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The National eWell-Being Awards 2007

Improving people's lives and the
environment through Information
and Communications Technologies



Produced by

**THE
INDEPENDENT**

for SustainIT's eWell-Being Awards



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PROMOTING BENEFICIAL USES OF ICT



Online assistants: Samaritans uses new technology to offer help and support

Technology's helping hand

New categories for 2007 mean that the eWell-Being Awards can highlight an even wider range of benefits from ICT

This is the fifth year of the National eWell-Being Awards and they are bigger than ever. Over 130 entries across six categories and with three special awards, the success of the awards is a symbol of the growth and dynamism of the sector as a whole.

Launched in 2002 by UK CEED's SustainIT initiative, the eWell-Being Awards are the UK's only national awards that identify and promote the social, economic and environmental benefits of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Professor Peter James, director of SustainIT, explains: "Five years ago when the awards started, media coverage of information and communications technologies tended to either focus on the technology itself or the excesses of the dotcom era bubble. What was less widely acknowledged were the impacts on our lives and the environment, both positive and negative, of the technologies and their applications. The eWell-Being Awards are about recognising the projects and the people that have developed ICT-based projects that bring tangible, practical benefits to all sections of society, in particular the neediest."

The awards aim to showcase best practice and to stimulate the application of technology for social and environmental benefits; to highlight and promote emerging technologies

where they have the potential to provide environmental and social benefits; and to raise awareness of the beneficial and inspirational uses of ICT.

As well as being worthwhile and deserving recognition in their own right, winning an eWell-Being Award can bring significant benefits in terms of profile and public awareness, too.

Over the past five years, there have been over 600 entries to the awards and 22 winners.

ENWORKS was a winner in the climate change and environmental efficiency category last year for its online resource efficiency toolkit. Todd Holden, programme director at ENWORKS, says, "Winning the award has proved to be a real boost for us, enabling us to develop further and faster than we would otherwise have been able. The award means we now have more companies using the online toolkit, saving more money, using less energy and materials – and that has to be a good thing for the planet and the bottom line."

Similarly, Carol Hill, centre manager at Nottinghamshire County Council, a winner in the mobility category in 2003, says that "winning was fantastic and endorsed everything we are doing with the remote working 'telecentre' in Nottinghamshire. It gave us national recognition and led to our centre becoming stronger and better supported. It also led to new partnerships – today we are unrecognisable from 12 months ago."

This year's contenders hoping to join ENWORKS and Nottinghamshire County Council on the winners' roster were competing in six different categories.

■ The Age and Disability category, sponsored by BT's Age and Disability Action Unit, recognises projects that use ICT to enhance access to opportunities, quality of life and services for elderly and/or disabled people.

■ The Better Ways of Working category, sponsored by Brother, seeks projects which encourage more efficient and flexible ways of working.

■ New for 2007 is the Building Social Networks category, sponsored by AOL UK. It seeks uses of ICT that join communities of interest and deliver social benefits through the participation of users.

■ The Climate Change & Environmental Efficiency category, sponsored by UK CEED, is for projects which make use of ICT to reduce energy, water and resource use. It is also open to projects which increase our

understanding of the impacts or science of climate change.

■ Digital Inclusion, sponsored by BT, seeks voluntary sector projects that encourage disadvantaged groups to access, learn about, and experience digital technologies.

■ Improving Public Services is open to national, regional and local government, this category, jointly sponsored by IDEa, eGov Monitor and e-Government Bulletin, seeks entries that deliver improvements in customer services and public service delivery using ICT.

There were also three special innovation awards introduced this year to recognise outstanding projects. These are:

■ Environmental Product Innovation, sponsored by PC Pro. This special award seeks innovations in ICT products that improve environmental well-being.

■ ICT Innovation in the Third Sector, sponsored by ICT Hub. This special award seeks organisations in the voluntary or community sector that have

improved the way they work through the use of ICT.

■ The Inclusion Through Partnership and Innovation award, sponsored by the Digital Challenge Inclusion Network, which seeks innovative projects which demonstrate good practice in third sector and local authority partnerships.

With more entries this year than ever before, the judging panel faced a challenging although rewarding task. SustainIT's Professor Peter James says that the 2007 awards are further proof that technology has the potential to change the whole of society, including some of its most vulnerable members, for the better.

"This year's bumper crop of entries are a real inspiration. So many of us do not realise the full potential of the benefits technology can provide, both to society and the environment," says Professor James.

One of this year's special award winners, Samaritans and its e-mail helpline, is a prime example. Samaritans developed the first ever telephone helpline in the UK and Republic of Ireland in 1953 and has since helped hundreds of other organisations set up similar services. In 1994, Samaritans began to see how technological advances could be used to provide emotional support via e-mail, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The e-mail service really began to take off in 2003, by which time over 100 of Samaritans' 200-plus branches were e-mail enabled.

