

English- and French-speakers' Use of the Canadian Health Network

Presentation to the Canadian Health Network

October 16, 2007

ACTION for Health

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Applied Communication Technology: Information . Organizations . Networks

Canadian Health Network
October 16, 2007

English- and French-speakers' Use of the Canadian Health Network

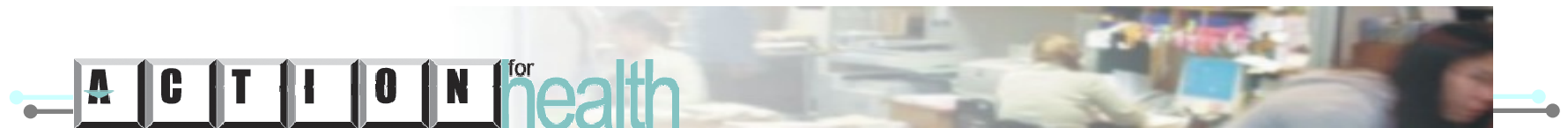
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ACTION for Health Project Goals

Project goals are to explore:

- a) whether or not the introduction of information technology into the health sector is meeting stated policy objectives, and protecting what Canadians value in their health system;**
- b) the use of the internet as a means of gaining access to health information; and**
- c) the challenges that arise when new IT is introduced into health sector work places.**



Project Themes

Values: Equity, Collective & individual responsibility, Efficiency and Effectiveness

What are the socio-technical constraints to realizing Canada's vision of the new economy through the application of information technology in the health sector?

Research Settings: Health Care Settings, Web-based Delivery Tools, and Community Settings

Lay User Issues
Health literacy
The role of
information
intermediaries

Case Study
Approach

Ethical & Legal Issues
Liability, intellectual property and
issues arising in other themes
(e.g., employment).

Legal and Ethical
Analysis

Case Study
Approach

Health Care
Professional
issues
IT use in context
Challenges of
standardization

Policy Recommendations and Implications for IT and Systems Design

Guiding Questions

Who has access to computer mediated health information in which settings?

What general, health and technology literacy issues arise in relation to lay user consumption of health information?

What role do human information intermediaries play in the consumption of on-line health information?

What role do technological intermediaries play in the consumption of on-line health information?

• Other Related Projects Undertaken

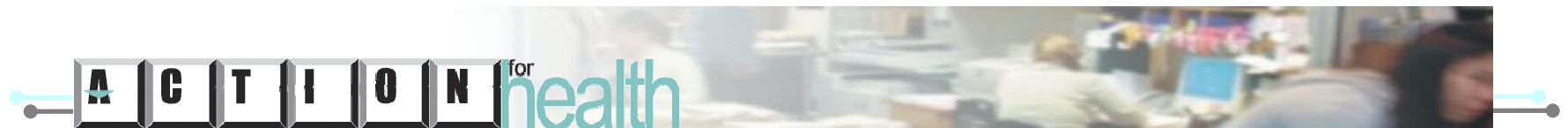
Investigation of:

Proportionately low use of BC HealthGuide OnLine web site amongst BC Residents

Rural women's health information seeking in Ontario

A wired waiting room – interventions to enhance access to on-line health information

Community capacity development – access to computers at community centres in Newfoundland



Outline

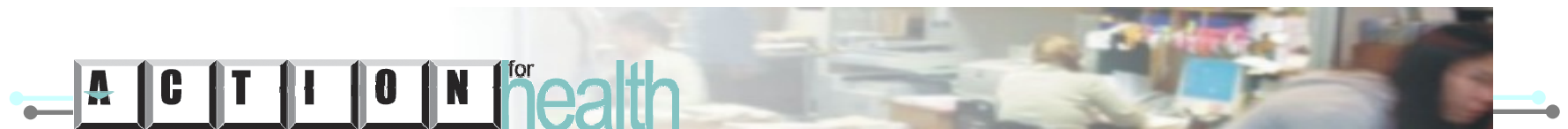
- Research partnership
- Research questions
- Study design and participants
- Key findings
- Key recommendations



• ACTION for Health

- Studies issues related to the use of technology for the production, consumption and use of health information, in varied settings
 - Public consumption of health information
 - Computerization in work environments
 - Legal and ethical issues

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• 2005 web survey

- Satisfied with the CHN website, but consulted other sources
- Visited the CHN website for personal and professional reasons, shared information with others
- Francophone and anglophones used the CHN website differently
- Not possible to quantify the impact of health and lifestyle decisions resulting from the CHN

• Research questions

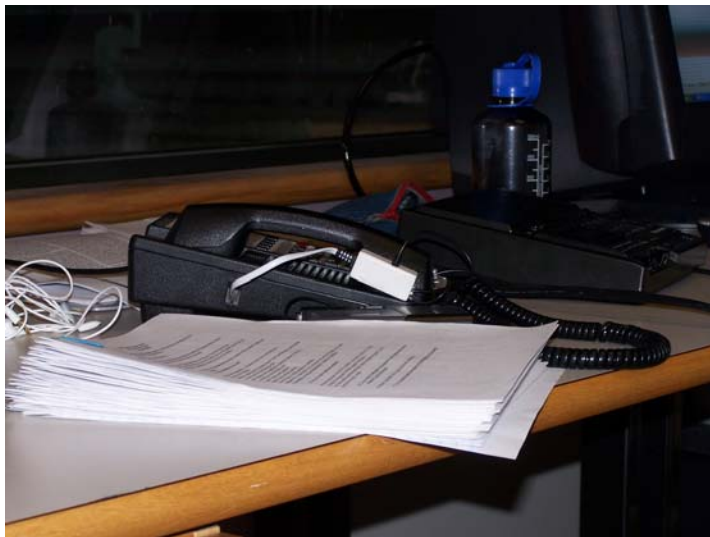
- What is the CHN's role in the health information seeking processes of CHN users?
- What do CHN users (lay and health professional) do with the information they obtain from the CHN?
- What do the Francophone users think of the French-language content on the CHN?



