



DIGA Programme Guidance

This Guidance note is an intellectual output of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Project Digital Innovations for Growth Academy (DIGA) [2014-1-UK01-KA202-001780]. It provides information to support with the preparation and facilitation of the DIGA Learning Programme.

Introduction

The Digital Innovations for Growth Academy (DIGA) Project meets the strategic need defined in the Bruges Communiqué to improve the capacity of Vocational Education and Training (VET) to respond to the changing requirements of the labour market. A fundamental capacity for VET practitioners is to keep pace with shifts in new technologies, work organisation and internationalisation with emphasis on the deployment of digital tools, ICT and the internet. This project has focussed on developing a programme that will enable ETEs across Europe to effectively help SME learners to become digitally competent and to be able to utilise digital knowledge and skills within their business processes.

The Guidance has been prepared to assist those who wish to deliver of DIGA Learning Programme. They are aligned with the key objectives of the DIGA Project and provide guidance on how to approach the delivery of the programme.

As well as providing an introduction and overview to the DIGA Project, this Guidance note provides comprehensive information and materials in the following 4 areas:

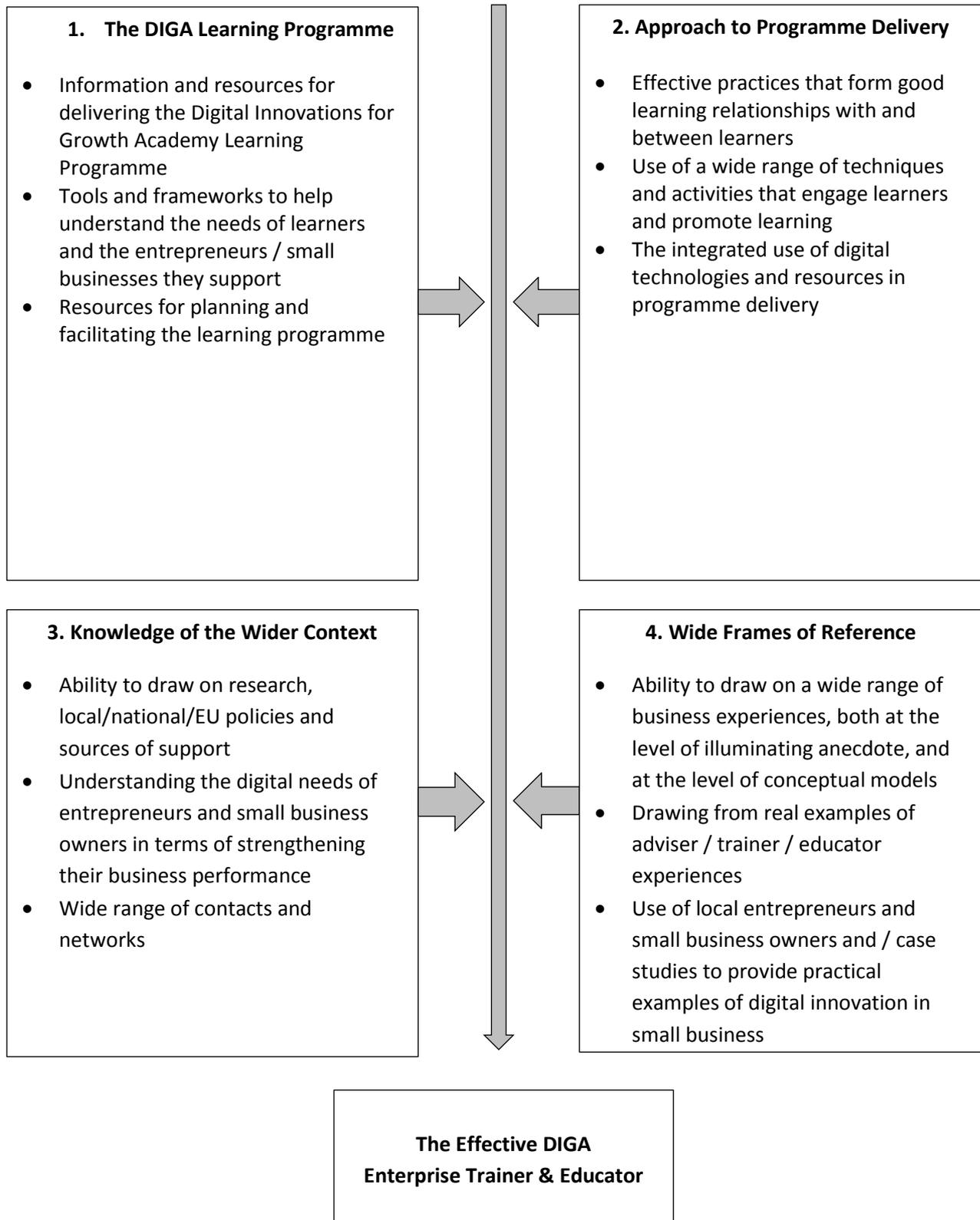
1. The DIGA Learning Programme – learning outcomes, lesson plans, slides, supporting materials, activities and additional on-line resources
2. Approach to Programme Delivery – promoting effective and appropriate teaching and learning strategies
3. Knowledge of the Wider Environment – understanding small business needs and policy priorities that provide the context for the DIGA Learning Programme
4. Wide Frames of Reference – ability to draw upon a wide range of experiences and resources to be provide practical and relevant examples of the benefits of digital innovation to small businesses and entrepreneurial learners.

