



Circuit Rider Conference 4.0 – BVSC, Birmingham

28 and 29 February 2008

As part of Lasa's continued work with the ICT Hub, Lasa organised and ran the 4th National Circuit Rider Conference in Birmingham on 28th and 29th February 2008. We brought delegates together to learn from each other by sharing ideas, information and experience. The conference was designed to be practical and accessible so participants could take the knowledge they gained and apply it to their work in the voluntary sector.

The original conference notes, materials, presentations, blogs, photos etc were uploaded as the conference progressed and are linked to the Conference Agenda at <http://www.ukriders.info/conference/agenda> - this is a compilation of the notes and are presented "as is" apart from spellchecking and occasional grammatical corrections. Please also note that the short speedgeek sessions were generally not reported upon.

There is also a flickr site (<http://www.flickr.com/ukriders>) where photos from the Conference have been uploaded. You can view the Circuit Rider Conference set of photos - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ukriders/sets/72157603999153248/>. To view all photos from the conference have a look at <http://www.flickr.com/tags/crconf08>

There are videos (courtesy of David Wilcox) of the conference at http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=DB87B12F0F5BDC9F

This event was different from other ICT conferences - We are interested in technology because we believe it can help voluntary organisations achieve their missions – not for its own sake. So this was an event where people:

- spoke in plain English and avoid jargon.
- offered solutions which are relevant to small voluntary organisations.
- discussed issues and learnt from each other rather than passively listening to "ICT experts"
- celebrated the independence and diversity of the voluntary sector



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Conference Programme at a glance

Day 1			
9.30	Registration		
10.30	Welcome and opening session		
11.30	Break		
12.00	Workshop sessions 1:		
	Talking Telephony	Naked in a goldfish bowl – Web 2.0 and the non profit world	Online community building and engagement
13.30	Lunch		
14.30	Speedgeek sessions:		
	Web-based office tools	Healthy computing and you	Ubuntu
	Key software solutions for the VCS	The Shuttle mobile ICT suite	
15.30	Break		
16.00	Workshop sessions 2:		
	Open source – practical tools for the job	Naked in a goldfish bowl – Web 2.0 and the non profit world	Online community building and engagement
17.30	Evening reception		
18.30	Close of day 1 and dinner (not provided)		

Day 2			
9.15	Registration		
9.45	Welcome		
10.00	Workshop sessions 3:		
	Circuit Rider Training and Standards	Community Wireless Mesh Networking	Evaluating ICT Support
11.30	Break		
12.00	Speedgeek revisited:		
13.00	Lunch		
14.00	Workshop session 4:		
	Bringing your organisation to life through digital media and the web	Circuit Rider Learning and Skills Development	ICT and Social Enterprise
15.30	Break		
16.00	Closing session and evaluation		
17.00	Conference close		

Delegates

Lewis Atkinson	Community IT Academy
Paul Allen	London Advice Services Alliance
Matt Armitage	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
Mirza Baig	Sponsored by London Advice Services Alliance
Pauline Baker	GMCVO
Chris Bell	WM ICT Champion - Community First
Indira Beqiri	Sponsored by London Advice Services Alliance
Sue Blantern	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
Lucian Borcanescu	Slough REC
Rae Coope	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
Robin Cope	London Advice Services Alliance
Simon Davey	Preponderate.network
Wayne Davis	Sustain
Alpha Doumbouya	Sponsored by London Advice Services Alliance
Simon Duncan	Cosmic
Matthew Edmondson	M6-IT
Rachel Farr	Advice For Life
Sue Fry	Community First
Rob Gentles	Sussex Community Internet Project
Ian Goodman	London Advice Services Alliance
Paula Graham	Hackney Voluntary Action
Dave Greenhalgh	Cumbria Council For Voluntary Service
Wendy Griffiths	The Haven
Vicky Halliday	NCVO
Rob Harvey-Duffield	Sandwell Community Information
Paul Henderson	Ruralnet
Josh Hoole	IT4Communities
Paul Jefford	Advice For Life
Clive Jenkins	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
Abdalla Kayal	Sponsored by London Advice Services Alliance
Helen Kell	Communities @ One
Sean Kenny	VOSCUR
John Kenyon	John Kenyon Consulting
Morgan Killick	ESP Projects Ltd
Richard Lander	LocustWorld - Community Connected
Philippa Leary	Superhighways Partnership
Jim Lyons	Manchester Community Information Network

Miles Maier	London Advice Services Alliance
Aba Maison	London Advice Services Alliance
Ngozi Mayo	Superhighways Partnership
Michael McAndrew	Voluntary Action Westminster
Mark McLean	Telephone Helplines Association
Alem Mengesha	London Advice Services Alliance
Simon Metcalfe	Sussex Community Internet Project
Alyson Moore	London Voluntary Service Council
Jacky Moran	London Advice Services Alliance
Catherine Morgan	NCVO
Emmanuel Oduro	Superhighways Partnership
Brian O'Hare	
Marc Osten	Summit Collaborative
Marcus Oтите	Superhighways Partnership
Cath Padfield	Communities @ One
Catherine Palmer	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
Marcus Pennell	Sussex Community Internet Project
Phil Perry	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
David Poulter	Advice for Life
Kevin Rapley	HRO'C Interactive
Richard Rothwell	M6-IT
Ian Runeckles	London Advice Services Alliance
Andrew Samuel	VONNE
Bijal Shah	Support4IT
Richard Smedley	M6-IT
Sharon Stainsby	LVSC
Terry Stokes	London Advice Services Alliance
Paul Ticher	
Maher Ugaily	Superhighways Partnership
Mike Veitch	Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services
Mark Walker	Sussex Community Internet Project
Paul Webster	National Association For Voluntary And Community Action
Besrate Wengel	London Advice Services Alliance
Kate White	Superhighways Partnership
Laura Whitehead	Popokatea
David Wilcox	Partnerships Online

Welcome to the Circuit Rider Conference 4.0

Conference opened by Terry Stokes and Ian Runeckles from LASA – aim of Conference is to aid interaction, networking and learning from each other.

For those bloggers we are going to be using the ukriders and crconf08 tags so that all the really useful information can be pulled in to one place.

Introductions and words about what people want to get out of conference (not noted as too many people) Really wide range of people from England, Scotland, Wales and overseas delegates.

Theme of conference allowing people to take a break from writing funding bids and “being turned in to a social enterprise”

Keywords from introductions:

- Network
- Share
- Learn
- Absorbing

Spectrograms:



Asked for people to use 2 hats when answering questions:

1. viewpoint of a Circuit Rider
2. from the point of view of groups you work with,

Question why you are where you at. Does this change your perspective?

Statement 1 - VCOs using the internet (web2.0) now have the tools and power to change the world for the better...

First comment - Is it the potential to use the power – “this moment in time”

High level of disagreement with statement...

Those that disagreed were for the following reasons:

- The question irrelevant because the intended audience are very good with technology.
- What is definition of Web2 – where you are on the spectrum could influence where you are – may move all to dead centre.
- Are you trying to change the world, does it work??
- Technology is available – are the enough community organisation using it to make a difference....
- Technology has always existed – not technology but people change the world.
- What is appropriate – old school, what ICT can do to help organisations. Cannot see “virtual world” getting to VCO’s – how much use they are for everyday organisation is not necessarily relevant.
- Different issues for rural areas – no access to broadband, predominance of older people. Take a longer time to change their world – resistance, appropriate use.
- Significant political element – how effective is it in changing the world, the reaction to it by politicians – not as successful as it should be. Technology and will is there but also political will to stop it happen.

Those that agreed were for the following reason:

- new tools can bring together people who believe in the same cause, for example the consultation on Heathrow airport extension.
- Seeing it on the ground. Direct action – use website differently with tools to mobilise people around an issue.
- It is happening now – local community group to save canal. Using Facebook and Flickr to get message across globally.
- It is happening organically.
- Tools can be catalyst.

Feeling that organisations are spending time and energy on making organisations run and not changing the world. Used mainly for fire fighting and fighting for funding.

John Kenyon (perspective from outside UK) – promise and organisations doing good things but in infancy. Organisations are working to keep organisations – metaphor of a meal given - web2 is like a dessert and most organisations are still tucking in to their starter.

Raised a number of questions...

- The question as it is worded makes you think about what you are doing with VCO’s
- ICT is just one tool in an organisations armoury several tools, part of armoury.
- Structural problems for organisations – need an element of creativity to make it work and VCOs are run by committees and risk averse.
- Where does the impetus come from – what is pushing the organisation....what is the driver?

When the questions was asked again there was some movement towards disagree.

Three key issues that were raised:

1. What is Web2? Clarification of what we mean by a term....
2. Difference between reality and aspiration - is it an appropriate aspiration?
3. Concern raised as tools are owned by somebody and giving information – slightly cautious of what information you give up.

Reflection – thread of strategic thinking through sessions about how we work with organisations.

Statement 2– *Circuit Riders do not have the skills and correct level of skills to the satisfaction of VCO's they work for*

Responses were very much compressed around neutral with the following comments:

- Don't know enough about organisations to give opinion
- Skills – what do we mean by skills – technical or soft skills
- ICT a combination of technical and strategic – deliver both to organisations, establish business case and then advise of practical – improve on strategic awareness
- Don't have Circuit Riders in Wales – outside looking in as don't have anything to compare with
- Need a context of individual and organisational skills

Was some disagreement for the following reasons:

- Personally have the skills to do the job – if don't have the skills failing of employers rather than circuit rider context.
- Moving technology means constantly changing skill levels and demands
- A lot of skills come through experience – cannot read in a book.
- Problem is that organisations do not want CR to be learning on the job – the way we develop skills?

There was some agreement with the statement:

- What is the measure of VCO satisfaction?
- Focus on horizontal (expert on ICT) – need a vertical skills (processes and objectives or organisation) – overqualified in ICT and not in the sector....
- Can one person hold all of those skills? Or is it a team needed?

The challenge at the Conference will be to think about how you would move along spectrum based on sessions...are you going to move?

Talking Telephony

Overview:

Access your current telephony knowledge. Learn about telephony products and services that can help your clients save money or become more efficient (this includes mobiles, non-geographic numbers, working as a virtual team, DECT, VoIP, indirect access services and more).

Explore ways of bridging the skills and knowledge gap that many VCOs have when it comes to telephony and discuss case studies for the costing, planning and implementation of telephony solutions.

The session content will be adapted from the telephony courses provided by THA to IT volunteers and circuit riders in January 2008.

Session Facilitator:

Mark McLean ([Telephone Helplines Association](#))

Biography:

Mark McLean is a consultant and trainer for the Telephone Helplines Association (THA), currently working on a project for the ICT Hub to raise the profile of telephony. He has recently worked with the Department for Schools, Children and Families and telecoms suppliers to implement a common telephony platform for several small-to-medium VCOs and is THA's main contact with Ofcom. Mark is the author of the ICT Hub's Good Telephony Guide to be published in March 2008. Before joining THA, Mark set up a contact centre to deliver several national telephone helpline services for the Department of Health attracting 3 million call minutes per year.

Session Notes:

Introduction

ICT Hub identified that I.T. was more prominent rather than the Communication aspect and therefore a perceived need to start taking telephony more seriously at a strategic level.

Telephone Helplines Association (THA) run training courses for managers of Small to Medium sized organisations and ICT volunteers.

The voluntary sector operates on a range of different levels and telephony is quite a mess. Therefore the seminar is not intended to be technical, or a course on VOIP (voice over internet protocol). The aim is predominantly on voice communication – blackberries, e-mails, MSN etc

The session opened with a 10 minute quiz to test the group's individual knowledge on a range of issues on telephony.

The full multiple-choice questionnaire will be made available soon, but the answers to the questions are provided together with any discussions which arose as a result.

