



DigiAcademy is an accessible digital education platform co-designed with people with accessibility needs to ensure universal inclusivity. Originally conceived by Dr Esther Murphy, a Trinity College Dublin Principal Investigator at School of Engineering/ADAPT Center, DigiAcademy is funded by an Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Feasibility Fund and EIT Health. DigiAcademy is an online e-learning platform that provides bite size video tutorials for digital literacy training for individuals living with intellectual disabilities. This platform has been co-designed with individuals with accessibility needs further adopting its message of inclusion. As society moves towards more digital services, a platform that provides tailored learning for those with intellectual disabilities is needed for a more inclusive society.

About Health Innovation Hub Ireland

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) was established by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health and is supported by Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to drive collaboration between the health service and enterprise. We offer companies the opportunity for pilot and clinical evaluation studies, and we provide the health service access to innovative products, services, and devices that they may not otherwise be exposed to. HIHI is built on the recognition that collaboration with enterprise can benefit patient care, patient pathways and outcomes. We assess all concepts for healthcare innovation from those on the

frontline – from clinician to porter. We encourage healthcare professionals to contact HIHI if they have an idea or solution to how something in your job might work better.



The Healthcare Challenge

Society has shifted towards digital means of communications, there are a large number of services using exclusively digital means of communications e.g., social media and email. For those not comfortable with technology such as email this can be isolating and limit their interactions with society.

In the European Union, there are eight million individuals living with intellectual disabilities, and of that 50% have communication difficulties with 1 in 3 individuals noting this as a barrier to healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted healthcare accessibility issues for individuals living with intellectual disabilities. The swift switch to online services during the pandemic became a large barrier to healthcare and the lack of digital skills and sufficient hardware limited the capacity of healthcare providers to deliver appropriate health and social inclusion services online.





The Healthcare Solution

DigiAcademy is an accessible digital skills video platform co-designed with people with accessibility needs to ensure universal inclusivity. This platform provides many detailed and accessible videos and webinars that provide instruction on how to use various digital services such as email.

DigiAcademy employs a qualitative co-creation focus group design methodology where participants discuss challenges of access and areas they would like to learn more about. The research data findings are then validated with the Citizen Advisory Panel. DigiAcademy have set up two paid Panels in Ireland (14 team members in total) and their European Union partners are replicating this model. From the Panels, DigiAcademy recruit and support training to become teachers and cover topics demonstrated in their research. These are critical topics for digital literacy to help individuals lead digital lives of their choice including access to education and employment where that is a goal. DigiAcademy is now also in collaboration with Microsoft providing range of new Microsoft topics delivered by new digital educators with intellectual disabilities.

HIHI Role

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) validates product need with key health opinion leaders or focus groups in HIHI clinical evaluations. A clinical evaluation is a key stage that allows feedback from end-users that can inform product application, market approach and offers the company to build a cohort of clinical champions and supports. HIHI adds value by connecting clients with key opinion leaders through a staged-gated framework.



Outcome Report

HIHI facilitated two separate expert clinical assessments of the DigiAcademy platform for product application and market value. Five clinicians were involved, these included occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and clinicians working in HSE procurement. This allowed comprehensive feedback to be gathered for DigiAcademy. Overall, all those involved in the clinical feedback sessions were impressed with the DigiAcademy platform.

As part of DigiAcademy's EI feasibility grant, there is an exploration into the market for DigiAcademy. All clinicians agreed that this was a worthwhile product and would be of benefit to their services. These sessions outlined a few potential barriers that included (i) lack of infrastructure around technology, (ii) staff engagement due to burnout and staff shortages and (iii) measurement of success.

Overall, the clinicians praised the design of this platform and highlighted that it could be used in a complimentary format to existing services. The clinicians also gave Dr Murphy insightful feedback into the procurement process and the next steps in development.

Testimonial

DigiAcademy is very grateful to the invaluable support provided by the Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI). It can be difficult to navigate the numerous the challenges, yet having a trusted partner such as HIHI provided a huge boost. HIHI supported accessing harder to reach networks and secure valuable feedback from clinical experts. The HIHI programme is extremely well organised and supportive. We were delighted to be part of it and would encourage other innovative companies to participate.

Dr Esther Murphy,
Principal Investigator for DigiAcademy



info@hih.ie
www.hih.ie

HIHI (UCC)
Western Gateway Building
University College Cork
Cork, Ireland
+353 (0)21 420 5560

HIHI (TCD)
H&H Building
St James' Hospital
Dublin 8, Ireland
+353 (0)1 896 2573

HIHI (University of Galway)
Lambe Institute
National University of Ireland
Galway, Ireland
+353 (0)91 492 072

HIHI (MTU)
CREATE Building
Munster Technological University
Cork, Ireland
+353 (0)21 432 6758