This structure maps on to the components of an effective DIGA Enterprise Trainer and Educator (ETE) and has been adapted from the work of Professor Alan Gibb supporting small business advisers (Figure 1).

Links are provided throughout this guidance to further information and resources created and collated by DIGA project partners through 2016/17. This document is available on the Dga Project website [here](#)



Figure 1: Components of an Effective DIGA Enterprise Trainer & Educator





1. The DIGA Learning Programme

The DIGA Learning Programme provides an opportunity for *Enterprise Trainers and Educators* to enhance their digital knowledge and understanding and to consider how to integrate digital skills, tools and processes into business start-up and development training and support activities.

This 5-module learning programme has been designed and informed by extensive research ([here](#)) that analysed the needs and experiences of learners considering entrepreneurship as a career option, entrepreneurs running their own small businesses and their teachers and advisers.

The five modules are:

1. Enhancing Digital Awareness and Knowledge
2. The Role and Use of Digital Technologies and their Benefits to Business
3. Making Digital Deliver for the Start-up and Small Business
4. Enabling and Supporting the Development of an Entrepreneurial Digital Strategy
5. Designing Integrated (Digital Competence) Entrepreneur Support / Programmes

The DIGA Learning Programme Module Resources

Comprehensive resources have been developed for each of the 5 DIGA Learning Programme Modules. These include **session plans**, **training materials**, **slides** (powerpoint) and activity **worksheets**.

The **session plan** provides guidance for the facilitation of a 4 hour module, with clear learning objectives, indicative timings and schedule for presentations, group activities and individual reflection.

The **training materials** provide background knowledge and information that underpin the module. This resource has been developed to support facilitators, not as a complete resource for participants. However, facilitators are able to share extracts of the materials if appropriate. The materials include a number of examples and case studies – it is not expected that all will be used in each group rather that a sufficient range of examples are provided for facilitators to choose the most appropriate.

A comprehensive set of **slides** for each module has been developed. Facilitators should adapt the slide deck to the requirements of their group, individual style of facilitation and to reflect the local, regional and national context as appropriate. Please note that the layout of the slides should not be changed, as logos and EU Statements are included to ensure compliance with overall Erasmus+ programme regulations.

Each module involves a number of group activities and the **worksheets** provided have been designed to be handouts for participants and support the activities described.