By 2006, it had 176 branches providing confidential emotional support via e-mail from 1,430 trained volunteers. The numbers have increased dramatically over the years: in 2001 it received 64,000 e-mails. By 2003 it was 99,000; in 2005 it was 154,000 and in 2006 around 175,000.

Explains Rosalind Hutchinson, trust manager at Samaritans, "prior to 1994 our service was primarily via a telephone helpline and supporting callers via e-mail was not considered viable. But in the first 24 hours of the pilot e-mail service which we launched that year, we received 37 messages. It was clear proof that this was a service that was needed and relevant – not because Samaritans wanted to introduce it, but because it was clearly how a lot of people wanted to communicate with us."

Samaritans' e-mail service is so highly regarded, that it gets frequent requests from other organisations across the world for help and support in setting up their own e-mail services.

Nominations for the 2008 National eWell-Being Awards are already being accepted. If your organisation is interested either in entering or in becoming an awards partner, please contact Catherine Saunders at UK CEED (01733 311644; csaunders@ukceed.org).

www.ukceed.org
www.sustainit.org
www.sustel.org

Message from the awards organiser

"Sustainable development charity UK CEED devised and manages the National eWell-Being Awards through its SustainIT programme. The Awards are a highlight of SustainIT's year, earning national recognition for the organisations and individuals doing most to improve people's lives and the environment through the imaginative use of ICT. See back page for more information about UK CEED and SustainIT"



DIGITAL INCLUSION WINNER E-LEARNING FOUNDATION

The key to better education

The e-Learning Foundation's aim is to ensure that all children have access to a computer and the internet whenever they want it

The media is full of images of our technology-controlled future, where everything from the fridge, the shower and the locks on our doors are controlled by computer technology. But for many of Britain's more disadvantaged families, just having access to a home computer is still a thing of the future.

Despite the digital revolution, millions of disadvantaged families still have no home access to computer technology and the internet. And for the children in these families, the lack of access to these technologies hampers their ability to match the digital and educational achievements being made by other school children.

The e-Learning Foundation has been striving since 2001 to reduce the effect of this "digital divide" by working with schools, parents and others to ensure that all children have access to the learning resources that technology can make available. The massive inroads it has made into doing this, as well as its successes in raising awareness of this important problem, are two of the major reasons it was chosen as one of this year's eWell-Being Award winners.

"Every child in this country should have access to learning technologies – a computer, the internet and learning content – when and where they want to learn," says Valerie Thompson, the foundation's chief executive.

"The digital divide affects children who are already going through their education with one hand tied behind their back. It simply adds another layer of disadvantage and leaves them further behind."

The e-Learning Foundation wants to level the playing field and help bridge the gap in educational achievement by ensuring children from all backgrounds are given the same opportunities. It helps schools to engage with parents, local business, charities and the public sector; to raise funds for ICT equipment on a sustainable basis. It has already made a massive impact on tens of thousands of disadvantaged families across the country.

Karen Coulthard, the head teacher at Berger Primary School in the London Borough of Hackney, says the foundation was vital in its plan to try and get PCs into the homes of its more disadvantaged students.

"The e-Learning Foundation has been fundamental in helping

us get our ICT project off the ground," Coulthard is quoted as saying on the foundation's website. "They helped us to create an offer for families, making it as failsafe as possible in helping children use ICT for home studies."

The school was awarded a £5,000 grant from the e-Learning Foundation to kick-start the initiative. As a result, 25 families now have a desktop computer in their homes.

The foundation has also worked very closely with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), which the charity says was critical for its survival in its early years.

Despite the financial challenges that faced the foundation from its inception, the hard work and dedication of its team of supporters and workers has meant that they have generated over £15m for home computer equipment for over 35,000 school children over the past six years.

And as well as making a difference for individual schools and students, the e-Learning Foundation has helped to raise awareness of the digital divide at all levels, from families and pupils to teachers and cabinet ministers.

Just 18 months ago, over 50 per cent of head teachers had no idea what the digital divide was, says Thompson. Now, that number has dropped to 15 per cent.

And with 180 schools running e-Learning Foundation programmes, and the same amount in the process of developing plans, demand for advice and assistance from the foundation is at a record high.

In January this year, the foundation achieved potentially its biggest boost, when the schools minister, Jim Knight, announced that the Government now shares its aspiration for universal home access and has set up a ministerial task force to engage



Smiles better: the e-Learning Foundation strives to ensure that children from all backgrounds are given the same opportunities

government, industry and the third sector in the challenge.