The group then discussed the following issues of the voluntary sector and telephony, particularly barriers to telephony:

- The person answering it – i.e. the way the calls are routed.
- Many small organisations don't have a call clearing system – you ring someone and its random who you get to speak to you may not get the best interaction with the service.
- Telephony systems not reviewed – so they have more lines than they need, they don't know their options or understand what they mean.
- If there's a heavy workload, cover is difficult as there are not enough people employed – i.e. staff capacity.
- People want to use VOIP and link it into their network but don't have sustainable enough IT – e.g. Windows 95 which they can't link to their phone system.
- Being sold Business Communication Manager (BCM) – e.g. you need to have a pc permanently linked to it just to log billing. They're also tied into a 5 year contract so lack of sound advice.
- Serviced offices and having to use their internal lines where you're charged a set rate for any single handset you want. E.g. in Salford a VCO need 12/connection per month and £20/connection for VOIP because they're using a facilities management system. They don't make money from the rental from the place, but by providing you with services which you don't need. But on the short term, serviced telephony can be useful you won't mind paying a premium as you're not taking on rental agreements and the project can start up and shut down without being locked into a long term contract.
- The way organisations develop – they start with a couple of volunteers and they buy a phone from a shop, and then they

expand and they have to get a proper phone system which then costs a lot of money.

- When an organisation grows organically and they keep adding and adding.
- What about buying specific kit for a project which the funders will fund, but the bigger picture means that it's uncoordinated .
- Hard to get funding for core costs. Also the convergence of costs – the organisation needs a server and a phone system so a huge leap in technology at the same time.

Path/Strategy

- Circuit riders could provide advice on a strategy, as it's important to build communication into an IT strategy rather than having it as an add-on.
- Look at costs – make it a core component of management meeting, and review – help somebody. e.g. do an audit of their system, what do people need?
- Lobbying funders – tell them the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of telephony – it's a core cost – make sure they're providing money for the right thing.
- Methods of raising awareness – do groups know that options are available e.g. make better use of CVS, ICT Hub, case studies, best practice and guidelines to raise awareness.
- Who is responsible for strategy? - sometimes an office manager might be the person dealing with telephony and there's no joined up thinking with the IT dept.
- Telephony has to be built in because if it's not been linked into business planning then it will only ever be an also ran.
- Working with small VCOs the telephony bit disjointed from IT and as a CR who has no in depth knowledge of telephony, it's difficult to help them integrate.

Knowledge of options/understanding

Lots of negative things and not many answers –

- lack of impartial information, using vendors who locked them into contracts finding impartial Internet based information
- Not easily self discoverable – you can learn how to hook two PCs up to a server, but not how to install a telephone network system.
- Lots of pricing scams around
- People with skills keep hold of them and don't share.
- Can be reluctant to migrate telephony (which is established and works well) to the IT dept which is often perceived as not working

Solutions

Check the telephony bit on the suppliers directory.

- You need to train IT people up in telephony for solutions for the future.
- Use a preferred suppliers list – e.g. ICT Hub/Lasa Suppliers Directory.
- Don't go looking for problems to solutions - the old switchboards are very reliable and there is no need to spend money on switching over to other systems – help people understand what they can do with what they've got already.
- Lots of jargon busting needed.

Staff capacity

- No funding for dedicated staff – no administrator/receptionist. Example was given of organisation which has a 24hr helpline for victims of abuse.
- Occasionally that number is routed through to the office where staff who are not trained to deal with these calls have to

Naked in a Goldfish Bowl - Web 2.0 and the non profit world



Overview:

With the growth of social media, organisations now have power to share information, express and influence opinion, collaborate, facilitate action, create new communities, fundraise and drive membership.

This workshop will offer a presentation and a game that Circuit Riders can then use themselves to help organisations understand and plan their use of Web 2.0. A mini site has been set up to support what we aim to deliver on the day with materials, activities and links for Circuit Riders and other nonprofit technology advisors to be able to take away and use when supporting their local organisations with their needs. You can keep up to date, or contribute over on the new mini site at www.open2media.org

Session Facilitators:

Laura Whitehead ([Laura's Notebook](#))

David Wilcox ([Designing for Civil Society](#))

Nick Booth ([Podnosh](#))

Biographies:

David Wilcox specialises in helping organisations and groups collaborate using a mix of creative events and social media. At the conference there will be an opportunity to try one of the workshop games he and colleague Drew Mackie have developed. These were first used in the early development of what became UK online centres, and more recently in the Digital Challenge programme and by Government departments planning how to use social media for public engagement. David has also worked as a Fleet Street journalist, and a consultant in regeneration partnerships and community engagement. He blogs at <http://www.designingforcivilsociety.org>

Laura Whitehead is a creative web and print designer specialising in the use of new and innovative technologies to further the development of effective communications for the non-profit sector. She is passionate about participation, inclusion and accessibility for all. Working in the sector for over 15 years, Laura has also supported a wide range of organisations and communities with their knowledge and information development, and their collaborative partnership working. Laura blogs her insights and discoveries with modern fangled media at <http://laura.popokatea.co.uk>

Nick Booth is a broadcast journalist by training who now specialises in online media, leadership and communities. He regards IT as a tool for telling stories, connecting people and encouraging conversation. In 2005 he set up the Grassroots Channel Podcast to tell

the stories of active citizens in Birmingham. It's still going strong with more than 10,000 programmes downloaded each month.

Before becoming freelance Nick was Director of the strategic watchdog Birmingham City Pride and before that deputy editor of current affairs for the BBC in the West Midlands. Nick is a member of the ICT Foresight team, sits on the advisory board of the NCVO, is a trustee of the Birmingham Conservation Trust, a school governor and a Fellow of the RSA.

Session Notes:

What is web 2.0? [Web 2.0](#) is about using the web to collaborate, share and network information freely between people. This differs from web 1.0 in which web sites were static and information was not shared and there was little or no collaboration between people. Because web 2.0 enables collaboration and networking between people – membership organisations are having to redefine themselves – who are now flocking to causes not organisations. Being a successful voluntary sector organisation now means having to communicate:

- your vision
- your values
- and what do you believe in

What about getting naked with that goldfish? Being naked in a goldfish bowl refers to having the confidence to surrender control of your message and let your supporters tell the story for you. So doing this means exposing yourself and your values to scrutiny in the goldfish bowl of public opinion. Contrast this with organisations that go to great lengths to control their message and the public perception of themselves

What tools are people using and why?

- wikis to keep documentation updated and accessible
- using Google Docs to share documents, bringing together like-minded parents child's school to campaign against academy schools. Worried that [social media](#) carries risk of giving away their plans away to authorities.

Nick says: have confidence in your campaign. Your cause is stronger for collaboration and sharing. It's also likely that a small group of community activists will be smarter and quicker to adapt than local authorities, etc.

- creating an online network space for information workers. Interest is in finding out what people use rather than providing another space for them.

Nick says: The principle is to relax and be clear about your leadership and direction if you do decide to provide a space for them to network in.

- Using Facebook to recruit IT volunteers. Has found it helpful to use Facebook as channel for pointing users towards their main website.
- One rural organisation is looking at distributed networks as a solution for rural communities who are often geographically dispersed. Made a decision to be completely open, and the sharing of information has been far more valuable than if they'd tried to control the agenda.
- Open Innovation Exchange bid to Cab Office – bid was written collaboratively in the spirit of an open source project. Free and open for anyone interested to join in – about 90 different collaborators. Used Basecamp to project manage the process.

- Open Innovation could be a model for how grass-roots issues are debated in local communities before going to the Welsh Assembly.
- Looking at blogs and then podcasts for visually impaired people to tell their stories.

Barriers to adoption of social media: Social media seems to fit well with the most articulate and campaigning voluntary sector organisations – these organisations often have the resource and time to experiment with social media – like Youtube and Podcasting.

- smaller organisations are too busy or scared to use social media.
- Web 2.0 tools could also be excluding those not familiar with social media or without access to the web.
- We need to change VCO mindset from competitive to collaborative – and this is harder than getting people to use the technology.
- See the Change the world blog, which looked at barriers to web 2.0 adoption, and concluded it was more attitude than technology.

Video link up with prolific blogger and social networker, Beth Kanter .

How will new attitudes affect membership orgs? Do we need them if people can give direct? People are now flocking to causes – it's about how people define themselves and their interests.

Q. Interested in groups using social media for fund-raising, particularly raising money for her primary passion and cause – Cambodian children. (Beth has adopted 2 Cambodian children.)

Beth: It was the culmination of community effort. Challenge was to get most donors signed up and dollars for a campaign to support disadvantaged children in Cambodia:–

- raised \$93,000 in 2 months 1,800 donations from all over the world won a competition bonus donation of \$50,000.

The campaign gained new names for its mailing list, new donors, higher profile, magazine articles. Board of trustees was very resistant – now receptive to power of social media. It worked for Beth because:

- Leveraged her professional network to raise funds for a personal cause.
- Told the story of how giving to the campaign changed lives in Cambodia
- Shared her experience of the fund-raising challenge
- Thanked donors in unique and individualised ways
- Keep the 'ladder of engagement' in mind – the last thing you do is hit people up for cash. Start by sucking them in with a good story and examples of how donating can help change lives.

Q. Do you have any other examples of using social media tools?

Beth: [Humane Society of the US](#) – has done some great work with [its Facebook group](#) and won some \$\$ from Microsoft in a challenge to attract the most new users to Facebook.

"When Windows Live Messenger's 'I'm Making a Difference' challenge was first announced, Microsoft said it would award a dollar for every member to the winning non-profit organization (the maximum donation sum being \$50,000). The group's member numbers surged quickly - there are 62,795 members at the time of this newspost - allowing the software giant to make the full donation. After grabbing the most votes, the Humane Society of the United States is receiving the \$50,000 donation from Windows Live on behalf of the Facebook group and its members." See [here](#).

Q. Any negative experiences of social networking?

Beth: Good question. Was worried because the Board did have issues with external people promoting their organisation and its cause. Start with small experiments and be prepared to let go. Did worry about asking professional contacts to contribute to a personal cause. Now feel comfortable about '*opening the kimono*' and being naked when it comes to trying new social media and sharing the experience.

Conclusions: Nick: Beth was here last year talking about another fund-raising competition she won – since then she's expanded her network. Rewards of experimentation and open innovation are now coming to her. David: Challenge is that orgs need to overcome traditional committee rules. See the Parliament protest from Wednesday. It's everyday technology we can all access. Paul H: If your stuff is good you won't have to worry about losing control because people will flock to your cause. It's about:

- using right tools for the right job and experimenting.
- attitudes between people
- focus on what you need and why.
- telling the stories and reaching out to new audiences. Hardest orgs to teach have been traditional VCOs who aren't ready to let go and make new friends.

Also see [thoughts on the session](#) from Beth Kanter

Online Community Building and Engagement

Overview:

Why do vast majority of online community building and engagement efforts fail? The tools and those who deploy online strategy are often pointed to as the culprits. Is that fair? Sometime yes...sometimes no! In this session we'll explore the importance of an organisation's general communication and engagement practices and how those relate to success and failure online. We'll hear directly from several people currently managing online projects to stimulate our learning. Participants will leave the session with a keen awareness of the questions they must answer related to planning for, launching, nurturing and sustaining successful community building and engagement projects online.

NOTE – Participants will be invited to review materials (and participate if they wish) before the conference via an online platform that will be used during the session at <http://sc.blogs.com/lasa08> (opens 22nd February). The platform will also be available for the several weeks following the session to create a real-life learning environment that demonstrates the possibilities for online community building and engagement.

Session Facilitator:

Marc Osten ([Summit Collaborative](#))

Biography:

Marc Osten has more than twenty years experience as an activist, innovator and consultant with non-governmental organisations. He is founder of the Summit Collaborative, an organization that provides program development, and Web/Internet strategy support to NGOs and foundations. He began his career in the non-profit sector in the early 1980s as a peace and environmental activist. He was part of the first wave of non-profit activists to use the Internet in the 1980's while he was at Greenpeace. Today he spends most of his time working on implementation of Web 2.0 projects to engage various audiences.

Session Notes:

Marc displayed video from web 2.0 social media session which links to this session.

People made notes on why online community is useful, why they fail and how to overcome resistance

Site available as follow up resource for this session <http://sc.blogs.com/lasa08/>

Will look at:

- why online community is useful
- why they fail
- how to overcome resistance

Online communities go through phases. From strategy, to maturity from Forrester Research

Helpful to ask the right questions

Strategy

Audience – who is your community?