The DIGA Partners have produced a comprehensive set of resources to support the delivery of the pilot learning programme. Whilst it is intended that each programme will be delivered to meet the common learning objectives and draw from the common bank of resources provided, it is recognised that there will be some variations in delivery – for example, the slides used and the cases studies considered.



Facilitators are asked to ensure that the resources are used and applied so that they are 'fit for purpose' for your audience / participants.

Overall, it is suggested that the DIGA Learning programme involve 20 hours of delivery with participants expected to undertake further independent work of up to 10 hours, in line with their personal development plan.

The DIGA Learning Programme Personal Development Plan (PDP)

An integral part of the DIGA Learning Programme is the Personal Development Plan (see Module 1 [here \(en\)](#)). Participants will have received the PDP as part of their pre-course information, or be introduced to the PDP in module 1. The PDP aims to enable participants to reflect on their learning and complete at the end of each module and / or in their own time between modules.

This focus on the personal development of participants provides a framework for individuals to consider their digital development to ensure they are suitably skilled in digital technologies to deal with existing or future demands of the digital native learner, entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Although the PDP is for individual participants and does not form part of the DIGA programme administration and evaluation processes, it does provide a useful structure for group feedback and reflection. As such, facilitators are encouraged to invite participants to share an element or example from the PDP – this can be done in pairs or small groups, or inviting only willing participants to share with the whole group.

DIGA research identified the importance of reviewing the personal and business perspectives and define an overall strategic vision for the enterprise. This involves identifying the stage of development of the enterprise and the digital skills vision for the enterprise. This analysis should be driven by the ethos of the entrepreneur, where they want the business to go and within what time frame. This detail focusses the mind and intentions of the entrepreneur and forces them to take a longer term integrated perspective of where their business is going and what is required to take it to that next level. The PDP provides a useful framework for this approach.

DIGA partners have introduced and piloted this programme with colleagues in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain and UK. The learning programme presented here is the result of the partners' work and evaluation of the pilots and we have sought to ensure that the programme truly meets the needs of those training and supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses across Europe.

Content and resources are available in 5 languages: Bulgarian, English, Lithuanian, Slovenian and Spanish; and are available here: <http://digaproject.eu/learning-programme/>



2. Approach to Programme Delivery

Drawing from DIGA research ([summary report](#)) the DIGA Learning Programme has been developed on the basis that,

‘educators must ensure that digital learning should not be about technology per se or the array of digital tools but demonstrate what they are used for (purpose) and how they are used (process and strategy) to effectively achieve that purpose in an entrepreneurial business environment. The purposes relate to how digital can be applied within and across the functional disciplines of the enterprise, most notably marketing and sales, market expansion, branding etc.’

Each module includes a mix of formal presentations to sharing information and knowledge, small group and individual activities. Reports, case studies and a range of learning activities are included in the programme resources for facilitators to use throughout the programme. It is important that a mix of activities and approaches are adopted to ensure a participative approach to workshop delivery and to draw upon the experiences and expertise of the different programme participants. The programme also recognises the value of participants’ experiences and expertise, and facilitators have the flexibility to encourage group discussions and other opportunities to enable shared learning between group members. The programme design is sufficiently flexible to allow facilitators to adapt their approach to individual groups so that the level of knowledge transfer is appropriate, reflects the needs of individual participants and is relevant to the local, regional and national context.

