# ACCANect 2018

**Session 14: 2:20 – 2:30pm**

**Digital Springboard**

**Presenter: Jessica Perrin, Social Innovation & Digital Inclusion Manager, Infoxchange**

**ACCAN is pleased to welcome Jessica Perrin to speak about the new Infoxchange (in partnership with Google). Digital Springboard is a community based program, working to address identified digital skill gaps to ensure no one is left behind in today’s digital world.**

JULIE McCROSSIN: Ladies and gentlemen, if I could ask Jessica Perrin

to head towards the chat pit of fun and I want to welcome a conversation

about digital springboard. Jessica Perrin is the social inclusion and

digital inclusion manager at Infoxchange and she's addressing the

digital skill gap in partnership with Google. Please give Jessica

a warm round of applause.

JESSICA PERRIN: Thank you, Julie. The chat pit of fun? I quite like

that. Hello, everyone. What a ripper of a day to be here. Thank

you so much for having me. My name is Jessica Perrin and I am the

manager at Infoxchange. A lot of you might be familiar with our

work. We are a not-for-profit social enterprise with the mission of

technology for social justice. I only joined Infoxchange earlier this

year and ultimately it was that social mission that drew me to where

I am today. We've already heard this morning a lot about the

power connectivity has in the good sense and also in the not so

good sense. Often Infoxchange we're trumpeting the good stuff.

That's what we do on a day-to-day basis. It's our job to tackle

some of Australia's biggest social challenges through the creative

and smart use of technology. Of course, we don't do this alone like

none of us do in this room, we partner with community

organisations, government and corporate partners to help us do

what we do best, to support people experiencing disadvantage.

Now that might be a woman who's experiencing family violence, it

might be a young person experiencing homelessness or it might be

one of the 2.5 million Australians who are still not online. Our remit

is quite broad in Australia. It's a very broad spectrum and we're

very broad to work with our community. I'm going to jump back

quickly to that stat I just quickly quizzed past, but in our view is

very significant, the 2.5 million Australians who are currently not

online. Now, that's a pretty significant chunk of our population that

are missing out on the social, educational and financial benefits of

being online and it's something that we at Infoxchange are certainly

determined to address. We have done a lot of work in this space, as

have many of you in this room trying to close that gap to bring basic

digital literacy forward and it's an integral area for us to continue

focusing on. But what we've learned I think interestingly from these

level entry programmes where we're teaching basic digital skills is

what happens once you've come online? What happens once you've

made that jump and are using technology? That's what I want to

talk about today, because we found there's a bit of a gap. You've

come online, but you're not embracing it to its full extent. How are

you getting help? Instead of talking about the 2.5 million people

who are not online, I want to talk to you about a different group of

people and this is the 4 million people living in Australia that are

accessing the Internet exclusively through a mobile connection.

Now, they are technically online. They have their phone, they can

look at the footy scores and the weather and perhaps chat on

Facebook with their friends, but they aren't necessarily seeing the

benefits of the Internet to help them thrive. I'm going to start

clicking through some of my slides. Do you think that would be

nice? These are people who have a Smartphone, but probably don't

have a fixed Internet connection at home. They use Facebook every

day, but shutter at the thought of having to apply for a job online.

They watch Netflix, but can't navigate MyGov. People in Australia

are making use of the Internet more than ever before. I was at the

launch of the Australian Digital Inclusion Index a few weeks ago at

Telstra and they were sharing that year on year the data and

Internet usage of their customers has doubled from last year to this

year and the year before that. It's significant and that is going to

continue. But - and there's a really big "but" here - the gap

between the digitally included people making the most of technology

and the gap between the people who are digitally excluded seems to

be widening. So who are the people that are missing out? If you

live rurally, if you have a disability, if you're Indigenous, if you're an

older person, or if you have low levels of education or employment,

chances are the digital revolution for all its many wonderful benefits

may not really be benefiting you. In fact, we're seeing household

spend more and more on Internet connectivity and services even

low-income households but the challenge is so many people don't

have the ability to make the most of what is literally in their

fingerprints and that's what we're trying to change. (Fingertips)

a few months ago we launched a program with Google called digital

springboard. It's a community-based learning program that works

to address identified skills gaps to ensure no one is left behind in

today's digital world. It reaches people that are already online, that

aren't seeing the substantial benefits that digital has to offer largely,

because they don't know how to. Digital springboard is built on

a number of face-to-face courses. Here are some of our courses.