Don't get caught up thinking about tools and technology. Think about the social and cultural factors.

What does the community rally around? Online communities need a sense of self identity. Without this, they can't work.

There are a few kind of communities, online communities can be successful when they replicate already existing communities, or represent nascent communities.

Is there a high level of trust in the community?

There are different types of networks. We will focus on those existing around organisations, where the organisation is at the centre.

Some models include broadcasting (the same message to everyone). Others about narrowcasting to specific groups. Others are more distributed. Different organisations have networks that are of different types.

Whilst there are many different models of networks, some organisations feel that ICT support force them to accept standard models that may not be appropriate. It is crucial to find the right model of network for the kind of online community you want to build.

The internet is new, and people are caught up in the buzz of change.

Key principle is listening.

Online communities can develop very slowly.

- 1% of your community will be high participatory.
- 10% will be listening commenting
- 90% are watching

Watching and listening is not bad. Many people get a lot out of just listening. If promoting listening is the aim, then lurking is good.

- Lurking shouldn't be seen as a bad thing.
- Email is the power app to get people into your online community

Try and encourage activity by seeding, by asking. Try promoting engagement by sending editorialised email. If the mail is relevant, then people won't complain about receiving it.

There is no evidence to say that people are

Don't be afraid to try new things to stimulate engagement. If your organisation has trust within a community then new approaches work.

Understand that communities can have personalities and can be made more attractive by promoting this.

End of slides



Marc distributed Online engagement planning guide tool.

It is crucial to start by looking at your audience, splitting in up and understanding the different types of communities that make up your audience.

Launching an online community needs to fit within the other processes that are happening within your organisation at the time – the organisations strategic priorities.

Time should be taken to look at the long term longevity of the project. There is nothing wrong with online communities that close after a certain period of time.

Content. Consider the type of content that will be discussed. This informs the structure of the community.

Speedgeek - Web-based office tools

Overview:

Web-based office tools allow you to create, collaborate and share documents through your web browser. Miles gives a brief introduction to the latest web based office suites, such as Google Docs & Spreadsheets, Zoho, Thinkfree and more. For more information: http://www.lasa.org.uk/ictchampion/category/web_office/

Session Facilitator:

Miles Maier ([LASA](#))



Biography:

Miles Maier is the London Regional ICT Champion. He advocates the cause of ICT to funders and policy-makers, and runs events sign-posting resources such as the Knowledgebase and Suppliers Directory voluntary sector. Before joining London Advice Services Alliance, Miles helped to develop ICT projects in East London, and was a circuit rider in Camden before he'd even heard of the term. He's also Lasa's resident Mac fan and would love an iPhone.

Session Notes:

The Web Office 101 or How to streamline your digital life or everything you ever wanted to ask about web office tools but didn't dare ask.....

Thanks to [Laura Whitehead](#), Paul Henderson of [Ruralnet](#) and [John Kenyon](#) for making this session fun and interactive with examples of the web office tools they use.

What:

Web-based office tools allow you to create, collaborate and share documents through your web browser. Check out the free or low cost examples below:-

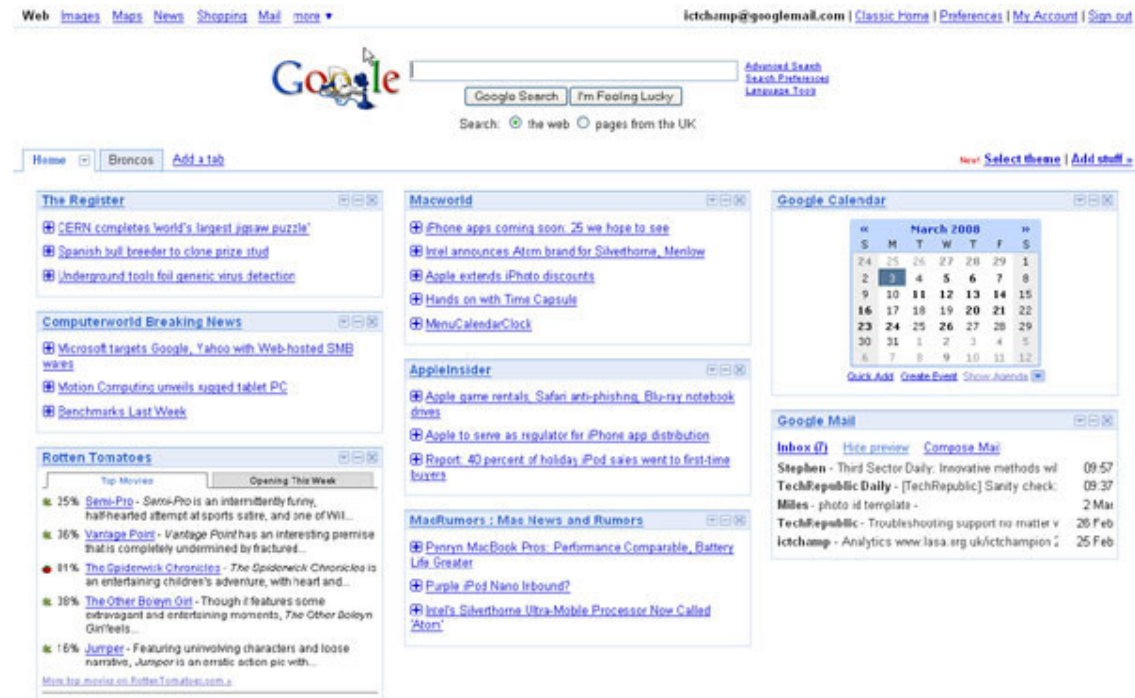
Google Docs
Google Calendar
Zoho
ThinkFree
MS Office Live

Zimbra (Yahoo!)
Webex

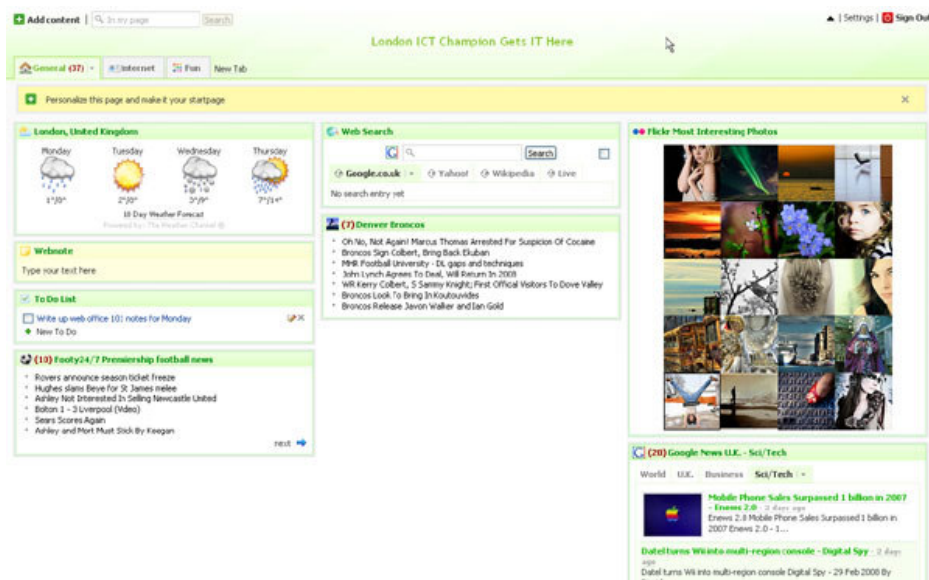
Some examples of commonly used web office tools:

Homepages or Start-pages:

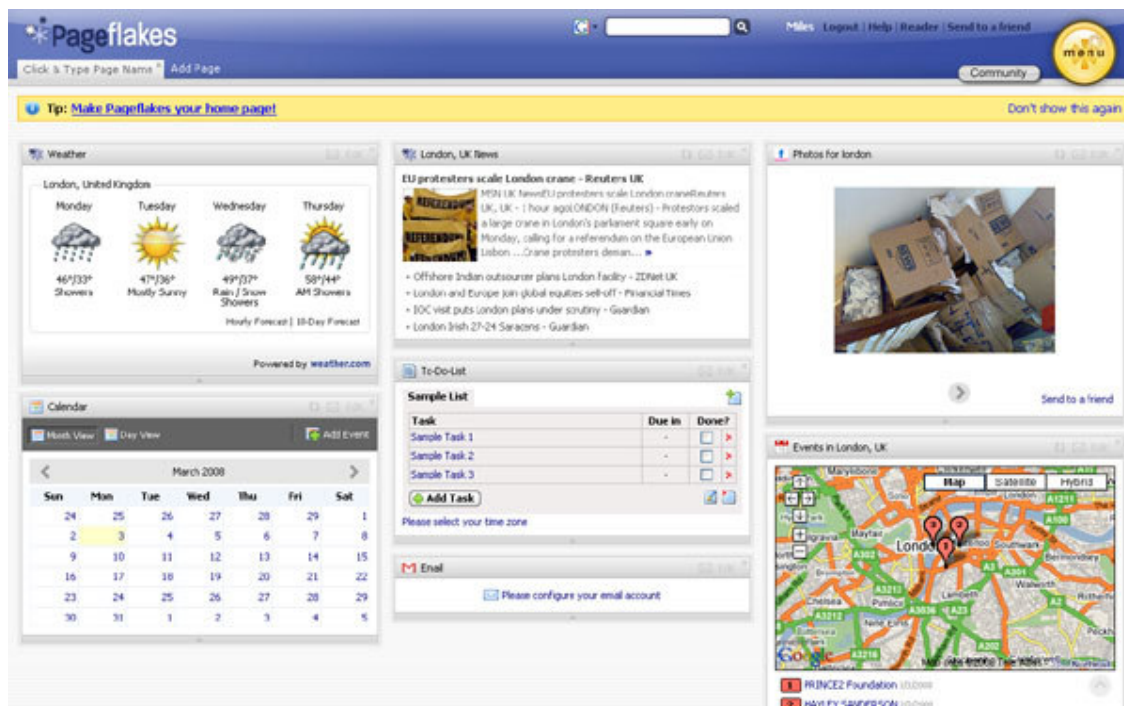
This is the first page you see when firing up your web browser. Use [iGoogle](#), [Netvibes](#) or [Pageflakes](#) to customise your homepage with feeds from your favourite news sites, calendar, blogs, weather, Flickr photos and more. These services are free and all you need to get started is an email address and a password.



Laura uses [Netvibes](#) (below) for her homepage.

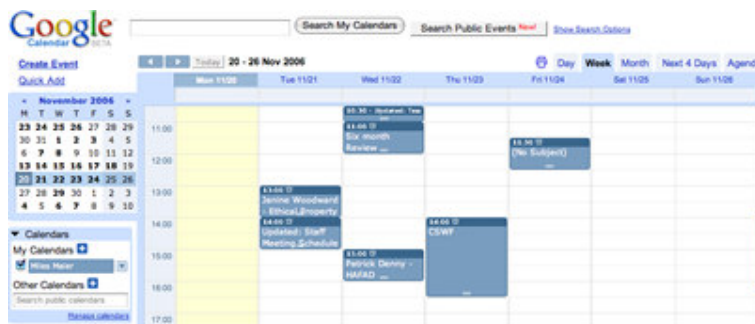


Paul uses [Pageflakes](#) for his homepage.



Mobile Office:

Use Google Calendar to keep track of your busy life - work, kids and personal. You can share your calendar with friends and colleagues. Miles uses Google Mobile to send text message reminders to his phone - this helps him turn up on time, barring mishaps with trains, tubes and buses.