The role of the DIGA Learning Programme facilitator

- Establish the context of the learner. You need to know the people you are training, their digital knowledge, abilities, goals and needs. The use of the Personal Development Plan will identify these and will form an important foundation on which to modify and customise the programme module content and timing accordingly.
- The Personal Development Plan is an important self-reflection learning tool and engages participants, many for the first time with their level of digital awareness and allows them to clarify their specific digital knowledge and competency learning needs.
- Be aware of and identify your own strengths and weaknesses as an Enterprise Trainer / Educator of digital technology based on the prescribed modules and determine if you need to supplement these for the programme.
- Plan learning so that it has pace, involves a range of activities and is clearly directed towards relevant goals and learning needs identified in the PDP and DIGA Learning Programme learning outcomes
- Develop strategies which involve participants at every stage as partners in learning, not “pupils”. ETEs learn best when they are active and encouraged to reflect and build on their own practice (including being allowed to make and think about mistakes). Your role is to facilitate: to make sure that both the practice and the opportunities to learn from it, occur.
- As many of the modules are new and contain the need to impart policy and country related digital technology knowledge, the facilitator needs to ensure this information is up to date and relevant and made applicable to the business stage and sector of the participant. Further, as the



information will change participants need to be pointed to where this information can be found and updated

Delivering DIGA modules and exercises

- Employ a consistent process for sessions. Every training session has a similar shape, which relates to the way people best grasp new knowledge.
- You need an introductory phase to help participants bring to the surface what they already know or think about the topic. Brainstorming, critiquing a case study can all help with this. The results helps you to understand participants' starting points, and allows them to internalise subsequent content better, because they have brought their existing knowledge into play.
- A short information session (from you, from reading and discussion, from an assigned report from certain group members, from a guest speaker or YouTube clip, case study consolidates knowledge and provides examples of the *What, How and Why* of the content.
- Review the combination of in class exercise, online activities and support material provide with DIGA and adopt or customise to accommodate to participant needs to ensure they are relevant and can be used in action learning on the principles of 'digital' and the application of this knowledge to practical and relevant contexts which would benefit them in their advisory and mentoring roles to the entrepreneurial audiences they engage with.
- A practice phase (an activity or assignment) gets participants engaging with the new knowledge, trying it out, evaluating it, exploring new concepts and encourages peer learning
- A consolidation phase lets participants return to their earlier knowledge or experience, work out how the new stuff fits (and, if it does not, why not) and plan future actions based on a new level of understanding.
- Have a recap session at the start of each day / session / meeting. Ask participants what the standout points were in previous activities for them – these may not necessarily be the key points you had planned and don't worry if this is the case as it allows you to modify the session to build on those points. It also allows you to notice and if key earlier points have been forgotten, misunderstood or missed. If that has happened, you'll have to find a fresh way of re-presenting those points.
- Look at sessions in terms of variety. The average human attention span for concentrated focus on one task is less than 15 minutes. To keep participants focused, switch activities or types of activities regularly: from talking to listening or reading; from moving about on a project to sitting and writing; from individual work to pair work to group work. Use the exercises provided or create your own exercises based on them.
- Consider time and other constraints. Don't try to deal with too much: if 'covering' a topic simply means mentioning it at a lecture, participants will take very little of that away with them.

Further information on the design of a learning programme for entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial learning is provided in Module 5, including an introduction to [Design Inquiry of Learning](#)



3. Knowledge of the Wider Context

Studies show that SMEs in Europe grow two to three times faster and create new jobs when they embrace digital technologies. Growth in the adoption of technology and subsequent benefits are not just restricted to ICT businesses. Technologies can be used by existing or “traditional” businesses to transform all areas of business activity. Novel technology trends offer a new range of opportunities for business services in the knowledge economy and hold potential for the creation of new business value to EU companies. But this huge potential is dramatically under-exploited in Europe, with 41 % of enterprises being non-digital and only 2% taking full advantage of the digital opportunities (embracing the four main digital technologies – mobile, social media, cloud and data analysis).¹