"This gives us a huge opportunity to play a central role in a national project that will make progress on a totally different scale to that which we could achieve on our own," Thompson says.

But despite the great strides that have been made, the e-Learning Foundation knows that there is still a lot more work to be done to ensure that no child in Britain, no matter what their background, will be excluded from the enormous educational benefits of good home access to technology.

"We still have a long way to go, but we are getting near the tipping point where schools will be asked to explain why they are not addressing the digital divide, rather than why they are," says Thompson.

e-Learning Foundation:
www.e-learningfoundation.com

DIGITAL INCLUSION COMMENDED

There were two commended entries in the Digital Inclusion category, both excellent examples of projects that help disadvantaged people access digital technologies.

In Scotland, the **Gorbals Library and Real Learning Centre**, managed by Glasgow City Council Cultural and Leisure Services, has brought digital technologies awareness, access, support and training to one of the UK's most deprived communities, in Glasgow.

Building on the traditional library concept, it provides a range of free services, including a designated digital inclusion team whose role is to increase ICT awareness, enhance learning and training opportunities and provide a route for local people in to employment and better-paid jobs. There are a wide range of introductory-level ICT classes, designed to interest learners in ICT, while providing the necessary skills and support. Each learner is given a one-to-one interview from which a Personal Learning Plan is developed.

Since launching in June 2004, the centre has delivered over 2,000 hours of tutor-led learning. One hundred and two people have been assisted into employment, 58 local community projects have been assisted and over 7,000 people are now registered library members – over 80 per cent of the local community, compared to a national average of around 20 per cent.

The second commended entry is the **BETA Netc@fe** (pictured) in Wigan. BETA is a local education charity helping adults with basic lit-



eracy, numeracy and IT skills. It also helps people with job search and employment entrance tests. The Netc@fe was set up with a millennium grant in 2000 and was the first charity internet café in the country. Like all internet cafés, it provides a range of internet-enabled PCs, printers, scanners, other hardware and on-site IT support. But Netc@fe is different in that it is staffed by adults with physical or learning disabilities. The aim is to offer paid employment to adults who have learning/physical disabilities and at the same time to enable local people to access ICT and the internet at a reasonable cost and with free tutor support.

Since February 2000, 19 adults with learning or physical disabili-

ties have been employed in BETA Netc@fe. A further 35 disabled adults have had training and achieved certification in Environmental Health Food Handler's certificate and the North West Tourist Board Welcome Host Customer Service certificate. Another 16 disabled adults have benefited from paid work experience.

Says Eileen Walsh, BETA project director, "Through BETA Netc@fe, the stigma of disability is challenged and barriers are broken down for people with disabilities to become truly integrated into society."

Gorbals Library and Real Learning Centre: www.intoreal.com
BETA Netc@fe: www.betanetcafe.co.uk

Message from the category sponsor

"Digital technologies have the potential to make a difference to how people interact with each other. Access to ICT can open the door to education, jobs, entertainment and communication with friends and family. However, it is not just about having access to ICT, it's about having the skills, confidence and motivation to use it. The Digital Inclusion Award recognises organisations that have engaged with, and empowered others, to utilise this powerful medium to improve lives."

Supported by



AGE AND DISABILITY WINNER ABILITYNET

'It got me using my computer'

AbilityNet has been helping disabled adults and children use computers and the internet for almost 20 years

It is estimated that up to five million disabled people in the UK face difficulties using PCs and the internet – and yet over 90 per cent of jobs require some ability in and knowledge of IT.

National charity AbilityNet has been trying to bridge the gap between those two statistics for almost 20 years, helping disabled adults and children use computers and the internet by adapting and adjusting their technology to suit their specific needs.

Its expertise is ensuring that whatever the age, health condition, disability or situation of the user, they can find exactly the right way to adapt or adjust their ICT to make it easier to use.

It has had a great degree of success. In 2005 alone, it supported 490,000 people. But, as with many charities, one of its greatest challenges is meeting the demand for its services, particularly the one-to-one assessments it provides for disabled users.

"We were unable to meet the demand for individual ICT assessments or afford the cost or time to travel all over the country to deliver them in person," says Jo Greenwell, head of public services at AbilityNet.

The one-to-one assessments are a mixture of confidential conversations; discussions about needs and problems; consideration of the environment in which the ICT will be used, including existing hardware and software requirements, location and space; and demonstrations and hands-on trial of the relevant hardware and software solutions, using AbilityNet's equipment.

By tapping into the potential of broadband, however, AbilityNet has found the answer to the demand problem. It has developed a remote assessment service – delivering the one-to-one assessments using the internet, webcams and telephone communication.

"With the growing availability of broadband, we have been able to develop a service which enables us to assess people at home not only at a time that suits them, but also at a pace that suits them," says Greenwell.