They range from on the left here we have build your CV to social

media strategy, so if you're keen on jumping forward to learning

how to code. They're being delivered nationally. These

programmes are something that we're really proud of and we have

built in partnership with community organisations and the best bit is

they're free. For organisations that come on board as a digital

springboard partner they can take these to their local library,

community centre, house, to work with the people they endeavour

to serve. We've had a number of organisations come on board

which is something we're proud of. The Red Cross, the Smith family

to name a few as well as the National Network of Neighbourhood

Houses. There's a small handful of them on the screen, but today

we have over 70 organisations across Australia who want to go on

this journey with us and who want to improve digital skills in their

community with our courses and curriculum. Now these partners

are absolutely integral and I know some of you are in this room

today, so first of all, thank you. We built this program with Google

on a couple of key premises. One was that we wanted to design

courses, so partners could pick and choose which ones they liked

that would suit their community. You don't have to do all of them.

You can look at them and say "I want to do build your CV" or "I'm

working with a young fun group of kids who want to learn how to

code". Pick and tailor what suits you. Our courses have to be

delivered face-to-face. For all the benefits of the online world, our

research and evidence has shown us the face-to-face training is

where we can have real impact. We want the opportunity for

interaction, connectivity, for questions to help the people that we're

all here and endeavour to serve. We've been using a train the

trainer model, which means people sign up as a community partner

of our program and we deliver either face-to-face train the trainer

with them or do a webinar if they are not in an area accessible to us

and believe me, we are trying to get around this country. None of

the team's feet have touched the ground, but the ultimate idea is

we give them the skills, the know-how, the resources to run these

courses on their own terms in their own time and it turns out it

works. Let me introduce you now to some of the people we've had

the pleasure of meeting on this digital skills journey. We have been

running the program for a couple of months now, but their stories

highlight exactly what it is we've been trying to do. A couple of

months ago we met with the Clontarf Foundation who aim to

improve the prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

men. They work within the school system and use Aussie Rules or

Rugby League as a carrot. The boys are teenagers and Clontarf had

the good fortune to recognise a lot of the students they're working

with, whether that be aged 14 or at the end of your high school

education maybe 17 or 18 were about to embark on applying for

their first-ever job and so they decided to work with us to run

a number of our Build your CV courses across Australia. They've

been run across Victoria, WA and the Northern Territory and I had

the very good fortune of being able to pop along to a couple of the

sessions in Darwin and in Perth. Let me tell you, these kids are

smart. They are totally switched on and really bright, but they have

no idea what awaits them in the world of job applications and how

you go on that journey to get a job. Before I move on, I'm going to

make you guys answer these questions. This is one of the key

questions we have. This is one of the key questions that we pose in

our Build a CV course. Hands up if you think, what percentage of

recruiters will check your social media before they hire you? 35 per

cent, 68 per cent, 90 per cent. You're right. You should see the

boys in the room elbow each other and have a snigger as to what

they put on their Facebook from the weekend before. In Perth we

had 19 boys at these sessions and they'd never really considered

how their social media presence or their digital footprint could

impact their ability to get a job. There was one guy in the group

called Billy, dead-set on getting into the police force, another who

wanted to be in the mines, one to break into journalism. Billy

needed to apply for a cadetship, the other boys needed to apply

online and the prospective AFL player needed to show he had

off-ground smarts as well as the ability to play footy I guess. Now

these kids knew their way around devices. They all had iPhones,

knew how to stream things and do a tonne of things. Had they had

any experience in applying for a job online? None. They are

learned skills and it's going to be really tough for them to jump on

the career ladder without them. I've got a few minutes left so I'm

going to blur through some content. We're looking at one end of

the spectrum with the young boys that I'm talking about, but there's

the other end of the spectrum which Jess Wilson will speak about

next. People at the older end of the spectrum are a big concern for

our programming. I think of my mum. A few years ago she decided

that she wanted to leave her job in retail and she was kind of

progressing towards retirement. She wanted to do something

a little less demanding. She had not written a CV in 30 years. She

had great skills, but close to no digital skills and ultimately there is

no chance she could have written a CV by herself. Now the needs of

my mum and the needs of Billy are very different. The way they

learn is different and the way they interact with learning institutions

is very different. When we designed digital springboard we were

conscious of pleasing both audiences and beyond those two and the

only way we could do that is by working with community partners.

My mum now goes to digital skills classes at her local library in

Adelaide where digital springboard courses are taught and Billy is

supported by mentors at the Clontarf foundation. We needed

Google to help fund us and give us some international expertise

when it came to course development. We needed government to

come on board at which State and local absolutely did and we

needed community partners like yourselves and many others to

open the doors to their community and start working on digital

skills, but really we have only just started to touch the surface. So

if you want to be involved in the future of digital skills and make

a great partner, please talk to me and get in touch. I'm waiting to

hear if Billy got his cadetship and it's my mum's mother in two

weeks' time and unfortunately for her she's getting her first ever

iPad. It's our job to ensure no one is left behind in this digital world

and I invite you to join us on this journey. (APPLAUSE)

JULIE McCROSSIN: Thank you so much for that wonderful

presentation.