The need to address this digital gap in the small firm is acknowledged in current literature and endorsed as a priority area for action in national and EU industry and Information Communications policy documents. According to Catinat (2014) ‘managers, entrepreneurs and business executives must have e-competences to grow, export and be connected to global digital markets in a digital economy and thus eLeadership skills are essential’ (Catinat, 2014:5). This need is further endorsed in documents such as (Communication on e-Skills for the 21st Century (2012); the Digital Agenda for Europe 2012; Digital Entrepreneurship Forum 2014). Empirically, the need to develop a more integrated perspective of digital and ICT across business functions was highlighted in the findings of a previous EU Transfer of Innovation project, e-Business Enterprise Learning for Women (EBEL) whose objective was to evaluate the use and application of Information Communications Technology (ICT) in female owner-managed small firms. ([DIGA Research Report](#))

Analysis suggests that national digital agendas are critical for boosting economic and social growth. Most Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries have established or are close to adopting national strategies addressing policy priorities related to digital economy. National strategies are cross-sectoral by nature and in many instances are designed to boost countries’ competitiveness, economic growth and social well-being. The various national digital economy strategies of EU member countries reflect the objectives set out in the Digital Agenda for Europe (EC, 2010), the first of seven flagship initiatives established under the “Europe 2020” strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

National digital economy strategies typically include the following key pillars: (1) Further develop telecommunications infrastructure (e.g. access to broadband and telecommunication services) and preserve the open internet; (2) Promote the ICT sector including its internationalisation; (3) Strengthen e-government services including enhanced access to public sector information (PSI) and data (i.e. open government data); (4) Strengthen trust (digital identities, privacy and security); (5) Encourage the adoption of ICTs by businesses and SMEs in particular, with a focus on key sectors such as (i) healthcare, (ii) transportation and (iii) education; (6) Advance e-inclusion with a focus on the aging population and disadvantaged social groups; (7) Promote ICT-related skills and

¹ European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry: Strategic Policy Forum on Digital Entrepreneurship; Fuelling Digital Entrepreneurship in Europe; Background Paper



competencies including basic ICT skills and ICT specialist skills; (8) Tackle global challenges such as Internet governance, climate and development co-operation.²

Digital Competence

Digital competence is the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes (thus including abilities, strategies, values and awareness) that are required when using ICT and digital media. It provides a framework that underpins skills development activities and the implementation of policies aimed to promote digitization – for businesses and citizens. Research and development continues into the areas of digital competence, with summaries of with notable publications presented in the table below:

Digital Competence in Practice (2012)	DigComp 2.1 (2017)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform tasks • Solve problems • Communicate • Manage information • Collaborate • Create and share content <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build knowledge effectively, efficiently, appropriately, critically, creatively, autonomously, flexibly, ethically, reflectively for work, leisure, participation, learning, socializing, consuming, and empowerment (EU definition, 2013)³. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and data literacy • Communication and collaboration • Digital content creation • Safety • Problem solving⁴

However, whilst the digital policy and competence frameworks develop, the DIGA research shows that the majority [of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial learners] are engaging with digital technologies and demonstrate intent to increase their usage of various digital tools over the next year. Further, respondents engaged a variety of digital tools beyond Facebook and LinkedIn to extend into online selling, online networking and ecommerce to a lesser extent. However, the ability and need for integrating digital into mainstream business activities requires attention and is a fundamental foundation for a successful small business’s digital strategy. Findings suggest that entrepreneur’s decide on training on a approach reflecting the current or immediate needs of the enterprise rather than a holistic and future planned approach. These results indicate that It is necessary to encourage entrepreneurs to adopt a more strategic long term perspective on the role and contribution of digital technologies to the next stage of development and growth of their enterprise, as opposed to an add on function or on the periphery and undertaken reactively when needed.

Further information available in Module 1 [here \(en\)](#) and DIGA Research Reports [Link](#)

² OECD (2015). Digital Economy Outlook 2015. OECD Publishing. Paris: [Link](#)

³ Anusca Ferrari (2012). Digital Competence in Practice. An Analysis of Frameworks. Report EUR 25351 EN

⁴ Stephanie Carretero, Riina Vouikari & Yves Punie (2017) DigComp: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens [Link](#)



4. Wide Frames of Reference

Whilst the information and resources provided with the DIGA Learning Programme is comprehensive and includes written and video case studies, facilitators (and participants) are encouraged to strengthen and utilise their personal and professional networks. This can help to keep up to date with new developments and ensure relevant practical examples are available to supplement the core content.