AbilityNet's remote assessment service allows the charity's team of experts to assess disabled users' IT needs in their own homes, offices, or even local community centres, over the internet, and then advise and work with them to identify solutions to their specific problems.

By using broadband technology, disabled people can now use the remote assessment service to fix the problems they have with their ICT, whether it be new software, finding a more appropriate keyboard, or any other problems they may be facing when interacting with their computers.

A client will take a self-assessment test online on the AbilityNet website. The test generates a report which highlights problems and suggests solutions. The report alone is sometimes enough to sort out some of the basic challenges. Where the report isn't sufficient, an outreach assessor will call the client to discuss the issues in more depth and, if necessary, send out loan equipment, such as alternative keyboards and software. If the person has a physical disability, then they are sent a webcam as well.

At an arranged time, the assessor telephones the client and helps them to download special desktop streaming software. Using the webcam, the software allows the assessor to see the client's screen and observe how they use the computer. The assessor can make appropriate system changes to the client's computer remotely to suit the client and see how any trial software or hardware is being used. Once the client is happy, they try out the new setup for two weeks with the option of follow-up sessions if needed.

"I was so depressed with the other keyboard going bananas every five to six months, I couldn't attempt most things and didn't want to bother," says one client with no speech and multiple disabilities following a brain-stem infarction. "Now, the computer is like my best friend and the internet is my window to the world."

The team at AbilityNet are keenly aware of the difference that the remote assessment service can make to disabled ICT users and what a massive improvement ICT in general can make to their lives.

"For many people with a disability, the computer can enable them to access work and social opportunities, enabling them to read, write and communicate with others in a format that works for them," Greenwell says.

The remote assistance project also involves the setting up of two new projects in London and Scotland, where AbilityNet is working with local partners to deliver remote assessment and as-



Window on the world: for many disabled people computers can enable them to access work and social opportunities

sistive technology skills via community centres. These centres will widen AbilityNet's reach even further to meet the needs of people who may not yet have access to broadband at home.

"AbilityNet really got me using my computer. I have very limited sight and suffer from multiple sclerosis. I could barely use a computer before, and now I can," says one satisfied client. "I can do e-mails now, and it's put me back in touch with life, put me in touch with the world. It's made a huge difference."

AbilityNet: www.abilitynet.org.uk/athome_remote

Message from the category sponsor

"Communication is at the heart of BT's business and it is committed to helping everyone improve the way they communicate. The Age and Disability Award provides organisations with inspiration on how technology can be used effectively to create a more inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from ICT."

Supported by



AGE AND DISABILITY COMMENDED

The BlueRIS project (pictured) in Blackpool is one of two commended entries in the Age & Disability category. Run by **Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Society for the Blind**, BlueRIS enables blind and partially sighted people to access audio information via broadband internet as an alternative to cassette tape. They can listen to news, information and entertainment created exclusively for visually impaired people and delivered straight to their computer at home.

Users listen to this content using BlueRIS's unique software, designed to meet the specific needs of blind and partially sighted people. It is extremely easy to use with a choice of using an internet browser for the partially sighted or bespoke client software for the very poor sighted or totally blind user.

Project leader Steve Carter explains: "The Society creates around 2,000 cassettes per week and mails them to its users. Because of the impending obsolescence of cassette tape, BlueRIS was hit upon as an alternative to wasteful CD production, which appeared to be the only way forward at the time."

BlueRIS now has around 300 registered members and over 1,200 pieces of original content have been produced. Such has been its success that a national roll-out is planned.



The second commended entry is the **Usability Exchange**. The Usability Exchange provides a simple, fast and cost-effective way for any organisation to test the usability and accessibility of their website with real disabled users. It also provides a platform through which organisations can communicate with a range of disabled people to identify and resolve accessibility problems.

The aims are three-fold: to provide disabled users with a source of income through testing websites for accessibility issues; to improve website accessibility by conducting usability testing with disabled users; and to help organisations better understand the experiences of disabled web users.

It works by organisations setting up their tests online and submitting them directly to disabled testers in the Usability Exchange database. Testers are then free to complete these tests in their own time, earning money for each test they complete.

The service launched in March 2006 and the client list is already impressive, including Orange, Royal Mail, Waterstones, the Disability Rights Commission and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Society for the Blind: www.blueiris.info
Usability Exchange: www.usabilityexchange.com

BUILDING SOCIAL NETWORKS WINNER THE ECTOPIC PREGNANCY TRUST

Emotional support from an online community

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust's website is the only one of its kind in the world, providing professional guidance, advice and a secure place for women to discuss the condition

Ectopic pregnancy is often a worrying, scary time for women. The name of the condition may be familiar, but few people have much knowledge or experience of it until it happens to them.

