



PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005

## **Recycled Computers and the Internet Bring Communities to Life**

Galway City's Lord Mayor Brian Walsh is to present a number of awards to refugee groups in the city at a special Internet Awards Ceremony hosted by the **Digital Enterprise Research Institute (DERI) at NUI Galway** and the Galway Centre for Independent Living (GCIL) on **Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005**.

The awards are part of an ambitious cross community education programme organised by DERI and the GCIL whereby unwanted computers from the business sector which were destined for the scrap heap are recycled back into the community. The ceremony will take place at **DERI, IDA Industrial Estate, Lower Dangan, at 10.30am**.

The programme places special emphasis on getting the computers to groups that could be defined as socially disadvantaged or marginalised, and then teaching those groups how to use the Internet to meet social, business and community needs.

In the last three months, DERI has given Internet courses to over 160 people from all walks of life ranging from members of the Brazilian community in Gort, to active retirement groups in Ballinasloe. DERI has also started a series of innovative blogging courses which have resulted in Mayor Walsh setting up his own blog (<http://brianwalsh2005.blogspot.com>). Other participants include a novelist who is publishing her work in the form of a blog for others to comment upon and review. (<http://www.sandbunting.blogspot.com>)

"This initiative by DERI and NUI Galway is warmly welcomed by Galway City Council and forms an integral part of the Galway City Development Board's policy which aims to create an online or e-Galway which is accessible to all of its citizens," said Mayor Walsh.

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Brendan Smith, DERI Education and Community Outreach Officer added that the classes have proved very popular with people across the city and county.

“The classrooms have been bursting at the seams to contain everyone who has wanted to attend. We’ve set up every sort of online presence from individual weblogs to community websites. It’s been really satisfying to see the positive impact that this course has had on the daily lives of these groups. In the case of the African groups it has turned a disparate group of individuals into a vibrant collective that have successfully used the internet to enrich their daily lives.”

Tess Kadesa from Kenya is among those receiving an award at Wednesday’s ceremony.

“DERI’s course on Online Social Network has done wonders in helping to develop a sense of community amongst many of the African refugees in Galway. It has enriched our lives and given us a sense of purpose. We are really enjoying the new activities that have grown out of this course,” she said.

*ENDS*

For further information, please contact Brian Cummins at 091 495180 or [brian.cummins@deri.org](mailto:brian.cummins@deri.org). Print quality photographs will be available immediately after the event.

#### **Notes for Editors:**

- **DERI (Digital Enterprise Research Institute) is the largest research organisation in the world developing the next generation of internet technology – the Semantic Web. DERI is a Science Foundation Ireland funded Centre for Science and Engineering Technology (CSET) located on the campus of the National University of Ireland Galway.**
- **The Semantic Web is a machine readable version of the web. Currently when you search the web, YOU have to filter the search results and decide what is relevant. The Semantic Web will enable more efficient searching, as the computer will do this filtering for you. Additionally this baseline technology will also power the intelligent transfer, sharing and negotiation of information between computer systems.**
- **The Galway Centre for Independent Living was established by disabled people in Galway City and County to empower those with physical, sensory and emotional disabilities to take control of their own lives. More details can be found at <http://www.gcil.ie/hme.html>**