

Instructions

Kia ora. The questions below are to help InternetNZ understand the triumphs and challenges you have faced to date in your mahi we have supported.

We want to celebrate your successes and understand the obstacles you have encountered so far. This will help us all to learn what we could do differently next time.

This form will be placed on our website for transparency.

Please complete and submit this form no later than the date stipulated in your funding agreement. Should you be unable to meet the deadline, contact us to arrange an alternative date, by emailing funding@internetnz.net.nz. You may not be eligible to apply for further grants from InternetNZ if this is not submitted. The completion of this form should be overseen by someone with an intimate knowledge of the funded mahi.

Mid-project report

*** indicates a required field**

For your convenience, you will find some information for this section has prepopulated from previous forms you have completed. Please amend any details as needed to ensure we have the most accurate information.

Project title *

Library digitization and Alexa rollout

Amount granted by InternetNZ? *

\$37,216.00

Must be a dollar amount.

Provide a short summary of the work that has been completed so far as part of this project/research. *

As of the 24th of May 89% (3098) of the 3500 devices have been distributed to clients. While during the January - March period distribution slowed down to less than 200 devices per month higher uptake in the early months has ensured that we are still on track to distribute the remaining 402 devices by June. This includes 222 devices that have been set up and installed by Noel Leeming.

In early 2021 a user feedback survey was undertaken including questions on the Alexa devices. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive including such responses as this

"Alexa is my new best friend we spend hours together every day she is very helpful and knows what I like to listen to books and music. Everyone should have an Alexa"

There was also some negative feedback, this largely centered around people's lack of understanding about how to use the device. These people were all offered extra support and training to ensure they are getting the most out of the Alexa.

Describe the "who, what, where, when and why" of your initiative.

When do you anticipate that your mahi will be completed? *

Digital Inclusion Grant

2020 Grant Round Mid Year Report

Application DI000432020 From Mr Josh Davies

Form Submitted 28 May 2021, 2:06pm NZST

30/09/2021

Must be a date.

If you are uncertain, please provide an estimate.

What are the outcomes of this project so far? *

The successful rollout so far has gone a long way to improve our modernization and digital transformation efforts. It has simplified the process of getting audio content to listeners and has helped us launch our new podcast Outlook. The podcast contains organization updates, interviews, and a look at what is new in the library.

This also means we have been able to convert the majority of pre-existing library users to the new digital platforms as such we can follow through on the planned stoppage of CDs in June 2021.

The Alexa device's ability to let users pick their own content and use the device how they like has also improved the library experience for many of our clients. Previously, a CD would be sent with a variety of books from a preferred genre. The Alexa device allows individuals to select content when they want it. The search functionality means they can get exactly what they want easily.

By increasing the user base, Blind Low Vision NZ is also able to develop a better understanding of what people want out of the Alexa skill through feedback and user data. This knowledge will give our developers more insight into improving the user experience, removing bugs, and improving the skill's functionality.

Describe major achievements of the project so far in terms of benefits for participants and/or others.

What have you learnt so far? *

With the much wider rollout, we have learnt what some of the hurdles going forward will be. These include individuals' personal situations as to whether they have access to the internet, finances, and their level of understanding of the internet.

We have also learned that some, predominantly our elderly clients, have found difficulty in learning to use devices. As a response, Noel Leeming now provides additional support and training for some users. We also have the alternate Bookdrive, which is a USB drive with a variety of content sent from the library that can be played by the user on their preferred device. Bookdrive is designed to help two issues: a lack of technological understanding or reluctance from some users and users who do not have a reliable internet source.

We have found that we needed to be more proactive in recruiting new users. Initially, we believed that uptake would be much easier and client-driven. Over the course of the last 12 months, we have found that we had to put work into informing clients about what the devices can be used for and the value they have. This outreach was done on a range of platforms including in-person, email, and social media. Whenever this was done we found a notable increase in the number of people registering interest.

We have also found that the demand for the Noel Leeming set-ups has been a lot lower than expected. Initially, we forecast 1500 of the 3500 would be using set up and installation from Noel Leeming, currently it sits at 222. Though many did not opt for a Noel Leeming installation, we have found through feedback that many people are not getting full usability from the device or experiencing issues. In the 222 who opted for a Noel Leeming installation, many felt that 30 minutes wasn't enough to reach proficiency. As a result, we are looking at using the Noel Leeming services to provide extended training to existing users to increase clients' understanding of the device.

In addition, through the Ministry of Social Development funding of the 3500 devices, unexpectedly, it seems we are close to saturating the number of clients who can adopt

the technology given the specific Alexa Dot Echo requirements. Going forward we are looking into versions of the Alexa device that don't require clients to have a smartphone for set-up. From preliminary research, it seems that the Alexa Echo Show may be the solution, however, it is considerably more expensive than the Dot Echo. We are also working on a solution to the issue that around half of our 12,000 clients do not have an internet connection because they either are not interested in an internet connection or cannot afford an internet connection.

