



Chapter V

Developing Electronic Content for the Support of the European Cultural Inclusion: From the Earlier “eEurope” Initiative toward the Future “i2010” Perspective

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Abstract

Various European initiatives and appropriate policies have been deployed (and are still in progress) to promote the creation and the distribution of new forms of electronically available content, aiming to support the “European cultural inclusion,” which constitutes a high-priority societal issue. The present works investigates diverse

potential opportunities for realizing and offering innovative services, applications, and/or related facilities in the market through the proper use of modern electronic communications, especially for the promotion of cultural and social targets. Such options implicate vigorous participation both of state authorities and market industry players to launch dynamic business partnerships in parallel with efforts to improve quality of life and social cohesion in order to forward new ways of participating in society and to advance the European diversity and rich cultural heritage.

Introductory Framework: The Importance from the Development of the Global Information Society

The information society represents one of the most fundamental changes (Chochliouros & Spiliopoulou-Chochliourou, 2003c) of our time with enormous opportunities for the society as a whole. Any relevant development offers huge perspectives to improve the way in which citizens live and work (European Commission, 2003a). However, the scale and pace of change present decisive challenges for individuals, companies, and certain groups of citizens and regions (European Commission, 2001a), thus having a significant social importance within the wider context of all relevant policy measures applied. For the particular European framework, the European Commission and other responsible authorities very early have underlined the extreme importance of the social dimension of all possible initiatives that are able to affect to the shaping of any political, social, cultural, and civil dialogue, and so to provide assistance to various measures (either planned or in progress).

Among the fundamental priorities promoted by the contemporary European Union's (EU) policies were: (a) to increase awareness of the social implications of the information society; (b) to build an effective "Information Society dimension," *where appropriate*, into well-defined social policies and actions; and (c) to identify precise actions designed to maximize the contribution of the information society to promote digital inclusion, employment, and culture (Royal Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2000b). New (interoperable) technologies and their applications can convert the entire image of our society, thus providing appropriate tools for such a transformation in a global environment. In fact, the wider European model of knowledge, based on truly multicultural societies, a wealth of memory and identity, and a unique way of dealing with technologies (Chochliouros & Spiliopoulou-Chochliourou, 2005a), has many opportunities to prevail in the new world order. In other words, the European way of life (or, alternatively, the "European dream") can offer to the entire planet a powerful response to the overriding challenges of civilization and progress of cultural values. It can be expected (Rifkin, 2004, p. 3) that

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