An ectopic pregnancy is when an egg develops outside of the fallopian tube. As a result, in the vast majority of cases the pregnancy is lost. If that is not worrying enough, the condition is often misdiagnosed and there is a risk of future infertility. It is unsurprising, therefore, that many affected women need professional advice and guidance as early as possible, or they simply need to be able to talk to someone who understands.

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust has set up www.ectopic.org to try and meet those needs. Run by web designer Jason King, the site is the only one of its kind. It acts as a gateway to an online community which meets the needs of women and their partners who may require emotional support over a long period.

"It's very satisfying," says King. "What I'm particularly proud of is that the right technologies were chosen to match a widespread need: using online forums it's possible to bring together people with a similar need but who are geographically dispersed, to share experiences, both medical and emotional, and support one another. Most users of the website would probably have never met without it."

The condition, which affects one in 80 pregnancies, is potentially fatal, so the website provides information on symptoms, diagnosis and treatment, all written and peer-reviewed by medical experts.

A carefully monitored message board enables women to share experiences with one another. There are separate forums for women at different stages of loss and recovery and password-protected chat rooms where users can support one another.

The site is staffed by eight volunteers who ensure medical inaccuracies are corrected and visitors are made to feel welcome.

"There was no other charity in the world for ectopic pregnancy and no other website dedicated to it," says King. "The discussion forums were set up because ectopic pregnancies are common... yet not so common that affected women are likely to know anyone else to talk to about it."

The website incorporates a forum for visitors to read, write and reply to each others'

messages. Surprisingly, what was intended to be an information source for The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust, the website is now a focal part of the organisation.

"Most new referrals to the Trust are via the website, fundraising efforts are co-ordinated online and the message board has helped relieve the burden on the phone helpline," King adds. "Also surprising is how many people from other countries use the message board, because they have nothing like it in other countries."

The forums get a staggering 44,000 visits a month, with over 1,300 registered users. An average of 200 messages are posted each day. The messages are read up to 4,000 times a day, with up to 40 users online at any one time.

Equally surprising is the fact that the website has been active for six years without receiving any funding. For the last three years, King has worked voluntarily to keep the site going, while Trust employees and volunteers are able to use basic software and online tools to maintain the content themselves.

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust has shown that a small charity can make innovative use of the internet to build a community. But the Trust is all too aware the service is not sustainable without secure funding. They have put together a plan for the website's development and are looking for funding to help maintain and develop the site's services.

"What I've tried to do is ensure that the website develops carefully, follows good practice, uses appropriate technologies, and has the backing of its users and Trust staff and volunteers at every step of the way. If we can do that, then hopefully the rest will follow," says King.

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust: www.ectopic.org.uk



The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust has shown that a small charity can make innovative use of the internet

BUILDING SOCIAL NETWORKS COMMENDED

There were three commended entries in the Building Social Networks category. **Film Street** (pictured) is an innovative website managed and developed by First Light Movies. It aims to engage primary-aged children, their parents and teachers with film culture and filmmaking.

Young filmmakers can take part in interactive activities, swap movie-making ideas and get expert advice, all wrapped up in a friendly and easy to use interface. Visitors can explore the site to discover how to develop a story idea, dress a character, learn how to shoot and edit films and much more.

The second commended entry is the **National Association for Premenstrual Syndrome**. Their interactive menstrual chart acts as an online diary, helping women to control their menstrual symptoms, while the website itself, which includes chat forums, is an invaluable information resource for women, enabling them to share and discuss their experiences with others. Women can log symptoms daily online and build a picture of



their menstrual fluctuations, both in a visual and printable format. This in turn helps them to act positively in the face of pre-menstrual stress (PMS) or peri-menopausal symptoms. PMS can only be diagnosed through a comparison chart or diary. Prior to this innovation, menstrual charts would be completed by hand and many women would struggle to keep charts intact and have difficulty comparing one chart with another. The on-

line chart provides a permanent, secure record of symptoms, for use at any time in the future for comparison. Not only does the menstrual chart provide categorical evidence that symptoms are cyclical, but it also shows if there are any improvements following treatment.

Finally, the third commended entry was Cybermoor's Community Discussion Forums. **Cybermoor** is a community website serving the vil-

lage of Alston Moor in rural Cumbria. It was set up in 2002 as part of the Government's "Wired-up Communities" initiative. The original funding paid for PCs for 675 households (two-thirds of the community), wireless broadband network for homes and businesses, a community website driven by a content management system, local helpdesk support and adaptive equipment, software and one-to-one training for people with disabilities. The discussion forums were launched specifically to give a voice to all sections of the community, to improve social cohesion and to generate feedback about local issues, ideas and problems. For a variety of reasons, many members of the community are unlikely to attend public meetings, but the forums give them an outlet to post their views and join in discussions 24 hours a day.