(For research) What findings have you made so far? (For projects) Describe areas for improvement, challenges or reasons for success.

What (if anything) have you changed in your approach and practices? Why was this necessary?

Often, aspects of the project that have changed come as a result of what has been learnt during the process.

When we found that some users do not have another device available to set up the Echo Dots Blind Low Vision NZ started looking into purchasing the Echo Show. Echo Show's work on the same platform as the Echo Dot but has a screen included with a simple interface. This is meant to be a solution that will help people in different circumstances while still being connected on the same platform and slowly transition people to the voice interface.

When finding out that some of our clients either do not have access to the internet or have restricted access we started to look into the feasibility of using Skinny Jump to provide a low-cost option for our clients. This is still in the early phase as we are looking at what is the best option to provide long-term support to clients.

Training provided to volunteers and clients for Alexa has also evolved as we have learnt more about what people need. This has resulted in changing some aspects of the training process and looking at how we can use Noel Leeming's services to provide extra people how to use devices and make sure people are getting the most out of the echo speakers.

Blind Low Vision NZ strives to find new ways to support our members. With funding support from InternetNZ, we have been able to distribute 3000 accessible smart devices to people across New Zealand. With these devices blind and low vision users can access books news, reminders, and much more all through voice commands.

Describe any changes from the original proposal and the reason the change was required. We may use this information to help others doing similar work.

Which population group/s were affected by this project or program? *

Health > People with disabilities

Health > People with disabilities > People with vision impairments

Please choose only the group/s that were at the very core of this mahi.

Financial report

*** indicates a required field**

Project income and expenditure

Please provide details of any project income (funds received) and project expenditure (funds spent) to date.

Use the 'Notes' column to provide any additional information you think we should be aware of.

Digital Inclusion Grant
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Income description	Income type	Confirmed funding?	Income amount (\$)	Notes
			Must be a dollar amount.	
Ministry of Social Development	Government grants	Confirmed *	\$430,000.00	Initial funding for Alexa rollout
Kelliher Charitable Trust	Philanthropic grants	Confirmed	\$50,000.00	
InternetNZ	Philanthropic grants	Confirmed	\$37,219.00	
Lion Foundation	Philanthropic grants	Confirmed	\$20,000.00	
Chorus NZ	Philanthropic grants	Confirmed	\$42,798.00	
Lottery Community Foundation	Philanthropic grants	Confirmed	\$46,520.00	

Expenditure

Expenditure description	Expenditure type	Expenditure amount (\$)	Notes
Echo Dot devices	Infrastructure and/or hardware	\$192,461.50	3850 devices priced at \$49.99 each
Noel Leeming installs, training and support	Salaries and wages	\$167,472.00	@ \$93.04 per half hour session
Alexa Skill development: BLVNZ service delivery	Salaries and wages	\$75,000.00	
Alexa Skill development: Library	Salaries and wages	\$45,000.00	
Project Manager salary 1.0 FTE		\$45,000.00	
Library Volunteer Coordinator salary .6 FTE		\$30,000.00	
Contact centre support and troubleshooting		\$79,000.00	7.5 FTE x 20%
Estimated cost of evaluation (all staff)		\$10,000.00	

Income and expenditure totals

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Total income amount	Total expenditure amount	Income - expenditure
\$626,537.00	\$643,933.50	-\$17,396.50
This number/amount is calculated.	This number/amount is calculated.	This number/amount is calculated.

Have you experienced any issues with your intended project budget to date? If so, please explain reasons for any major variances or for providing incomplete information:

Staff time has spent on the project has been higher than anticipated. (not indicated in the budget) This is largely due to staff outside of the project assisting eg service delivery staff promoting awareness and helping set up and install. As well as additional efforts to reach potential users through digital communications and phone calls.

The budget also did not include the cost of the survey undertaken in early 2021 as project-related questions were part of a larger survey.

The lower uptake of the budgeted Noel Leeming services fees also means we are having to look at those allocated funds to see how we can best utilise that money. The current plan is where possible to purchase the Echo Show devices for new users as well as having longer training sessions and return training sessions through Noel Leeming to ensure people continue to use the device while growing their understanding.

Feedback

You are almost at the end of our mid-year reporting process. Before submitting your mid-year report, please take a few moments to provide some feedback.

Please indicate how you found the acquittal process:

Very easy Easy Neutral Difficult Very Difficult

How many minutes in total did it take you to complete this form?

400

Estimate in minutes (i.e. 1 hour = 60 minutes)

Please provide us with your suggestions about any improvements and/or additions to this form that you think we need to consider:

InternetNZ is a membership organisation. Would you be interested in hearing more about becoming a member?

Yes please No thanks I am already a member