▼

Guests

+

Add guests

Guests can

☒ invite others
☒ see guest list

▼

Options

Reminder

SMS

▼

2 hours

▼

Remove

[Add a reminder](#)

Show me as

☒ Available
☐ Busy

Privacy

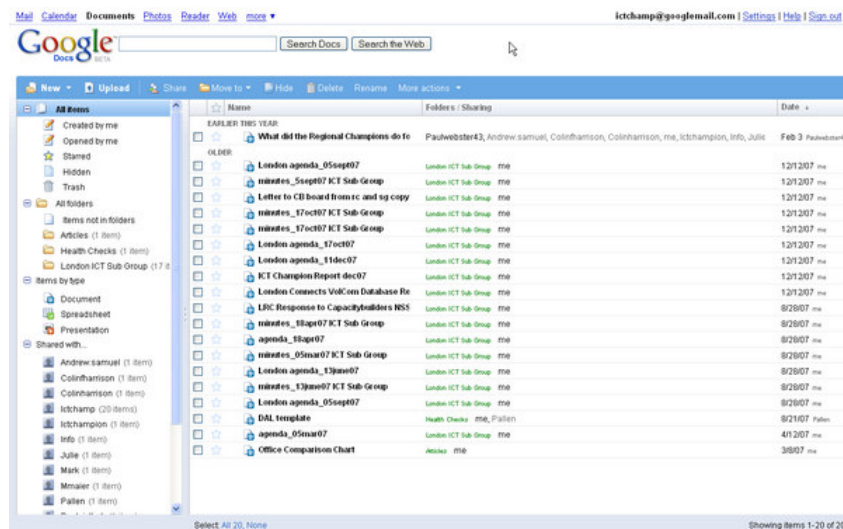
This event is:

☒ Default
☐ Private
☐ Public

[Learn about private v. public events](#)
[Publish this event](#)

Documents and Spreadsheets:

[Google Docs](#), [Zoho](#) and others offer a great way working collaboratively on the same document at the same time. John and Miles are fans of Google Docs, using it collaborate and share project documents, meeting minutes and agendas with colleagues.



RSS Feeds:

Subscribe to [RSS](#) feeds using [Bloglines](#) like Paul or [Google Reader](#) like Miles to get all the news from your favourite websites to delivered to you, wherever you are. You can also use [Netvibes](#) and [Pageflakes](#) to add feeds from your favourite sites to your homepage.

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Moq (128)

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- Beth's Blog (28)
- Contentions of a Non-... (3)
- Designing for Civil S... (4)
- Full Circle Online L...
- Gavin's Digital Diner (2)
- HVA Director's Blog
- Laura's Notebook | Te... (4)
- Learning Lab (3)
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Laura's Notebook | Technology for Non-profit Organisations, Social Medi... Feed settings... Expanded view List view

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Circuit Rider 4.0 Conference Round Up by Laura Mar 2, 2008 (13 hours ago)

Around 70 nonprofit techies and ICT development workers from across the UK came together in Birmingham for the Circuit Rider 4.0 conference organised by Lasa on 28th and 29th February. As well as those who innovate with technology for voluntary sector organisations here in the UK, some of my favourite inspiring nonprofit technology consultants from across the pond were also facilitating at the event.

I co-ran a session along with David Wilcox from [Designing a Civil Society](#) and Nick Booth from [Podnosh](#) and with the input too from Paul Henderson from [Ruralnet](#).



Our session was entitled 'Naked in a Goldfish Bowl - Web 2.0 and the non-profit world'. Beth Kanter from Boston joined us in the session using Skype (we hoped to have tested out the fab [Demo](#) but wasn't to be, with wireless bandwidth issues on the day). Beth shared her experiences and enthusiasm of her recent fundraising successes and the factors which helped to make it happen by using social media. A big thank you to Beth for joining us, especially with the first time we ran our session being just after midday here in the UK, and only 7.30 am there with Beth in Boston. You can read [Beth's reflections on her involvement in our session here](#).

In our session we discussed about purpose, need, openness, transparency, and membership amongst other areas as well as some of the tools or ways that can help make it happen. Resistance from management or committees was raised several times as a potential barrier from adopting social media in voluntary and nonprofit organisations. Our session was very much a discussion and conversation about use of social media and the change needed to help make it happen, rather than us just saying 'here are the tools and here's how to use them'. We discussed about the reasoning and about the wider picture too, how people are using different ways to communicate and work together and that organisations should be looking to incorporate social media in addition to their current communications practices to reach to wider audiences. Paul Henderson from Ruralnet was able to share the insightful experiences of his organisation that currently are 'naked in a goldfish bowl' themselves, as they are consulting with stakeholders and the wider community in exploring

Previous item Next item 6 items

Bookmarks:

Do you have bookmarks of your favourite websites spread over home and work computers? Use del.icio.us or magnolia to save your favourite websites in one place, so you can access them from anywhere. Use tags to label websites you visit, making them easier to find and share. Check out the del.icio.us toolbar for Internet Explorer or Firefox web browsers. Miles uses del.icio.us.

del.icio.us / milesahead18 / ictchamp

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ThinHost: Welcome edit / delete
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to HubTag/ictchamp ... on may 15

Final version of the proposal - and what's next | Open Innovation Exchange edit / delete
to wiccx/innovation_exchange/ictchamp ... on may 15

PolicyLink - Research - Bridging the Innovation Divide: An Agenda for Disseminating Technology Innovations within the Nonprofit edit / delete
to PolicyLink/npbtech/nonprofit/technology/research/report/ictchamp ... saved by 9 other people ... on may 10

Cascade - A Network for London's Second-Tier Information and Communication Workers edit / delete
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- 1 awards
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- 1 bass
- 1 blog
- 5 blogging
- 11 BloggingTools
- 23 Blogs
- 1 bluetie
- 1 boatr
- 1 book
- 1 books
- 8 Bootcamp
- 5 Broadband

Laura likes [Magnolia](http://magnolia) (below) for discovering, sharing and discovering the best of the web!

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 **?Social Media + Social Web**

This is a moderated group.

<http://magnolia.com/groups/socialweb/bookmarks>


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 **Swango! Swapping Better Than Shopping | Online Clothing Swap Where Everything is 99¢**

***** | [DETAILS](#) | [SEND TO](#)

smarter, cheaper, more fun way to shop for clothes...the only online clothing swap where everything is 99¢

Tags: swapping, bartering, swap, barter, recycle, clothes, clothing, shoes, accessories, trading, 99¢, cheap, used clothes, used clothing, shopping

Saved by [anviamagnolia](#) on March 02, 2008.

 **How Networked Link Journalism Can Give Journalists Collectively the Power of Google And Digg**

***** | [DETAILS](#) | [SEND TO](#)

The link journalism meme seems to have legs, based on the number of smart people who picked it up. Now it's time to kick it up a notch, with the concept of NETWORKED link journalism, which can give journalists, collectively, the power of Digg and ...

Tags: socialmedia, social media, newmedia, new media, journalism, journalists, networked journalism, link journalism, networked link journalism, meme, socialnews, socialweb, traffic, web, social, links

Saved by [anviamagnolia](#) on March 02, 2008.

Pros:

- Free or low cost
- Anywhere with computer and Internet
- Collaborate and share

Cons:

- Security
- Sustainability - will this service provider be around next year or get bought out?
- Lack of web accessibility features

What next?

- Figure out which tools can do which job for you – calendar, address book, docs, etc
- Experiment - sign up for a free account
- Check out the [Web Office Database at IT Redux](#) for a list of web office tools
- Blog it up – let us know how you got on!

Speedgeek - Healthy Computing and you

Overview:

Have you ever had aches, pains, strains and tiredness that you would link to your computer use? Positioning or using your computer, chair, desk and input devices improperly can lead to various injuries, from the short term discomfort of headaches, arm and wrist soreness to potentially long term debilitating conditions and impairments. Try out a self assessment today or you could be on your way to an unhealthy relationship with your computer in the future! Find out a little more in 10 minutes of your time.

Session Facilitator:

Paul Allen ([LASA](#))



Biography:

Paul Allen moved to the ICT field in 2000 when he started a web design course after various jobs with a community development flavour. He then went on to an Internet start up company, which went bust (not his fault) where he was their IT manager. Paul became a Superhighways staff member as a Circuit Rider based in Wandsworth CVS for nearly 3 years and was the part-time London Accessibility Champion for about 18 months. He has now been at Lasa for 9 months as an ICT consultant, trainer and project manager.

Speedgeek - Ubuntu

Overview:

Ubuntu has risen rapidly to be one of the most downloaded and deployed GNU/Linux solutions in the world. Through the Free and Open Source development model, it offers high degrees of security and ease of use. This distribution also allows older equipment to be used effectively and includes the extremely valuable Linux Terminal Server Project (LTSP).

Session Facilitator:

Richard Rothwell (M6-IT)
Matthew Edmundson (M6-IT)
Richard Smedley (M6-IT)

Biographies:

Richard Rothwell has spent two decades in IT education, building upon a lifetime of voluntary work to develop a Community Interest Company to promote the use of Free Software in the Third Sector. He has been involved in national and regional developments. He has been invited to many national events, including talking at the OSSWatch conference and at GUADEC – in international GNOME developers conference. While teaching at Handsworth Grammar School he implemented a GNU/Linux network for the pupils, which has been favourably reviewed in two BECTa reports and is a reference site to the deployment of LTSP in schools in the UK.

Matthew Edmondson (known to his friends as “Hamish”) has a long pedigree in the Circuit Rider movement and in voluntary environmental work in Scotland. More recently he rescued the NCC's efforts to deliver the ICT Hub's ChangeUp-funded, Free Software

training programme across the ten regions of England. Matthew is a director of the Doon of May Land co-operative.

Richard Smedley spent part of the dot com boom programming websites, and administering web servers, before moving into IT publishing, and generating strong links with all areas of the ever-growing Free & Open Source Software community in the UK and Europe. Involvement in community projects led to full time work in the voluntary sector, ensuring the West Midlands ChangeUp spend reached beyond big charities in Birmingham, to help numerous smaller projects in small towns and rural areas.

Speedgeek - Key software solutions for the VCS

Overview:

We will be presenting the findings from our research project for the ICT Hub. The title is a real mouthful but it basically boils down to what software is available to the small to medium sized VCS in terms of Databases (CRM), Financial packages, Fundraising, Content managed Websites, on line transactions (fundraising) and a final category entitled "software you need but don't have".

Session Facilitator:

Lewis Atkinson ([Community IT Academy](#))

Biography:

Lewis Atkinson is a former teacher and IT manager. In addition to working in the public sector, prior to working in the voluntary sector, he spent a few years working in the commercial sector. Being involved in IT management and training for around 25 years he has gained experience in all aspects of IT recently moving into IT capacity building by working on strategy, planning and management.

Lewis has maintained an interest in the Circuit Riding movement and is actively involved in the delivery of 2 projects in the North East region. CITA is a Net:Gain centre, offers the full range of IT services including website design and technical support and is actively involved in the provision of Open Source solutions.

Speedgeek - The Shuttle mobile ICT suite

Overview:

We will be talking about the Advice For Life Shuttle which is a self contained mobile ICT suite with a satellite link to the internet. It enables people living in isolated communities access to computers, the internet, and ICT training, in their local area. We take the shuttle to hard to reach areas so minimal travel is required. We will discuss how this has been effective in our region and the different ways in which it has benefited the community.

Session Facilitators:

David Poulter and Rachel Farr ([Advice for Life](#))

Biography:

David Poulter is a Circuit Rider working in the Eastern Region. He works for the Cambridge Circuit Rider Project which is part of Advice for Life providing ICT support to voluntary sector organisations within Cambridgeshire and the neighbouring counties. Before joining this organisation he worked in the education sector providing ICT Support and advice to primary and secondary schools.

Rachel Farr is a Circuit Rider also working for the Cambridge Circuit Rider Project and is mainly focusing on website design and project development. She has experience of creating Content Management Websites using a variety of different software packages and has been working recently on AfL's Migrant Gateway project. Before joining this organisation she was working as an office administrator for a short time after completing her degree in Internet Technology.



Open Source – practical tools for the job

Overview:

There is a very wide range of software available that is free to use, modify and re-distribute. Most computer users encounter open source applications on a daily basis - often without noticing it.

This session will demonstrate some of these tools, for both desktop and server. We will also look at the possible routes for deploying these sustainable solutions, covering the skill sets needed, and the support and training available.