Film Street: www.filmstreet.co.uk
National Association for Premenstrual Syndrome: www.pms.org.uk
Cybermoor: www.cybermoor.org

Message from the category sponsor

"The number and calibre of the entries received for this particular award highlights that social networks were, and will continue to be the hot topic within the Internet sector for some time. As a strong advocate of online communities since AOL launched in the UK more than ten years ago, we'd like to commend everyone who entered this fiercely fought category, so well done to all. A vibrant, online social network can provide an unrivalled and powerful tool to engage and entertain an audience, so we're delighted to be part of this year's awards in this category."



BETTER WAYS OF WORKING WINNER OAC PLC

The office without workers

Cutting-edge computers and updated software keep Oxford Actuaries and Consultants on the button

If you walked into the head office of Oxford Actuaries and Consultants plc (OAC) on a normal working day, you could be forgiven for wondering how it has become such a successful business – there's hardly anyone there.

That's because over the past 13 years, OAC has pioneered one of the country's most impressive teleworking offices – not just in the financial services industry, but in any industry.

Bernard Grenville-Jones, the company's founder, says the whole idea began in 1994 with one consultant and a laptop. The need for the consultant to respond and react to one client while at the premises of another prompted the modification of a laptop that could hold scanned correspondence and was equipped with the facilities to send faxes and letters that appeared to originate from the head office.

"When we realised that it worked, we employed more mobile consultants and equipped them with the same facilities. As the technology developed, we realised that a physical office full of consultants, where everybody had to go to access the files they worked with, to liaise with

colleagues or to conduct correspondence, was no longer essential," says Grenville-Jones.

"From there, the idea of setting up a wholly virtual business model which could benefit from the advantages of non-geographical restrictions, financial savings and improvements to the work-life balance was developed."

OAC employees have access to all the systems and support that you would expect from a traditional office, but completely accessible remotely over an innovative digital infrastructure.

"We have carefully engineered a fusion of available ICTs to create our unique infrastructure, designed, owned, operated and maintained in-house," says Grenville-Jones.

Cutting edge computers and constantly updated in-house software ensures that OAC is making the most out of new technologies such as 3G, voice-over-IP and broadband. The constant developments have ensured that the office is open and accessible for staff and clients, from anywhere at anytime.

In theory, OAC staff are almost always in the office, whether they are at home, on a train, in a café or a wireless

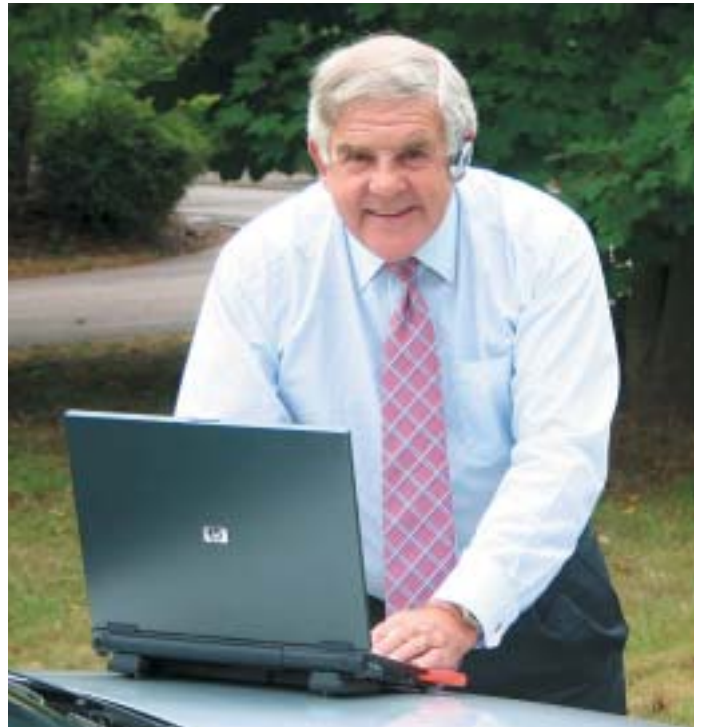
hotspot – they can access the "office" facilities from practically anywhere.

"Obstacles were overcome by our ability to continuously establish new solutions for challenges, built upon innovative ideas and new thinking," says Grenville-Jones.

The new thinking is clearly paying off. The company has increased its turnover by 1,000 per cent over the past 12 years, staff numbers have grown by 1,500 per cent, and corporate growth has been over 25 per cent per year over the past three years. In short, the company is continuing to thrive – and the staff believe that their success can be attributed to the innovative operational structure.