• Study design

In-depth telephone interviews

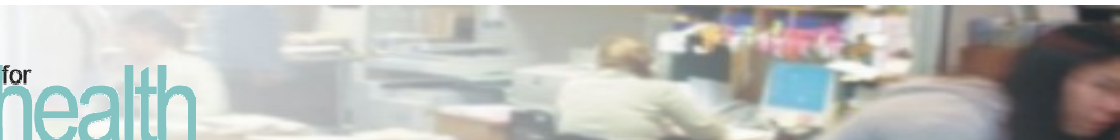
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Follow-up e-mails

Participant selection

Preferred Language	Potential Interview Participants	Interview Participants Contacted	Interviews Declined	Non-responses	Interviews Conducted
English	107	15	1	1	13
French	18	18	3	3	12
TOTAL	125	33	4	4	25



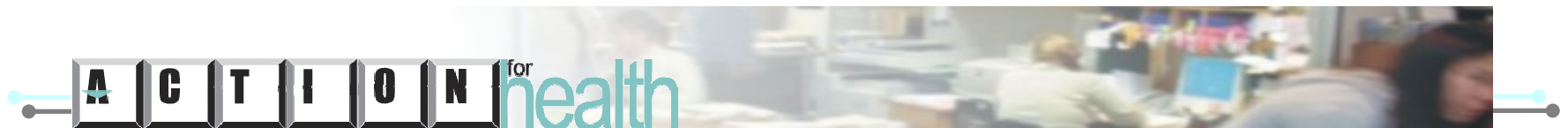
Study participants

Preferred Language	ENGLISH n = 13	FRENCH n = 12
Nurses	5	2
Highest level of education	college = 2 undergrad = 6 Master's = 5	high school = 2 college = 5 undergrad = 2 Master's = 3
Place of internet access	home = 13 work = 9	home = 12 work = 3
Province	BC = 3, AB = 2 ON = 5, NS = 1, NB = 1	ON = 2 PQ = 10
Age	mean = 48 range = 35 to 74	mean = 45 range = 25 to 65
Sex	female = 11 male = 2	female = 11 male = 1

• Research approach

Searching → Understanding → Using

- Focused on process in context, not outcome
- Supports and constraints
- Experiences of laypeople and health professionals
- Linguistic and cultural similarity and difference

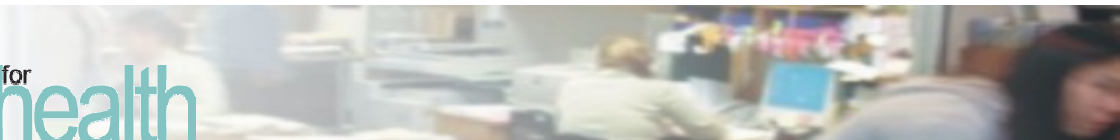


Key findings: searching

□ The internet was a key source of health information, but they consulted multiple:

- Websites
- Media
- Health professionals
- People

internet → solution? → health professional



Key findings: factors influencing the source

- Urgency or severity of the health issue faced
- Access to sources
- Job responsibilities and level of education



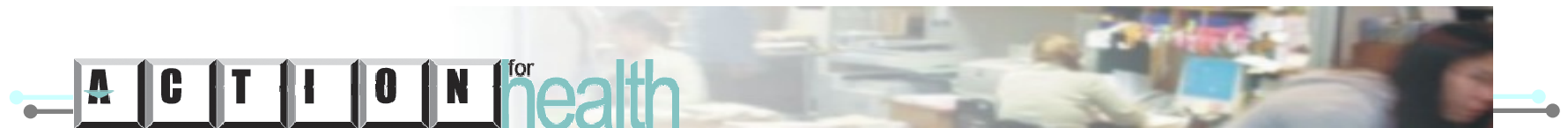
Key findings: on-line search strategies

- General search engines
 - Experienced and inexperienced internet users
- Known websites
 - Inexperienced internet users
- Comparisons between websites
 - For additional information and determining credibility



• Key findings: understanding

- Even health professionals and the highly educated public need help making sense of web-based health information



• Key findings: Francophones' experiences

- Used the CHN in ways similar to the Anglophones
- More varied search strategies
- Considerable use of English-language websites
- Cultural differences presented challenges



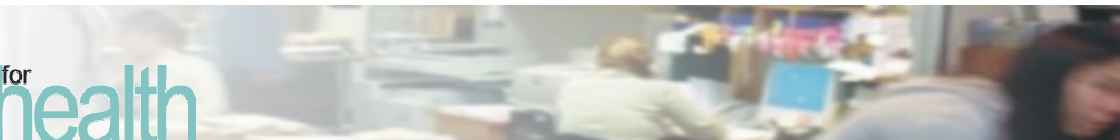
• Key findings: using

- Some “healthy choices”
- Specific health issues were
top-of-mind
- Understanding, peace-of-mind
and engagement with a physician,
not self-care



Key findings: supporting others

- Almost all participants found and assessed health information for someone else and communicated it
- Participants with and without formal health training took on this role
- Nurses exchanged web-based health information for continuing education



Key recommendations

1. Connect CHN users to on- and off-line resources
2. Broaden the scope of the CHN to include condition-specific and medication information
3. Lead the user from simple to complex, and to related topics
4. Put CHN in the minds of Canadians when they open their web browser

Discussion

Thoughts

Feedback

Questions

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