



EU-funded success stories

WIRELESS NETWORKS TO EMPOWER LOCAL COMMUNITIES

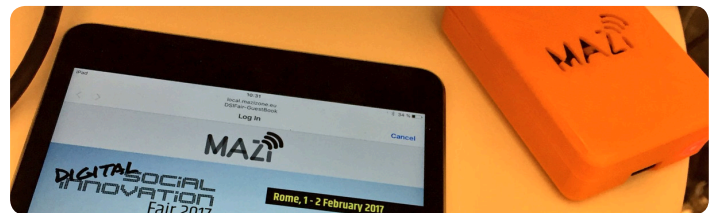
MAZI

DigitalSingleMarket #DSM



Even though modern technology can bring us into contact with people across the world, we often feel the need to build a sense of participation and community at a more local level. The EU-funded project MAZI (“together” in Greek) helps people who are located close to each other to stay in touch and socialise, share knowledge, discuss and participate in decisions about the space they live in. It is creating an alternative technology known as Do-It-Yourself networking: this combines wireless technology, low-cost hardware, and open source software applications to build local networks known as community wireless networks: they boost internet connectivity in the local area but also promote local interactions and services. The data these networks use can be generated and shared in the same place.

The project is highly interdisciplinary, and brings together specialists in computer networks, urban planning, human-computer interaction, community informatics, and interaction design. The toolkits it developed comprise a low-cost, basic computer (such as a Raspberry Pi) and software to be downloaded onto it. This creates a ‘MAZI Zone’, like a wi-fi network, enabling community internet access, including in rural areas where there is otherwise limited or no connectivity. The MAZI toolkit can be used for collaborative work, to share photos from an event, to encourage neighbours to talk to each other, to create a virtual ‘guest book’, and other social interactions. A number of pilot projects are making use of MAZI zones: in London, to bring together the residents of a socio-economically mixed community and encourage them to participate in debates about the area’s redevelopment and gentrification; in Zurich, to work on cooperative housing and sharing urban space; in rural Greece’s remote communities, in museums, and soon also for urban renewal and social inclusion in Rio’s favelas.



MAZI in brief

- **Total Budget:** EUR 1,846,640
EU contribution: EUR 1,352,890
- **Duration:** 01/2016-12/2018
- **Countries involved:** Greece (coordinator), Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

KEY FIGURES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



More than 12.5 million Raspberry Pi computers have been sold.



In May 2018 alone, more than 900 MAZI toolkits were downloaded.



In 2017 the European Commission launched the WiFi4EU scheme, to finance free public internet access in European municipalities.

NEXT GENERATION INTERNET (NGI)

The internet makes it possible to interact with others, access information and entertainment, and support the manufacturing and the provision of services. However, concerns about privacy and transparency remain. It is essential that the next generation of the internet is designed for humans, to create a competitive digital economy and a sustainable and inclusive society. The goal of the European Commission’s Next Generation Internet initiative is to shape the internet as a powerful, open, data-driven, user-centric, interoperable platform ecosystem, enabled by decentralised solutions such as blockchain that are trusted by users. The Commission’s proposed new Digital Europe Programme allocates EUR 1.3 billion of funding for high capacity digital networks and innovative digital services in the EU, which will help develop the next generation of digital technologies.

More info: <http://www.mazizone.eu>