"There is a widespread perception in the working world that it is impossible to achieve staff cohesion, and the inventiveness and relationships that it generates, unless people work together and can meet regularly face-to-face. OAC has proved that is not the case," says Grenville-Jones.

OAC has a reputation for being able to offer the same services as its competitors for half the price, due to the savings made



Wireless working: Mark Secker, the business development manager of OAC, keeps in touch

through its unique teleworking office structure. And the company has been recognised not just for the service it provides for its clients, but also for the way it looks after its staff. In 2002 and 2005 it was given Investors in People accreditation for its commitment to its staff, who seem genuinely proud to be working for such a pioneering company.

"The flexibility that working for OAC provides is fundamental to the way I live my life. While there is plenty of contact with colleagues through the use of e-mail and phone calls, the fact of working physically alone as opposed to in a busy office means it is possible to concentrate to a much greater degree," says Christine Rose-Williams, a compliance consultant who joined OAC in June 1998.

Moreover, OAC's teleworking model doesn't just benefit the company's management, its staff and its clients. It also benefits the rest of us through the broader social and environmental benefits offered by a teleworking office.

Because most of its staff are based at home, there is no need to commute to work, which drastically reduces OAC's carbon footprint in relation to similar-sized businesses. The whole working model is also based around a paperless office, using electronic communications wherever possible, which cuts down on paper and the need to visit clients' offices for meetings. On a social level, OAC is also able to tap into a pool of workers that otherwise may find it difficult to get

employment, such as mothers, disabled people and carers who need to spend long periods of time at home.

Aside from all the benefits for its staff, clients and the environment, the final marker of OAC's success is the development of the business. Its steady growth has shown that teleworking is not just nicer business, it can be better business.

"And others may have to follow," says Grenville-Jones. "As we expand, we expect to put cost pressure on our competitors – that, along with the need to reduce damage to the environment, could put pressure on others to adopt a similar teleworking model."

Let's hope so.

OAC plc: www.oac.co.uk

Message from the category sponsor

"Brother is committed to developing technology to support emerging working needs, particularly flexible working. Brother has developed a broad range of multi-function devices offering printer, scanner, fax and copier functions all in the one space-saving machine. For a free copy of Brother's teleworking guide, *There's No Workplace like Home*, please visit www.brother.co.uk. Brother is delighted to sponsor the eWell-Being Award's "Better Ways of Working" category."



BETTER WAYS OF WORKING COMMENDED



The first of two commended entries in the Better Ways of Working category is **Nottinghamshire County Council's Adult Services** and its Infocare project.

Infocare is an electronic smart-card base system that records, monitors and manages the delivery of home care services to over 5,000 elderly, disabled and often isolated people. The bespoke system was developed in partnership with Bural InfoSmart, a specialist in electronic logging technology.

The system is based on a card reader installed into the service user's home telephone point. When a care worker arrives, they swipe their card through the reader, which uses smart-card technology to recognise the

identity of the service provider and the care worker, at no cost to the service user. It is activated by the insertion and removal of the care worker's smart-card at the start and end of their visit, enabling "real time" recording of visit duration.

The care worker can input information into the Infocare unit, such as any delays experienced, their travelling time and the services they have provided during their visit. The unit also has a single button "call me" facility, allowing people to easily contact their service provider; a temperature monitor and a review facility, showing details of all care visits and services delivered in the previous two weeks.

Since the project started in 2005, Infocare units have been installed into over 4,300 homes.

The second commended entry is an automated personal safety system for lone workers from **C3 Ltd** (pictured). Launched in 2002, it uses the telecommunication technology to provide additional protection for people who often work alone, such as social workers. Each time they go out on an appointment, the workers use a phone to update LookOut Call of their activities. Typical information includes an address, details about the activity and the route taken to get there. LookOut Call then uses this information to initiate a programme of countdown timers. If the timers reach

zero without LookOut Call being updated, it automatically raises the alarm that a lone worker has gone missing or may be in trouble. Feedback has shown that staff feel more confident about working alone once equipped with LookOut Call and often comment that they feel better valued as employees.

The system is extremely flexible and can be set up to reflect the working practice of any organisation and it is supplied on a "license per user basis", so no capital investment is required.

Infocare: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/social_care/ss-main-contacts.htm
C3 Ltd: www.lookoutcall.co.uk



the other way



the brother way

The new Brother inkjet all-in-ones combine a high quality colour printer, copier, fax and scanner in one compact machine. Easy to set-up and use, they'll give you all the functionality of the head office, stylishly designed for the home or small office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 0845 60 60 626 or visit: www.brother.co.uk

At your side.
brother

Keeping in step with the environment

A website that promotes the benefits of travelling on foot rather than by motor vehicle is striding ahead

Walkit.com is a new website that literally helps people to find their feet in responding to the challenge of climate change.