Session Facilitator:

Richard Rothwell (M6-IT)
Matthew Edmundson (M6-IT)
Richard Smedley (M6-IT)

Biographies:

Richard Rothwell has spent two decades in IT education, building upon a lifetime of voluntary work to develop a Community Interest Company to promote the use of Free Software in the Third Sector. He has been involved in national and regional developments. He has been invited to many national events, including talking at the OSSWatch conference and at GUADEC – in international GNOME developers conference. While teaching at Handsworth Grammar School he implemented a GNU/Linux network for the pupils, which has been favourably reviewed in two BECTa reports and is a reference site to the deployment of LTSP in schools in the UK.

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Opening Session Day 2

If money time and energy was put in to work where would you like it to go? Is there any sense of where we want to put our focus... Choose one of the following:

- Mentoring
- Trial & Error
- Volunteering
- Workshops
- Learning from Others
- Online



Not allowed to be in between as we are all in between in reality.

- Greatest proportion in workshops - human support, hit more people at once, formal, structured, peer to peer learning, interaction.
- Learning from others - need focus, lots of knowledge to have, one to one dialogue, drill down, experience, not re-inventing the wheel, when needed.
- Mentoring: timely and specific, personal, happen in a number of ways, can be long term, can be collaborative, exchange, been through all the other stages first, personal learning styles, ongoing
- Online: you can do all the other things online, instantaneous, suits particular learning styles
- Trial and error: minority group - original competent, practical work where you can face up to the realities of your own work.

Now pick your second choice priority, reposition group: Anyone want to add anything?

- Workshops: can be about standards
- Mentoring: relaxed, informal - can do it in the pub
- Online: research possible
- Webinars: mentoring gives support - between workshops and online and been really useful
- Trial and error: able to make mistakes and learn from them and not be scared of them, valuing trial and error is a balance towards accountability.

Take that question into the workshops and think about it through the day.

Community Wireless Mesh Networking

Overview:

Combined case studies of live networks and a hands on workshop showing how mesh networking technology can deliver community broadband services. Maher Ugaily from Community Connected Wireless Project will showcase the wireless network in Kingston upon Thames. Richard Lander from LocustWorld will run a mesh networking workshop showing how to set-up, manage and use a wireless mesh network. You could bring a wireless enabled laptop/PDA to participate in Wireless Mesh Demo.

Session Facilitator:

Maher Ugaily ([Superhighways](#))
Richard Lander ([Locustworld](#))

Biography:

Maher Ugaily joined Superhighways, the ICT Support programme in the South London CVS Partnership, as an ICT Support Worker in 2003 after completing a Masters Degree in Computer and Network engineering. In 2006, Maher developed Community Connected Wireless Project a community broadband Project and PC refurbishment project, funded by LSC which now delivers access to training and learning via the internet to more than 500 users on a large housing estate in Kingston. Maher was commended by the ICT Hub Awards in 2007.

Richard Lander is director and co-founder of LocustWorld, pioneering wireless mesh networking. Richard's career covers 25 years of computers and communications, with a strong background in open systems and internet networking going back to the early days of the PC and the Internet.

Session Notes:

Maher talked through partnership and funding, starting in September 2006.

Background:

When project was planned the council had suffered in the past when having installed mobile phone masts on top of buildings which the residents were quite angry about. So there was a public consultation before mesh boxes were approved because of the previous reaction. To install them it was necessary to liaise with the council contractors and that was where things were held up.

Post Dec 07 there are plans to roll out in Kinsnympton/Chessington to put mesh boxes in libraries so that people can log in and access learning materials. Mesh boxes fitted on original TV aerials, taking power from the lift room on the flats. The mesh boxes on top of flats distribute to the lower level buildings. One problem is the direction the users' computers faces so they have to be facing the mesh box in order to pick up the signal.

Network management: identifies traffic going through the mesh, band width used, who is using, what time of day – e.g. peak/evening etc so very good statistics.

There is also a diagram to show the location of each mesh box and how the traffic is moving between the blocks of flats, i.e. where the signal is being received.

Mission was to enable internet access, bring learning home, volunteering and pc plus programme - kids who can't afford broadband can access learning at home.

PC plus programme is using 65 recycled computers from the Primary Care Trust; open source is loaded, configured with a wireless card so it could be used. Those who already had own PCs could get a password for wireless access.

The future:

- Virtual learning – many community organisations have their own learning materials which have been done by trainers so to provide a virtual learning environment where all these resources can be uploaded – e.g. learning English – not necessarily accredited materials just basic training – e.g. how to manage your finance etc.
- Social networking – to get people to participate in forums and debates
- Voice Over IP/video on demand: residents can communicate with each other without using internet. Their mobile phones are expensive but with the computer they could communicate through VOIP without having to pay as many don't have landlines.
- CCTV/ security – possible to put a wireless camera anywhere so it can be used for security. They've put one in a dark ally so before you leave home you can see if there's anyone lurking outside (this is just a pilot)
- Community library – people put online any books they've read and they can let others read them

Lessons Learnt:

- Logistics with public sector partners – housing office, local contractor etc
- Time wasted waiting for them to get back to you and give you access to the lift room etc
- Technical issues – need to learn how to support mesh technology and another learning curve is understanding the FOSS and making it compatible with everyone's computers.
- Customer relationships/expectations: Set day between 2-6 where volunteers are available and people experiencing problems can ask for help. But their expectation is that you are an organisation like BT and should be able to sort everything out there and then (even though it's a free service)
- Sustainability and ongoing support.

Contact:

support@communityconnected.org.uk

<http://www.communityconnected.org.uk>

Maher Ugaily – 0208 255 8040

Questions:

Did you achieve complete coverage or were there black spots?

With a block of flats it's difficult as there was a health clinic in between and so it's necessary to then put a mesh on top of the health clinic...or it could be a pub or a library so you have to go to a separate landlord or, in the case of the health clinic the primary care trust to make sure the signal reaches all the buildings. The network produced on the Cambridge Rd estate goes beyond the boundaries – they sign up to it and then turn up to 'wireless Wednesdays' asking for help, even though they should live within the boundaries. So whilst some parts of the estate don't get the best service, whereas others living outside get brilliant reception. So to overcome this is to putting antennae outside the window, or by a different window to better pick up the reception. So you have to

please most of the people most of the time. Also sometimes it is not the connection but a problem with their own computer – e.g. someone might put a fixed IP address and this clearly won't then connect.

Any strong objections from residents?

No – they're getting free wireless access.. Other housing estates then started to lobby the council as they also want to have the service set up.

Is it an open network?

No, it's access controlled. When you try to connect it will request a user name and password. But people can provide proof of address to show that they live there.

Filtering for content?

Not originally, but then later on peer-peer blocking, e.g. Kazar was put on. Also SMPP because computers were sending out spam and ISP said they were going to cut the computer off. Just an ADSL line – some of which they paid for and some of which the council paid for – therefore the partnership has been important and getting to the right person

What level of bandwidth?

7 or 8 MB with the council. But you can restrict the width on the mesh to 3MB so it doesn't affect the council's bandwidth...also because the council only require it during peak time. Depending on where the users access the gateway. We can look at the way the bandwidth management is used in order to distribute the bandwidth equally across the users, or by looking at the number of gateways available, the history – i.e. what's the aggregated bandwidth consumption, what time it's being used, how much is being downloaded. Therefore it fluctuates but the stats package can provide this information. The system is optimised for interactive use so that if there are a large number of users using the system, those who are getting on to the web or using MSN; these users will get priority. Long term sustained downloading will get lower priority – it won't stop working but you won't be prioritised and therefore designed to distribute according to interactivity of user. Therefore you'll get a good connection to the internet. You can set a class for each user – download/upload and burst speeds which temporarily allows user to exceed their bandwidth.

Tele2 – Reading Broadband project – main access nodes for lease lines coming in, similar project. How does the technology compare as it seems to suffer the same problems. Once the bandwidth got over subscribed, the system was slowing because there were a lot of internal problems and finally the project became unsustainable because the cost of transmitters outweighed the service.

So, how sustainable is the project?

Many projects use this system, they have a growth path where they achieve what they set out to do and continue to grow. So they've overcome the obstacles on the way. So with cost, it's important to make it financially viable. But how can you make that sustainable in a deprived area?

There is always funding available. If you're providing broadband to 500 people, that's minimum of £10/month – with line rental that's £20/month so presenting that amount of saving to a funder can be a good argument as it's saving the council a lot of money. Organisations have to provide accessibility; e.g. NHS direct – it's not equal opportunities if people in deprived areas can't access it. Basically it's best to go in partnership with councils, libraries, PCTs etc because they have sustainable funding, and they can support it if funding runs out as they can take it on as their own infrastructure.

However, remember the council is a long, bureaucratic service.

What are the ongoing running costs?

Mainly support if problems with network. Paying for the broadband - £500/year. Project relies on support from volunteers and Locust World. Steering group gave a forecast of how much it would cost to support it and then Super Highways can budget for it.

Possibility that they can set up the project and then walk away, but you can't because you become like a service and therefore people have expectations on how this will be maintained when there are problems.

On one hand the upfront cash costs are negligible to keep the system running; for maintenance, pennies per month for electricity and pounds for things that stop functioning so that's negligible, but it's the individuals who keep the support going – i.e. they can diagnose whether it's a computer, signal, connection problem etc which the volunteers can trouble shoot.

Do you support Windows users? – or just those who have had a computer provided?

They support anyone – on Wireless Wednesdays – they will clean an infected computer regardless of whether it is Ubuntu/Windows.

20 Ubuntu computers, only one person brought it back because Firefox isn't compatible with Learn Direct for example. They have the licence to put Windows 2000 on the computers even though it's not high spec. Another e.g., a user passed his ECDL even though he was practising at home on Ubuntu. He also got a job as he needed to show experience of using Open Source! When the community realises it's their own network they want to keep it going. So many people come to Wireless Wednesdays that it's now helping to recruit volunteers.

Are you linking with other learning projects? – e.g. community internet cafes which are linked up with learning and employment within the council to help them gain skills, have you linked up with job agency sites?

Wireless Wednesdays is based at a 'community shop' – one stop shop, but on a Tues it's a CAB, another day its refugee action so people who use the centre can sign up to volunteer. Wireless, internet training suites – there are many community halls without broadband/internet, but because it's in the estate you can get it from the mesh and therefore you can use the community hall for training on lap tops

Maher then showed the map with the 10 network sites – and explained how they link directly from into link and where the gateways are.

The stats provide a list of all traffic and configuration and total bandwidth used across network. You can then drill down to find what an individual user is using over time.

Ethical Issues?

Stats give such an in depth amount of information that there may be ethical issues. However users have to first agree to the fact that for network monitoring purposes they will track the internet, ask them to use less if they are over-using it. What often happens is that they're involved with some criminal activity, the ISP notice that you're IP is being used. You're therefore liable. Common carrier status so you'd have to give out information but not responsible.

With a totally open network if you cannot name the user who is abusing the internet, the authorities have the right to shut the whole network down rather than blocking the

individual user. Users can be identified whether or not they are honestly registered. You can block them and put intercept on their traffic to track them if you get a court order. You are an ISP providing a public internet service so you have to conform to a lot of legislation which so far hasn't been tried and tested and not very well enforced.

Is it sustainable?

The evidence speaks for itself, - very clear graphs showing just how many people are using the service. This is a strong argument in the value of the service (£5000/month) when going to funders. However getting funders to support the network is the difficult part. Cash costs (as mentioned above) are minimal. But the real cost is the soft costs of meetings, contracts, phone calls, office space etc. The hardware – cabling, networks, equipment etc is basically just 10% of over-all costs.

Issue of voluntary organisation/council project:

Good thing about it being volunteers and not statutory, is that volunteers might be friends with people on the estate so can go into the houses of the users and fix things or diagnose the problem and feed back to Superhighways.

How much are the users using?

So need to forecast the trend going forward to think about more mesh boxes, gateways, upgraded broadband etc.

Capacity of Technology: Each computer is connecting to different nodes simply because it depends which direction the windows face. The technology is capable of more than the conditions dictate – e.g. buildings in the way etc.

