

NDS QLD Conference 2016

Shaping the future: preparing for change

Creating a market that serves people with disability

This paper describes the development of Techfinder.org.au, an information portal powered by Conexu Foundation, to provide consumer product reviews for people who are Deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired, and the people in their lives. Drawing on sector research, Techfinder.org.au identifies an inclusive digital future for the NDIS, where people with communication needs are empowered to find information to influence their own future. Through an interactive presentation, we'll trace the evolution from identifying unmet community needs through to delivery, initial outcomes and next steps. Delegates will take away an appreciation and interest in using digital platforms to encourage consumer choice, and co-create, to advance knowledge of unmet sector needs as we progress through the rollout of the NDIS.

Ability to communicate central to exercising NDIS consumer choice

NDIS is giving power back to the consumer and the ability to communicate is central to this aim. Designed as a community hub built by, the needs of the community, Techfinder.org.au's ratings, experience and advice sharing is delivered with information access needs in mind, with relevant video content translated into Auslan.

Communication the gateway to improved quality of life

Like NDIS, the goal of Techfinder.org.au is to create a network that enables people to connect, who may be isolated. By making access to information easier, and by creating awareness of information technologies that help, our communities are empowered to participate to each individual's potential.

Expanding our networks to engage wider range of voices

Partnering with organisations to develop and evolve the portal, Conexu will continue expanding its networks to engage mainstream services such as technology companies, researchers and corporate agencies, to strengthen our market.

Evolving connections for grassroots research via co-creation

A key part of our research includes community engagement and grassroots local focus groups. Conexu's consumer advisory group guides and directs our activities to relevance, with a view to targeting strategies across life's stages. We conduct research, such as our National User Needs Analysis, to better position ourselves to make evidence based decisions, and Techfinder.org.au is an important output. Early indicators suggest this is valued, and will continue to guide us in the most relevant direction for our communities.

Communication barriers should never stop people from reaching their full potential

Our vision of 'A connected community' and our purpose to use technology to bridge communication gaps sees the portal as a 'go-to' resource for people seeking information about, communication and technology that can help in everyday life, particularly as people transition between home, school, work and out and about.

Remaining flexible and reactive to place-based communication needs

We're concentrating our efforts on maximising digital impact, working with organisations committed to digital inclusion, to bring information to as wide an audience as possible. Coupled with targeted pop up workshops to get people started, we seek to balance the need for location-based support as sustainably as we can.

Bridging the communication divide

By connecting people to better communication outcomes through technology with a tailored information portal, Conexu accesses a diverse range of people, and an important research tool to help us remain flexible and responsive to evolve for the changing needs of the community. In keeping pace with rapid technological changes, and keeping people connected to better communication, we hope to positively impact health and wellbeing outcomes, and will continue assessing these at intervals via independent research.

Supporting information:

Some initial comments from community organisations and deaf networks

“Thanks for your great work – it is much appreciated.”- Garry West-Bail, GM, Deaf Sports Australia

“What a great initiative. Will certainly spread the word!! AND will be in further touch very soon.”- Johanna Plant, Chair, ACCAN

“We all think it is fantastic! We will add this to our website”- Rebecca Adams, GM, Strategy and Planning, Deaf Children Australia

“I hope this website makes success for all degree of hearing loss to find what they need. How excited it is already, let’s watch the climbing status.” - Andrew Green, Deaf Services Queensland

“I had a browse over the website and it looks great! You should be proud of the fruits of all the hard work that you have put into it. Well done to you and your team!” - Toan Nguyen, Newell Network

Relevant research

[Summary of the National User Needs Analysis study..](#)

Media and public relations material at date of submission

[View Zara’s Story, the launch video Techfinder.org.au.](#)

[Read the media release from 26 October, 2015](#)

Media coverage from community organisations and mainstream media

- [CICADA Queensland](#) – cochlear implant advisory service
- [Vicdeaf](#) – Victorian deaf society
- [Aussie Educator](#) – special education resources
- [Australian Ageing Agenda](#) – technology review for older Australians
- [Community Care Smart AT Collaborative](#) – assistive technology news
- [Queensland Government – Aids and equipment resources](#)
- [At the Rim](#) – international deaf blogsite