities in which users actually use ICTs and to discover their current

forms of creativity. This involves assessing existing studies and, on the basis of this,

informing industries and developing recommendations about ways to integrate these insights

into future products and services.

2) To look ahead to technology related-developments in the more medium term (e.g. the

planned implementation of certain national and EU regulations) in order to apply the insights

gained from existing research and indicate the implications

3) To suggest new approaches and methodologies for constructing a more user-driven model

of innovation in order to overcome the limitations of current models of 'user-centred'

development. This entails providing an analysis of the various conceptualisations of the role


of users held by those developing new applications within different parts of the ICT industry.

4) To produce a new phase in interdisciplinary cooperation. This would provide the basis for

conceptually integrating the various methods for assessing the experience of broadband

technologies from the perspective of different disciplines (e.g. through workshops that invite

people from various disciplines to attend in order to stimulate dialogue)

Last updated: 02 May 2011 



COST is supported by the EU RTD Framework Programme



ESF provides the COST Office through a European Commission contract



The Council of the European Union provides the COST Secretariat

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