Use of security cameras.. do you give access to the general public to allow people to see the estates? Reluctant to do that as people feel they're being spied on. Lots of legislation of registering any camera which is on a public building.

Maybe the neighbourhood watch group could make a decision on this so the responsibility is theirs to decide.

Mesh boxes are new technology which provides universal wireless internet access over as wide an area as you want. The technology can be installed at low cost and rapidly.

Could it therefore be used in a village? Yes – it began as a rural project. With the appropriate antennae, the range is about 40 miles. As it's a new technology nobody knows how to judge it.

On one hand it's a communication system, but it's a community network built on volunteer participation, where as elsewhere it's a paid for private service. There are some community groups who will run a commercial service (like a co-op).

Weather doesn't affect the mesh box. Trees with leaves i.e. it's fine in the winter but not in the summer. Sources of bad noise can upset the network on certain frequencies. Standard frequency is 2.4 mhz (as for wi-fi). In a flat part of the country with a low population, the range is long. However in parts of the country with stone walled houses, how easy is it to get the signal into the house? Ways of solving these issues is laterally – therefore instead of one real strong transmitter, it works better to either have several transmitters or you can have one transmitter and then cable up the houses quite easily. Also in the flats you can put an internet connection on each floor.

Circuit Rider Training and Standards



Overview:

In this session participants will receive an update on the newly published Circuit Rider Principles. Then the participants will engage in a discussion related to standards and benchmarks that are being developed to help Circuit Riders focus their ongoing skills development. Examples of standards and benchmarks will be shared to stimulate the discussion. We'll also look at "learning accountability" scenarios – how will Riders evidence their learning?

Session Facilitator:

Ian Runeckles ([Lasa](#)) Marc Osten ([Summit Collaborative](#))

Biography:

Ian Runeckles joined Lasa in September 2002 to work on the first Lasa Circuit Rider Project and subsequently worked on the 2005-7 Project. He is currently Project Managing the ICT Hub Circuit Rider Development Programme which includes the [Training and Standards Project](#), this Conference and editing Round-Up, the Circuit Rider News Digest. In addition, as a member of the Information Systems Team he has also contributed to various projects and consultancies and written articles for Computanews and the ICT Hub Knowledgebase. He has attended several NonProfit Technology Conferences (NTC) organised by [NTEN](#) in the US and presented at two break-out sessions at the Chicago NTC in 2005.

Session Notes:

Marc Introduced session:

Go over what's been happening over last year or 2 around CR (circuit rider) standards and training. Primarily spend time on translating standards into skills and modalities of training. Accountability systems, what does accountability look like? Presentation slides available as handouts and will be available on the web (Circuit Rider Training and Standards) Background / progress – refer to Circuit Rider Training and Standards PowerPoint presentation CR Principles – handout and on web – <http://www.lasa.org.uk/circuitriders/principles.shtml>

History 2004 NTC discussion started, further work at subsequent CR conferences. Sign up to principles. Logo available for signatories to use on web and other formats. Future – maybe take internationally – principles published under share/share alike creative

commons license. NTEN involved. Why use VCO ICT standards as the basis of our skills development?

See PowerPoint presentation Framework – CRs need to base our skills decisions on something. Standards issue is contentious – standards exist but are not published – de facto standards – generally what community agrees on. Will help to focus CR training. Standards => skills. Marc Emphasised that not all VCOs are the same so the standards are just guidelines that help to tease out the skills / training that CRs may need. Comment from floor – minimum standards for organisations– not CRs this needs to be clarified on materials. Discussion / Exercise – Draft CR Standards => Skills Reference Guide – ICT Planning / Internal communications – Marc presented these as DRAFT/SAMPLES. The idea is that in the next few weeks these will be published for each of about 7-9 standards. There will be consultation with the community about the nature and number of these standards over the next few weeks before they are published. Where we want to go is to develop the tick / list framework Core skills – things we all need to do and specialist skills - recognising that different CRs will have different skills and that there will be basic skills and advanced skills within each area AIM to find 20-30 skills needed in a particular area and identify whether:

- I have this skill
- I have this skill but need to improve
- I don't have this skill
- I don't need this skill

Brainstormed in two groups and looked at network standard, and planning standard, what the list should contain - what are CRs / CR Managers impressions of the framework

Any skill listed that participants felt were core skills marked with asterix – spend time drilling into the specifics.

For every skill in any standard articulating the understanding of that area as opposed to the implementation – some things are about understanding, some are about implementing e.g. understanding of security - what does that means – knowing there are legal issues, knowing there are issues re how safe data transfer can be – the deeper ability to know that a VPN is safer than web based open traffic.

Comments / questions:

- Strategic and implementation standards?
- Strategic ICT skills cut across all standards Strategic vs Links with learning – as well as looking at tech stuff there is material available, resources perhaps need to be geared around the core / soft skills areas as this material is not as widely available.
- Do we need to focus on 20 core skills and strategic skills and make reference to where tech skills can be gained?
- In terms of skills levels in IT there are a myriad of qualifications already?
- For tech skills do we just need to say people have a particular technical standard?
- Goal is to try and figure out what skills CRs need to do their job?
- Should we just focus on soft skills and frame the tech skills around the soft skills
- Are there any CRs out there that have all skills?
- Avoid turning skills set into a checklist?
- Danger with soft skills of drilling down to far in the same way as tech skills?
- Skill – being able to Signpost
- Do we need specialisms?
- Is someone who just goes in and fixes a printer a CR?
- In danger of putting too much down and alienating people?

- Should we simplify and do things in stages – planning / implementation/maintaining and review – keep it simple?
- Core skills – mostly enshrined / implied in the principles?
- Know non profits well and skill them up with tech skills rather than vice versa CR teams to cover the skills that are needed?
- Communication in terms of attitude / aptitude rather than language
- Standards are tied into the organisations we are working with, how we work with them and what their expectations are of CRs, need to keep this in mind – quality service.
- If we only look at core skills we are looking at being org dev consultants – we need this as CRs but we need something more – awareness / knowledge / skills around “core” – have awareness of the tech issues and know where to signpost
- Should there be a list of all things we all need to know e.g. about website development – help organisation with “do you really need a website”.
- Fundraising – CRs may not be experts in this area but orgs need funds to get ICT so CRs need awareness of fundraising issues and where to signpost for deeper information / help.

Flipcharts from brainstorming session:

Each group looked at the draft standard for internal communication and came up with a list of knowledge / understanding and skills CRs will need. Asterisk against those that are considered to be core skills: Both groups adopted slightly different approaches:

Group 1 Strategic / practical relationship skills:

- Understanding of security implications of remote networking e.g. for accountants and financial data sensitivity / confidentiality
- Raising awareness of security issues with organisations*
- Bandwidth issues – (volume, connectivity)
- Understanding / awareness of hardware and software compatibility issues e.g. how do we run an access database on a Linux system?
- Managing external suppliers / services skill = identifying / analysing issues, negotiating
- Understanding data storage / format/ transfer and implementing systems for security / backup or knowing how / where to signpost on
- Project Management*
- Mapping organisational needs (by category e.g. business communications)
- Research, recommendation, choice
- Clear documentation (making, supporting, encouraging); skill = communication/ability to present information clearly
- Supporting technical skills gaps when handing over - Able to implement new technologies as they come along - Supporting scalability

Group 2 - Identify CR with different & appropriate skills

- Understanding of best practices for VCO internal communication
- Understand information management systems and process management
- Understanding of tools that support information flow - Reporting and recording strategies
- Reporting and recording tools
- Identifying, assessing and reporting on issues - [awareness of] various communication and training methods
- Project management

- Facilitate implementation Skills: - telephony - VoIP - cabling - systems interfaces - databases / CRM (customer/ constituent relationship management) - website / CMS (content management systems)
- Specific software skills e.g. Servers etc.
- What is learning accountability?
- How are we going to account for ourselves to professional bodies?
- Certification etc. how might that work? (see Circuit Rider Training and Standards PowerPoint presentation)
- National framework already exists that can be applied to any profession.

Discussion:

- Level 3 equates to core skills?
- Level 4 specialist skills?
- What levels do we need to focus on?
- How do people evidence what they are doing?
- Personal learning AND recognition.

Comments / Questions:

We need to be careful how we present this in order not to alienate CRs. HOWEVER...Learning & skills council needs the detail of what SKILLS, how they relate to the framework and how we EVIDENCE, ASSESS and VERIFY in order to accredit a program of learning and development so we need to be more explicit.

Personal plans need the details as well Issue does not just affect CRs government is pushing for some form of accreditation / certification from anyone who works with VCS How many in the room would fill out self assessment form, go to classes, get organisations we work with to evaluate the work we did for them?

Fears and concerns

- we will also consult with community about this online.
- not meeting the assessment criteria
- people getting pushed out because they aren't in the process
- making decisions that are too prescriptive
- having to work in a certain way
- is this restrictive?
- How specific or vague do we need to be about this
- Reputation of ICT in the sector
- organisations pre conceptions about what we are / quality issues - "marketing" of standard and value to the sector
- if the client hasn't heard of it / us does it matter?

Evaluating ICT Support

Overview:

We work hard and do our best, but how do we know if we are really making difference? Paul Ticher has been one of the two external evaluators for the ICT Hub, and has also evaluated many other ICT projects. This session will look at the different types of evaluation, the kind of questions we ought to be asking, how we might obtain the information we need to answer them, and how we can present the results most effectively.

Session Facilitator:

Paul Ticher (paulticher.com)

Biography:

Paul Ticher has been providing ICT support to the voluntary sector for the past 25 years. He started out at the Community Information Project, a sister organisation to Lasa, where he was the first editor of Computanews. He now concentrates on consultancy, Data Protection, research and evaluation. For the past two years he has been the lead evaluator for the national ICT Hub.

Session Notes:

Paul has been evaluating the Hub for two and a half years. He will be looking at what has worked and what needs more attention when evaluating ICT.

Why are we here?

- How do we know, without feedback, whether we're doing a good job?
- It would be nice to consider external evaluation – are we doing as good a job as we think we are?
- There is no hard and fast method for evaluation, you will need to decide:
- What do you want to find out, how will you collect it, how will you analyse it? Otherwise you won't get the useful information.

Whose agenda is the evaluation focusing on?

Is it your own values (providers) or those of an external funder, or is it for your clients (recipients)?

The most important thing to consider is: Did it meet the objectives?

Focus Quality

- whose definition of quality are you using? (yours or your recipients)
- are you looking back? (did you sort out the problem?) or forward? (what impact can decisions have?)
- Value for money - what are you measuring against (outcomes, numerical targets?)
- Impact - are your outputs short or long-term? which is best?
- how do you measure the effect of what you're doing?
- will you re-evaluate in a year?

- did you meet the set outcomes?
- Before you start
- Evaluate against objectives – what are you doing???
- Specific measurable objectives
- Plan your data collection

Question: How about advertisers, they don't always have achievable or realistic targets?

They usually say 50% is a success; we can't go to funders and tell them 50% will work! The value for the funder might be the picture for the annual report not the output itself. Funders are wrong to expect 100% success – if they do they aren't taking any risks, not using initiative or expanding knowledge.

Most are new ideas so will be worth doing and we can build on the knowledge gained, even if it didn't work as well as expected. If every project was guaranteed to work, what would be the point in evaluating it? Planning your data collection - Frequency.

As example, one evaluation per conference or should you have regular intervals?

Coverage.

Do you evaluate everyone or just a cross-section?

How?

