

Fax to: LRE-EGO-CreaNET, University of Florence  
Fax +39 06 233 22 75 29

Reference: @LIS Call, E-Learning and Cultural Diversity  
Pilot Project "SKILL SHORTAGE," Applicant: LRE-EGOCreaNET of the  
University of Florence, and Access Development Knowledge, Tuscany Region,  
Economic Development Department, Italy.

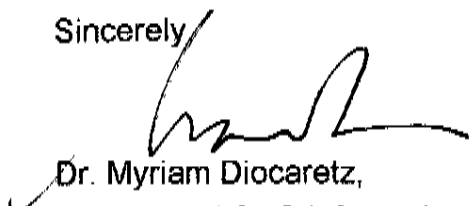
Maastricht/Heerlen, September 15 2002

*Letter of Intent*

The European Center for Digital Communication member organisation of the  
International Institute of Infonomics hereby states its interest in participating in  
the demonstration project named "SKILL SHORTAGE".

Our participation will focus on the *implementation processes and products for  
the communication and dissemination* of demonstration activities and 'content  
dissemination', through e-strategies as well as real-time events, including: ad  
hoc website, a portal, e-journal, interactive electronic publishing digital e-  
learning multilingual objects (e.g. e-newsletter), an international conference;  
monitoring and testing of prototypes or new products/services.

Sincerely



Dr. Myriam Diocaretz,  
E-Culture, ECDC/Infonomics  
Heerlen, The Netherlands

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

*Full name of organisation:* European Center for Digital Communication /Stichting  
Internationaal Instituut voor Infonomics  
*Legal status:* Foundation, non-profit  
*Address:* PO Box 2606, 6401 DC, Heerlen, The Netherlands  
*Official Representative ECDC:* Jan Bierhoff Email: jan.bierhoff@infonomics.nl  
*Contact details:* tel.: +31 45 4000540, fax: +31 45 4000545  
*Contact person:* Dr Myriam Diocaretz  
Email myriam.diocaretz@infonomics.nl

## Technical and Scientific Background

### 1. The European Centre for Digital Communication (ECDC)

The ECDC is part of the Infonomics network. This is a joint initiative of six higher education outlets (universities) and international research institutes in the region of Limburg/Maastricht, for a collaborative, multidisciplinary study of digitisation processes in all societal sectors. Infonomics functions as the umbrella and integration point, while work is concentrated in three international research institutes: the MERIT (economic and legal aspects), the Maastricht McLuhan Institute (interoperability and standardisation issues, agent technology), from the University of Maastricht, and the ECDC (*human interaction issues concerning ICT deployment*).

The specific contribution of the ECDC to the study of digitisation processes lies in the area of the changing communication paradigms, the rise of online communication structures, the changing positions in the emerging media landscape, the move from product-oriented to demand-oriented communication and ultimately the redefinition of the whole of societal information production- and consumption patterns. The scientific angle emphasises the socio-dynamic aspect: a focus on the way people and organisations deal with the newly available ICT and integrate these in radically transformed communication patterns. The scientific angle emphasises the socio-dynamic aspect: a focus on the way people and organisations deal with the newly available ICT and integrate these in radically transformed communication patterns.

The ECDC works and plans to further develop around three concrete research strands / application areas: e-Culture, Media and multimedia, and e-Government.

The ECDC has completed and is working on a variety of projects concerning e-publishing and Interactive Electronic Publishing. They all concern E-strategies, prospective studies, project management and/or include scenarios. We present a selection of recently completed projects made on the basis of their relevance to the proposed SKILL SHORTAGE project: The use of Internet in Higher Education Institutions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America ([www.infonomics.nl/globalequality](http://www.infonomics.nl/globalequality)); Occupational Change in the Media Content Industries; Emerging Multimedia Newsrooms ([www.mudia.org](http://www.mudia.org)); Scenario Building for Future Media Consumption Patterns; Monitoring Multimedia: Making Change Visible; Wide-screen Action Plan Evaluation; Pan-European Publishing 1990-2000: An Assessment; Terra 2000; Information Management through Multi-Agent Systems (I-MASS); Towards a Digital University Press, among others. For more information: <http://www.infonomics.nl>

## 2. The University of Maastricht

The University of Maastricht is the youngest university of the Netherlands (founded in 1976). The university currently has about 9.000 students and almost 3.000 staff. It is a rapidly expanding institution.

One of the unique characteristics of the UM is its system of problem-based learning. In 1999, for the fourth time in a row, the UM has been placed at the top of the ranking list of Dutch universities. There are seven faculties, offering a total of thirteen programmes: the Faculty of General Sciences, the Faculty of Arts and Culture, the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Faculty of Psychology and the Faculty of Law.

The University of Maastricht was founded with the idea to provide education with a different approach than education offered by traditional universities and opted for problem-based education. The UM also developed a strong international commitment. Both problem-based education and the international orientation are attractive to many students, from the Netherlands and from abroad.

## 3. The International Institute of Infonomics.

**'Infonomics' is defined as the interdisciplinary science investigating the digitisation of society.** It brings together insights from a variety of different scientific fields, covering the liberal arts such as philosophy, linguistics and law, the natural science such as mathematics, informatics and operational research, as well as the humanities, such as psychology, economics and business studies. More specifically, IIOI analyses the impact of so-called 'new' information and communication technologies on individual and collective behaviour, psychological and cognitive patterns; on organisational and economic structure and performance; on ethical norms and values and the legal system; on knowledge accumulation and diffusion; on learning and competence development; on communication modes and culture. It does so in an interactive, interdisciplinary fashion looking both at impacts as well as feedbacks.

By choosing for the name 'Infonomics', rather than the notion of information society, we wish to emphasise the interdisciplinarity of the proposed new scientific field combining information sciences with both liberal arts and behavioural sciences.

The Institute can draw on the substantial resources of its founding members, which include the University of Maastricht, MERIT (the Maastricht Economic Research Institute on Innovation and Technology) but also the two Limburg based polytechnics for vocational higher training, and in the future a network of affiliated European universities.