Chapter 72

New Ways to Buy and Sell:
An Information Management Web System for the Commercialization of Agricultural Products from Family Farms without Intermediaries

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ABSTRACT

Granxafamiliar.com is a project for developing the Galician rural milieu both socio-economically and culturally in order to appreciate the quality of life and rural culture, to create communication links between the rural and urban world, to emphasize the importance of the traditional self-supply production market of Galician family farms, and to promote the spread of new technologies as a social intervention tool against the phenomenon of social and territorial exclusion known as the "Digital Divide".

Our objective is to boost social, economic and cultural development in the Galician rural environment. It is our aim to bring about the recovery of historical memory and the appreciation of local rural culture in the context of the information society. To this end, we are planning the architecture of www.granxafamiliar.com, which is developing the creation of a virtual community based on boosting commercial transactions and the possibilities for buying and selling traditional self-supply products that exist in the rural environment. We are hoping to promote it globally across the Internet by promoting the use and spread of ICTs (information and communication technologies) as tools and commercial channels for agricultural products, equally well-known among rural and urban communities, as well as information and learning channels.

We also intend to carry out an in-depth empirical and theoretical study of the territorial and social effects linked to the development of the information and communication society in rural communities. Our aim is to assist the progress of public decision-making and administrative efficiency for when the time comes to invest in suitable services and activities related to the information society in the rural environment, by defining the needs of those citizens resident in peripheral regions-areas with the purpose of developing their competitiveness and addressing the new social demands generated.

INTRODUCTION

Galicia, in the north-west of Spain, is an area which is cut off and switched off as an information society, occupying the lower places in the ranks of users of new technologies according to the information provided in the Retevisión-eEspaña 2007 report (pp. 232-235). Bearing in mind that Spain is in penultimate place at a European level, Galicia's marginal position as an information society is emphasized still further. A research team from the University of Santiago is developing a pilot scheme in several rural municipalities spread over Galicia with the objective of prompting social, economic and cultural development in the Galician rural environment and spreading the use of new communication and information technologies. The Granxafamiliar pilot scheme is part of a research module called E-Inclusion within the organic structure of the SINDUR project (Information Society and Urban-Regional Development) (SEC2002-01874, SEG2006/08889). In this chapter we present the technical and scientific characteristics of SINDUR, the methodology and development of granxafamiliar.com, an interactive multimedia digital tool designed to face the phenomenon of social exclusion known as the "Digital Divide" of the peripheral regions cut off from the information society and of the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs).

SINDUR started in 2002 as part of the national R & D plan of the now defunct Ministry for Science and Technology, today part of the Ministry for Education, and among its objectives was a plan to create and give continuity to a scientific debate forum focused on the analysis of the impact of new technologies on peripheral regions. This is currently in its second phase. The purpose of the SINDUR project is to study the effects and impacts of the information society on urban development in peripheral regions, in order to assess quality of life and promote the spread of information and communication technologies as tools of social assistance in facing the phenomena of socio-territorial exclusion known as the "Digital Divide". It involves researching, from a social point of view, the communities and territories which are cut off and switched off from the information society. The overall objective of the SINDUR project is to make a theoretical and empirical study of the territorial and social effects linked to the development of the information society and to the implementation of information and communication technologies. We intend to assist the progress of public decisions and administrative efficiency when the time comes to invest in the services and suitable activities of the information society, defining the needs of the cities and peripheral regions to develop their competitiveness and to address the new social demands generated.

The Granxafamiliar.com project involved the design, architecture and implementation of an information system, communication through a public website and another private site for managing the contents. This website was conceived using advanced free PHP programming with a strong multimedia content. It provides video, sound and digital image about the family farms to be shown and the products that they are offering

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