- Should you do a questionnaire or interview, usually best for small groups?
- If demographic is large, perhaps best to use sampling - you don't need a monitoring form.
- Pick a specific week and evaluate users/clients for this period.
- Should you focus on statistics gained internally?
- Interview via email or telephone or in person?
- You will have a better idea of which methodology will work best for your organisation.
- More in-depth information can be gathered through interviewing people. Observation can also be a good method in order to see how people work.
- When using your internal statistics, you will need to know how to extract it.
- Question: Tesco method – collect everything, not everyone has the capacity.
- Data collected can be used for a later project but may not be in an appropriate format – how can we use this information for the next lot of funding?
- What data do we need to collect?
- In order to maintain consistency ask the same questions so data is consistent from beginning to end.
- Not easy to predict what data you will need – the data for the first project will be valuable.
- What you are looking for is what has the project not achieved?
- Collect evidence of need for the next funding bid. If it doesn't cost anything to collect the data, then collect it.
- What you're looking for is: where has the project failed....obviously don't use this exact phrase!
- Make sure data is collected in a useable form.
- Usually you will have all the information; it's just a case of providing it in a useful format.
- As an example, expenses system - there is a good motivation for accurate data collection. If someone is benefitting then the data will statistically be more

accurate. Sometimes data will be based on opinion e.g., how much more do you know about a service than before?

What to find out/record?

- what did you do?
- how much did you spend?
- did the client like it?
- how can it be improved?
- are we satisfied with the outcomes?
- will it make a difference?

How to analyse?

- is the report internal or for funders?
- summarise your data
- commentary
- analysis: internal or external (maybe use comparisons)
- action points (what should we change?) and recommendations
- Evaluation isn't just something that is used afterwards
- it is ongoing, investigate a situation so it can be sorted.
- There should be continuous improvement otherwise complaints will go up. Asking how something can be improved doesn't mean something is bad. Perhaps suggest you were expecting something to work in a certain way or in a certain timescale and ask if it did.

How you phrase the question is important.

What matters to you? Tools for evaluation You should be designing questions and forms that get the results you need. This shouldn't be things they don't have access to, don't ask people to speculate (i.e. if you hadn't had our services what would be the result?) Ensure everything is worded clearly – do not be ambiguous. Stick to similar values and format throughout the form but use a combination of tick boxes and open-ended questions and don't put them off! Evaluation Trust can provide advice on how best to formulate your evaluations. (<http://www.evaluationtrust.org.uk>)

Tick box questions

- be clear, use single response or multiple
- explain the scale (1 is bad, 5 is good etc)
- break down complex ideas, do try to explain things - 80:20 rule.
- Include the option for "other" (80% of people will be in 20% of the answers – i.e. 80% of your funding will be from 20% of funders)

Collecting data electronically

- this is easy as people can just email back but doesn't suit everybody
- expect a lower response rate - this will save on data entry
- there are two main ways: email back a form or complete an online questionnaire (although you may not be able to print this out for your records)

Using Excel

- handles numbers well (formulas etc)
- produces charts

- not that good for multiple answers
- can use pivot tables and cross tabulation
- is not great for text answers (i.e. if you have answered "other" and expanded)
-

Using Snap (Paul gave a demonstration of how to use it)

- it's designed for analysis
- you can ask questions and it will email a response
- it can accept electronic data
- one downside is that it is expensive
- also it is not intuitive - it can be exported as a RTF document and edited in Word
- there are different modules for PDAs, internet version and a Word format
- it has preset styles which saves time when designing questionnaires

In order to collate accurate data you must ensure your figures are accurate.

Question: What is the point if people hear what they don't want to hear?

Concentrate on your action points. From this we can say what needs to be done and how things can be improved. Future outputs can then be adjusted to allow for the previous learning.

Question: Is there anything different about evaluating ICT support?

People are scared and think you're going to ask them what they don't know and getting the terminology right. If you ask someone "how well is your system working?" they may not have the definitive answer.

The basics are the same for evaluation throughout the sector.

Bringing your Organisation to Life through Digital Media and the Web

Overview:

This session presents the various digital media and storytelling options and examples for non-profits, including Web 2.0 tools and techniques.

Session Facilitator:

John Kenyon (www.johnkenyon.org)

Biography:

John Kenyon is a nonprofit technology strategist who has been engaged with nonprofits for over 16 years providing advice, teaching seminars and writing articles about technology. Along with Michael Stein he wrote both "The eNonprofit: a guide to ASPs, internet services and online software" and the Nonprofit Quarterly article "A Decade of Online Fundraising". He recently served as Training and Consulting Manager at Groundspring.org/Network for Good before returning to private practice in 2006.

John's practice concentrates on strategic uses of appropriate technologies with a focus on leveraging the internet. He developed Tech Academy, which teaches nonprofit technology advisers - consultants, circuit riders and staff - how to build excellent practices. John is an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco and has been a featured speaker at conferences and workshops across the US, England, Australia and online. Clients include Bioneers, Community Information Strategies Australia, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, CompuMentor, Democrats Abroad, Hospice Foundation, Legal Services Corporation, London Advice Services Alliance, Meals on Wheels, New Progressive Coalition, River Network, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Women's Funding Network, AFP Chapters and Community Foundations across the US.

Session Notes:

John introduced the session about how to engage people with web 2.0 with stories to connect. John explained his experiences and examples of his journey of working with nonprofits and the stories of organisations and their technology and communications.

Current challenges ...

John asked the audience, tell me about, what are your challenges...

"As a CVS a second tier infrastructure organisation - how can we tell our stories, get loyalty and recognition and understanding; present engaging stories and how to be approachable."

"Digital media tools" "Finding the things/examples that work or not, and identify where appropriate"

Online engagement

John showed a slide of a triangle of online engagement, from the Nonprofit Handbook The ladder of engagement to drive forward from prospects to committed supporters... attract - engage - commit - retain. Collect and drive traffic from email address, interact

and engage by web and email will lead to online action which can be either donations or petitions.

Four Key Website Attributes -

John explained the changing ideals of funders, they will use your website to see how fit for purpose you are, they may also have funds to give and share, and will seek you out. With a good website, they may come and offer funds to support your good work. The four areas he covered as the four key website attributes and gave examples of how this can be used to good effect.

- Credibility - The public face of your organisation
- Cultivation - Outreach and building relationships
- Clickability - Interactive user experience
- Content - most important elements - requires regular input.

Digital media and storytelling overview

John explained in detail how organisations are involving and creating wider conversation and experiences of people within an organisation to tell stories to reach out to stakeholders using a variety of media. Anybody can do it, he cited an example of an 80 year old who began to blog. Your organisation if using web 2.0 is 24 hours a day and global, you are no longer just a local organisation. Even if a local focus, you connect with the wider world. You can bring the audience to you and use media to illustrate your work in a live and real way. Be transparent and open. Be personal and specific. Focus on your needs, your audience and your message.

- Content Generation - Organisation and user generated content
- Interactive content - surveys, quizzes, blogs and wikis (examples shown: <http://www.youthnoise.com> showing quizzes and the language used and different interactivity and innovation to create good content to connect, blogs used the Rainforest Action Network as an example of a blog and also show the anatomy of a blog with the environmental defence blog site, and the openness of the Nonprofit Management wiki got collaboration and user generated content)
- Digital Storytelling - Audio (downloadable podcasts, streaming online, CD's) Video (Streaming online, downloadable, DVDs) - John showed an example of a search on iTunes for 'nonprofit' podcasts and showed a long list. Videos can be an easy and powerful form of storytelling using real people and volunteers for example, has a instant quick impact, moves the viewer to wanting to volunteer, participate or donate.
- Online Engagement and Web 2.0
- Maps - Planet Hazard, Google Earth, Frappr
- Photos - Flickr (use for events, programmes, website integration)
- Games - Games that teach - Ayiti and Darfur is Dying were cited and shown as examples these games put the user/web reader into a scenario which educates and gives experiences.

Digital Media - Reflection

What does this mean for my organisation?

Which of these elements do we have / need?

What ideas does this generate for me?

Questions raised...

"How to integrate these tools within existing sites?"

"How to change the 'traditional' site into an interactive site without losing focus?" John explored the idea of rotating areas on the front page regularly to keep things moving and interesting to readers and introduce different concepts to reach out.

"What's the return of investment?" Build relationships. Use relationships. Who would you give your money too - the updated website that reaches out to it's audience or the bland 'brochure' website? Credibility again, as a donor would you think, they can't manage their communications, therefore can they manage my money?

John talked about the most important part of organisations, first is the people; second is the data (and knowledge)...is that reflected the same way in your budgets? Does your data feature as highly? Remember to include technology in all funding bids.

Resources

Guides and Books

- The eNonprofit Guide to ASPs, Internet Services and online software (free download)
- Online Fundraising Handbook
- Successful Internet Strategies

Website Resources

John showed a list of good resource websites under the headings of design and navigation for your site, images, accessibility, and general resource sites such as Tech soup, digital storytelling and more on digital media for nonprofits (see attached presentation)

Discussion

- Tips for online fundraising - if you are doing this, have a process for first time donors, don't hassle them straight away for more funds, give them space, communicate and converse before campaigning for funds with them again, say giving a space of six months. You want to retain your donors and supporters.
- Links on websites - should groups have links to other sites from their websites? Yes, create those links, you'll make new friends and relationships, others will link back to you.
- RSS Feeds - how can they be used? John showed his blog website and talked about his transition from a static site and how easy it now to keep a site updated so now updates and remixes data more. Tip for RSS - if using with a site, help your readers add a page explaining 'What is RSS' to explain what is and how it can be used. RSS enables readers to be notified when a site is updated. The reader doesn't need to hunt for the data, the data goes to the reader automatically. RSS feeds embedded on a website from external sites can help keep your website alive and fresh with new links and content.
- What is the shelf life of your articles, podcasts, videos? Do we just leave them up 'there' forever? You can rotate, keep them updated, renew them or keep them there as an archive of the stories and journey of an organisation. Some may keep their stories timeless if they are not likely to create regular media feeds (video, podcast).

Circuit Rider Learning and Skills Development

Overview:

In this session participants will be presented with the spectrum of learning resources and systems that Circuit Riders are currently using to improve their skills development along with how ideas for how these could be taken a step further.

We will then explore perceived barriers to learning and solutions that may overcome these, before having a go at developing our own Personal Learning Plan relating to one of the Benchmarks, Standards and Associated Skills Sets discussed in the earlier Circuit Rider Training & Standards session.

Participants will be asked to share what they see as most beneficial including specific resources, tools and projects to guide ongoing programme development.

Session Facilitator:

Kate White ([Superhighways](#))

Paul Allen ([LASA](#))

Biography:

Kate White has been managing Superhighways - a CVS-led ICT Support project, for over seven years, and in this time the project has grown from one sole worker to a team of six covering the South London sub region. Current services include technical advice and troubleshooting, ICT healthchecks and strategy development, ICT training, ICT volunteering and most recently a community wireless broadband and PC recycling project.

Paul Allen moved to the ICT field in 2000 when he started a web design course after various jobs with a community development flavour. He then went on to an Internet start up company, which went bust (not his fault) where he was their IT manager. Paul became a Superhighways staff member as a Circuit Rider based in Wandsworth CVS for nearly 3 years and was the part-time London Accessibility Champion for about 18 months. He has now been at Lasa for 9 months as an ICT consultant, trainer and project manager.

Session Notes:

Session related to Circuit Rider principles project.

Perspective around professional development opportunities and quality aspects of service delivery.

How do you currently learn and develop your skills?

What do people want from the session:

- Keep up to date.
- How do other people deal with training
- Find out what can be done better in terms of development
- What is happening and future developments
- Share information and learn from colleagues

- Get information
- Develop training certification for Circuit Riders

Mixed group – delivering, co-ordinating and people who have undertaken CR training.

Will cover:

1. The story so far...
2. How do we learn
3. What are the barriers and what are the solutions
4. Personal learning plans – skills sets and how to use them to develop plan

Funded by ICT Hub until end of May and possibility to be included in a BASIS project from LASA in London which will be available to the wider community.

Training and Standards project started April 2007 – led by focus group from the CR community.

What methods do Circuit Riders currently used as like a tag cloud (see slide 3) with following information:

- Google
- self-discovery
- others experience
- classroom training
- online forums and lists
- screencasts
- webinars
- workshops
- trial and error
- osmosis from techies experimentation
- mentoring
- reading
- systematic research
- formal qualifications

Could include:

- Online community
- One-off buy in of experts
- Blogging about personal learning
- Reading – could cover a wide range of sources
- Shadowing

What came out of focus group (slide 4) often patched together learning – project moving on to enable better planning and affording of training.

