

DORFFUNK – THE REGION’S COMMUNICATION CENTRE

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DorfFunk (*VillageRadio*) is a smartphone application intended to serve as a rural area’s communication centre. The app features various functionalities around the principle of enabling communicative exchange among local and village communities.

The mobile application holds up to seven channels, offering various forms of interaction within a local area: “Gossip” allows for everyday talk with public text messages and pictures on local issues, observations or questions. The channels “Seek” and “Offer” resemble a local market square and are intended for the non-commercial exchange of goods and services. Various “groups” can be requested and facilitate public as well as private spaces for communication on special topics, while “Tell us” opens up a direct link to the local administration.

In addition, the two channels “News” and “Events” offer the latest information on what is going on locally as well as regionally. Users can post comments on all these channels and contact each other through private messages.

DorfFunk was developed in the context of the project “Digitale Dörfer” (*Digital Villages*) in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany, by the Fraunhofer Institute for Experimental Software Engineering IESE. It enables digital communication and local interaction in given rural communities, to support identification with the region and a local sense of belonging. It aims to support aspects of rural life such as neighbourly help and networks of mutual exchange. Furthermore, it offers a platform that brings together various actors who are vital for rural life – citizens, clubs and associations, members of church congregations, volunteers, public administration and local policymakers.

Application scenario

Communicative exchange and information to support local sense of community

Digital technologies

Mobile application with social media functionalities for local digital communication

Socio-economic impact

- Economic: facilitates the local market
- Social: cohesion, identity, inclusion, participation and access to information. Improved governance and participation

More info: www.dorf.app



Purpose of the tool

DorfFunk is a communication tool that aims to bring together a region's population and strengthen rural communities. It expands various forms of everyday talk into the digital sphere, such as gossip, bartering or personal support. Additionally, DorfFunk offers the latest local information on various topics such as politics, events and other issues of community life. The app promotes local and regional exchange, supports existing networks of clubs, associations or initiatives, intensifies the connection between citizens and public administration, and helps to organise volunteer work as well as community life in general.

Description of the tool

DorfFunk is one of several software tools developed in the project “Digitale Dörfer” (*Digital Villages*) that cover services of general interest, such as local supply, delivery logistics, administrative services and communication. All these tools are interconnected through the “Digital Villages Platform”, which handles centralised data, user and account management. The app has been developed according to the real-life needs of rural communities following a co-creation approach. Starting off in three test municipalities in Rhineland Palatinate, DorfFunk is now available in eight federal states in Germany with more than 50 000 registered users.

DorfFunk runs on Android and iOS smartphones. It is free of charge to users; however, it needs to be activated by the municipal administration. Due to the limited financial capacities of rural municipalities, a small monthly fee has to be paid. As a location-based service, DorfFunk asks users to register in their home municipality and to set a geographic range for information and communication to be received.



Image Source: Fraunhofer IESE

Areas of socio-economic impacts

Social	Supports social cohesion, local identity and inclusion through communicative exchange, grants access to relevant information by various actors. Strengthens the connection of the community. Improved governance, participation in rural community life and exchange with the local public administration.
Economic	Facilitates local market.