DIGA partners are committed to collaborative working and can be contacted directly for further information. Email addresses for each of the partners are detailed on our website [Contact us](#)

Links to other useful projects and partnerships are also included on our website [here](#)

And finally, the following are the definitions of digital capacity, digital pedagogy and digital literacy that have guided the DIGA research that underpin the DIGA Learning Programme:

Blended learning: a teaching approach that combines online and in-person learning, allowing a higher degree of personalisation and learner autonomy.

Digital Capacity: The skills, competences and attitudes that enable people to work, live and learn in a complex world that is increasingly digital" (National Forum Strategy Meeting, January 2014).

Digital entrepreneurship: Digital enterprises are characterised by a high intensity of utilisation of novel digital technologies (particularly social, big data, mobile and cloud solutions) to improve business operations, invent new business models, sharpen business intelligence, and engage with customers and stakeholders. They create the jobs and growth opportunities of the future.

Digital Pedagogy: 'the seamless integration of technology (digital tools/websites/hardware etc.) with great pedagogy' (Hawker, 2010)

Digital Literacy: digital literacy defines those capabilities which fit an individual for living, learning and working in a digital society" (JISC, 2014).

Digital Subscriber Line (DSL): Digital Subscriber Line technologies are designed to increase bandwidth available over standard copper telephone wires. Includes IDSL, HDSL, SDSL, ADSL, RADSL, VDSL, DSL-Lite and xDSL.

E-business: defined by the OECD as "automated business processes (both intra- and inter-firm) over computer-mediated networks", with the imperative conditions that "the process integrates tasks (i.e. a value chain) and extends beyond a standalone /individual application" and that "the processes should describe functionality provided by a technology, not a specific technology per se".

E-learning: learning conducted via electronic media, typically on the internet.

Electronic Commerce (e-Commerce): transactions conducted over IP (Internet Protocol) based networks and over other computer mediated networks. The goods and services are ordered over those networks, but the payment and ultimate delivery of the goods or service may be conducted on or offline. Orders received via telephone, facsimile and non-interactive emails are not counted as electronic commerce.



Enterprise Trainer/Educator: individuals delivering vocational education and training in the fields of entrepreneurship and business development; and acknowledge they may be working in colleges, universities, training organisations or business support organisations

Extranet: a secure extension of an intranet that allows external users to access some parts of an organisation's intranet.

Intranet: an internal company communications network using IP-based communications within an organisation.

MOOC: stands for "massive open online course": massive, since there is generally no participation limit, so thousands can enrol for the same course; open, as courses may be accessed free of charge by many different kinds of learners who normally register with their provider without having to satisfy any formal entry requirements; and online because the whole course, including its assessment and additional services, is delivered online (even though personal contact with tutors or other participants is possible)

Social Media: use of social media refers to the enterprise's use of applications based on internet technology or communication platforms for connecting, creating and exchanging content online with customers, suppliers, partners or within the enterprise. Enterprises using social media are considered to be those that have a user profile, an account or a user licence depending on the requirements of the social media type. Social networks e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing, Viadeo, Yammer, etc; Blogs or microblogs e.g. Twitter; Multimedia content shared websites e.g. YouTube, Flickr, Picassa, SlideShare; Wiki based knowledge sharing sites e.g. Wikip

Disclaimer:

This publication has been produced in the frame of DIGA (Digital Innovation for Growth Academy) Project. The project has been funded with support from the European Commission, ERASMUS+ Programme. The information contained in this publication reflects only the author's views and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Sole responsibility lies with authors

Thank you for your interest in the DIGA project.

<http://digaproject.eu/>