Imagine if.... We creatively pulled together the myriad of great existing Circuit Rider learning resources to create and nurture a Personal Learning Environment (PLE) where (see slide 5)

Important to recognize the different people have different preferred learning styles, using resources available. How 3 different learners might select how they best learn.

Barriers – what stops you learning.....

- Money – associated costs not just fee for training/conference
- Finding something that is appropriate
- Knowing what questions to ask
- Availability – e.g. mentoring, is someone available locally
- Time
- Prioritization
- Access to resources
- Who do I need to connect with for peer-to-peer learning
- Retention of learning
- Measuring impact – will and has it benefited
- Confidence – to admit to needing to learning new skills
- Know it already – self-identify
- Availability of learning to meet your learning style

In pairs pick one barrier and how you might find a solution this, how do people overcome barriers?

- Money
- seeking funding
- prioritise learning
- flexible learning
- use free resources
- Day job gets in the way
- Make a convincing business case for training
- Measuring return on training in economic sense
- Plan and better time management
- Assessing long-term benefit and value
- Developing evidence that training was worthwhile – why did it work for me?
- Get more staff or volunteer to free up time
- Focus more on job rather than being pulled in different directions – outside the job description
- Formalise how you work in to a learning experience – recognise new skills through trial and error
- Focus on success not just on what is not achieved
- Access to Resources

Quote about how difficult it is to find time to plan learning - *"Too busy treading water to learn how to swim"*

Learning possibilities

- Online learning
- Directory of expertise
- Interactive/peer to peer online learning opportunities

Webinars – who uses them?

Common in USA and very popular method of learning Superhighways experience – where to go for high level training...need for server support, developed a relationship with commercial provider. Using remote resource dialled in to carry out work with worker on-site to learn how work was done. Problem solving and learning Cost – learning around security issues. Linked with partner organisation to be able to split cost and access training. Personal Learning

Could we shape generic learning for the sector?

This includes providing support for learners to:

- set their own learning goals
- manage their learning - both content and process
- communicate with others in the process of learning and thereby achieve learning goals"

Personal Learning Plan

Where do skills set for Circuit Riders come from? Links benchmark, standard and skill (see slide 9) – example of one specific area. Using example of ICT planning to look at how training can be identified, will allow drill down to what skills have and need to improve on Importance of training – key element Fill out skills checklist – identify 2 development areas Interested to see how this works in practice: Gave examples of how form was used

Example of use of non-technical language – being observed and recognise weakness, using metaphors when explaining technical issues – "getting a database is like buying a new home". Identified outcome and deadline Capability to set budgets and fit with financial planning. Skills Level – low. Develop through practice, may be a need to look at using models – simulating. Need to find training (online). If not happened in 12 months re-evaluate. How do you make sure you carry this out? Find people to check you have achieved this – can be an issue for sole circuit rider. If desirable why such tight deadline – how you decide what level to put things at? Personal learning can suffer if not prioritise needs Important to think about what to do next.... How was it for you? (using this process)

Question – advisor to sit whilst you complete form, walk you through process?

Is this an investment worth doing? Yes – could be done peer-to-peer. Accountability to complete planned elements. Using an advisor or colleague to help complete training form helps focus on needs and get a better overall picture.

Done before with training officer – looks like a good template. What are the other training plans going to be? Hook up with someone with similar experiences. Directory of human resources – say from people on the ukriders list? Skills audit from people working in the sector – soft skills. Evidence of learning needs to be quick and simple

ICT and Social Enterprise

Overview:

The ICT Hub's Unmet Need Fund has funded research into the work of social enterprises that deliver IT support to the sector. It includes case studies of ten existing social enterprises and helps identify key ingredients and good ideas for developing your own social enterprise solutions.

Come and hear more about what we're learning and tell us how we can make it useful for you.

Session Facilitators:

Simon Duncan, COSMIC (www.cosmic.org.uk)

Rob Gentles & Marcus Pennell, SCIP (www.scip.org.uk)

Session Notes:

Participants and their expectations

- Providing support service – previously wholly funded but transition to SE. Find out how easy to sustain project as SE. Feel only way for project to go.
- Domain name and one person! – starting out. Hear experiences. Some say SE doesn't mean anything is just a legal structure. Hear from people really doing it.
- Recently trained as circuit rider. Here to learn.
- Nor from a SE – SE vs co-operative. Differences.
- IT project. Interest not to do with work but a lot of areas where the provision of quality service via model, maybe a mix of SE, private business, direct provision through sector.
- Co-ordinator of circuit riders. What models – different flavours. Interested in examples of how an ICT SE functions.
- CVS – had fully funded CR project. Groups back for help and looking to move to a paying sustainable model.
- SE – ESP – turnover £5 million. 9 staff. Started from nothing 5 years ago
- COSMIC – 10 years SE – set up and turnover similar to ESP. Mixture of funded work and commercial work
- SCIP – SE -
- COSMIC introduction to Social Enterprise – Simon Duncan
- 55K SE in UK

Key issue – profit making. Often do a mix of funded and commercial

- Who benefits?
- Community - often local
- The people whom they work with – collaborate with . Partnerships Organisations with similar values
- Employees – must be behind the values.

Examples

- Setting up – mission - what org is ultimately trying to achieve.
- Values – link to mission – ethically, morally driven often. Change the world?
- Social Objectives – where benefitting society, who, where, how

- Social Accounts – measure your objectives. Assess social objectives. Measure benefits.
Careful about what your benefits will actually be.
- What Legal structure – Ltd, charity, CIC, Co-op, community business. or anything you like and be a SE.
Social objectives in constitution etc...How run the org.
Type of business will dictate the legal structure.
- Have to be benefitting society in the way you have laid out. Most reinvest the profit. Back into the org or to fund another project.
- Profit making is different from profit distribution.
- COSMIC has a strong sense of ethos and values. The social objectives are training and employment.
Help local orgs, people make most of ICT.

See presentation from Cosmic for contact details

Transition process – if becoming a SE will effect org when trying to get more funding. Yes it will. Where are on spectrum will affect funding streams. There are specific funding streams and may take a different view than other funders.

There is a spectrum of types of SE

Funded

If no private ownership in the SE it will be easier to get funding.

ESP “A Successful Social Enterprise” Morgan Killick

Story of ESP – Profit motive – private gain public good

Wanted to do a combination. Nothing to say businesses must maximise profit.

- SE development unit – took risk on private individual expressing aims.
- Gave help to be a SE.
- Model – shared capital model – private ltd company – tweaked to be 3 categorises of shareholders
- Private individuals
- Employees
- Not profit orgs

Social aims and mission in memorandum & articles.

Allows the efficiency of private org but if profit then pro rata share of profits are shared out. Orgs can be part of ESP and may also get some money.

Private good and public good driver.

ESP Grown quickly. This year looking to put 10 – 15 k back into community through orgs with shares.

A number of community orgs bought into ESP. Where do they get the money from? funding? They buy shares at £10 each so minimal financial risk to org.

Success

Run efficiently with committee baggage

Pitfalls

Shares are locked and if problem with org – not participating just want money. What can we do? No mechanism to take them back. Only get back if agree to sell shares. Issue of shares can be restricting.

Can look at preference shares – invest in short time.

Lots of complexity around legal aspects. Speak to qualified people. Research can help you find any model you want. Usually an area to help you grow SE and develop. Social enterprise coalition.

ESP has an accord on salaries – they are capped. Has to be agreed by board so can't go against spirit of accord.

Any SE model will have room for both good and bad practices.

How guarantee that deliver real social value? Same as applies to a funded body. Board – to check. Annual social audit – look at things do which contribute to the social objectives.

Transition from grant funded model – money to provide services. In SE commissioning and tendering for org. there will be VAT implications to add in.

Difficulty moving from grant funded to SE. Meeting needs of funders and turn into something completely different. Try to get best bits of each.

SCIP – “another social enterprise”

Mixture – initially primarily grant funded and charity based model. In model some charging and recover costs to now – mish mash. Company by guarantee. No money to shareholders. Memorandum & Articles include that any profit back into org. Board unpaid.

Gives best of both worlds but there's complexity. Mixture of services – 7 depts of 1 person. 400k turnover.

Funding streams – most of them contacts with public sector for service delivery. Philanthropic sources for social benefit services

BLF – partnership working

Grants within national, regional infrastructure funding

Money from services SCIP sell

Expand? Trade commercial as well as 3rd sector? Currently not able to sell to non 3rd sector.

Difficulties of clarity about what trying to do. Pricing – pitfalls revenue generating – hard headed right pricing, costs covered etc.,

Social benefit to groups by making money from groups who are providing social benefit.

Key – social part of model. Enterprise – tricky to do but easy to understand. Is it making revenue?

But are you actually providing benefit – much harder to measure. Would the orgs getting services be better those from elsewhere – commercially?

CR ethos – what it's about with diff models

Grant funding – clear about what for! Using for particular things and deliver them.

Regulatory framework. Minefield – tax etc. partial VAT exemption. Part corp tax. Keeping pots of money separate.

Any aspect specify to ICT? How SE and ICT fit together?

Advantage is that SE that can compete with private sector. Purchasing power (charity discounts etc) and expertise is often better than some commercial businesses providing IT support.

Example of Circuit Rider standard settings session – everyone had as priority that CR should understand of working with orgs to provide with most appropriate according to their needs. Get to know them first then understand and then recommend app IT solution or not a solution based on IT.

Success Factors

- Having profits to put to social purpose
- Making as much profit as a commercial company
- USP – community sector to community sector business
- Getting hold of the business support to be a SE – external advisors
- Starting afresh
- Cost/pricing understandings
- Excellent cash flow management

Pitfalls

- Sell services too cheap
- Getting pulled away from cause
- Over regulation by stakeholders
- Belief that just by being a SE will get you business
- Social aims impact on the capacity to deliver services that would support social aims. Free work can take you away from paid work.
- How do we know we really have made a social change – who monitors it?
- Chasing sales can dilute mission

What next for you?

- Do more research
- Google map of CICs in London
- Seek specialist help
- Business planning for cash flow management
- Drafting refined contracts
- Seek mentoring from business

Conference Quotes

Show us your Quotes

As well as formal evaluation of the conference we asked delegates to type a sentence or paragraph about what they thought of the conference. Thanks to all delegates who did this.

"Its been a great resource of information and experience. Inspirational and motivating. Thank you to all at LASA please continue the great work!"

"It has been a very useful conference"

"I think that the facilitators – Ian and Marc were very good, and made the introductory sessions very entertaining."

"Excellent idea with the Speedgeek format. Well run and thought through. Back slaps all round."

What really went well was how connected things were to each other so the conference had a cohesive feel to it. The thread around personal learning was helpful."

"Its great to meet and talk with people in the same circumstances as ourselves. I really thought we were on our own out there."

"The facilitation was really useful I the big sessions. I feel like I really knew what we were doing and why. It was fun!"

"I have really enjoyed the opportunity to meet and share ideas under these circumstances; I have learned a great deal from my peers and through the sessions during the day and I feel I have a lot to take away with me."

"It was great experience to participate national level circuit rider conference . I learn and absorbed a lot I am glad there weren't a lot of sessions to choose from. Less is more!"

"A fantastic opportunity to meet people, share ideas and make connections for the future."

"A great meeting of minds, fortunately they don't all agree! Even better they disagree in such a positive way! Thank you."

"The wireless networking session was an inspiration. That alone made the trip worthwhile. The networking and other stuff was just a big bonus. Shame I was feeling too poorly to go out on the razzle with everyone in the evening."

"I've learnt so much both from the session and from everyone at the conference – it's been great!"

"Really good conference – very giving people. Good range of topics Thanks for organising it!!!"

"I was quite worried that this wouldn't be relevant to my work but I couldn't have been more wrong! I've learnt so much that is really useful, things that I can set up quickly that will be great for my members. Also met some lovely people, found some new members for my network and have found a solution to a big problem that I faced in relation to putting a database online. Thanks and I can't wait for the next one!!"



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