Set up less than two years ago, Walkit.com aims to show just how easy walking in towns and cities can be, at no cost to walkers or the environment. Its ambition is to wean urban people away from cars and taxis and it presents the perfect alternative to those disillusioned by unreliable, expensive and often unnecessary public transport.

Jamie Wallace, the site's director, says unnecessary pounds are being spent on transport when a far healthier, sociable and environmentally friendlier option is available.

"I got the idea for the site after watching colleagues dive into the tube or taxis when I knew the meeting they were going to could be reached on foot," he says.

The motivation for the website is to help people navigate their way around city streets without the need for black cabs or buses, while offering users the chance to exercise and mix more in the community.

The site provides a point-to-point journey planner that creates tailor-made walking route maps and journey times. It even estimates how many calories you should expect to burn and how much carbon you will save.

There are no timetables to keep to; no parking fees; no journey delays and no overcrowding. Users have access to direct travel with benefits for health, the environment and their wallets. Wallace admits to being "a certified greenie" but believes walkit.com is more a public service than an energy saver – and to prove it, the website doesn't take a penny of profit.

"I've always been keen to not labour the health/green aspect of walkit.com. It has to succeed or fail on the utility of the service it offers," he says.

"Sure, the subtext is to get thousands of people off buses and tubes and out of cars and taxis, but to succeed you've got to play up the merits of the alternatives rather than rail against the problems associated with cars."

Wallace, who has previously worked for a charity which seeks to convince big business to promote sustainable living, says the site isn't about trying to get people to sell their cars, but to consider the benefits of travelling on foot.

"Cars are great: I drive and for many people cars are essential. But it's just getting the balance right," he says.

"In central urban areas we need to crack down even further on car and even bus and taxi use. Providing quality pedestrian environments can transform areas for the better, socially, environmentally and economically."

Walkit.com Ltd is a small company with big plans. A non-profit organisation of less than five people operating out of London, Birmingham and Norfolk, it hopes to be available to anyone who clicks on the "How to find us" link on websites of urban-based organisations.

The site is looking at providing further services to enhance the on-foot journey, such as "quickest vs most scenic" options on the route generator, as well as a "via" facility. It uses the same Navteq technology as car route planners, but modifies the options, like removing the one-way street factor and turning restrictions imposed on vehicles.

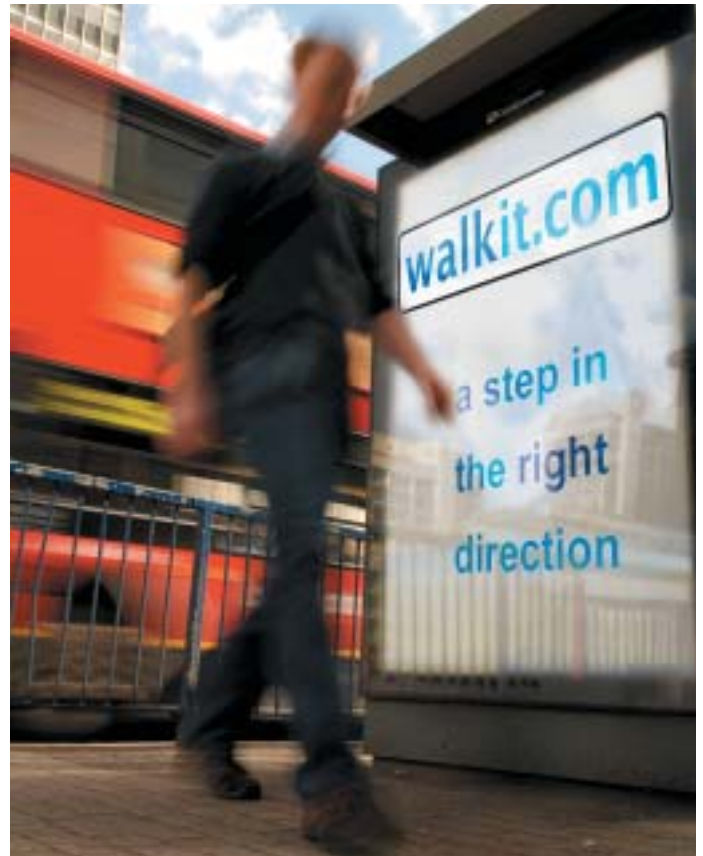
There are even plans to create a means for users to report problems with routes, such as missing footpaths or construction work, in addition to the possibility of route generators for mobile phone users looking for instant ad-hoc travel.

Within 80 days of re-launching the site with a new design in September 2006, walkit.com generated route information totalling more than 75,000 km, equal to about a year-and-a-half of walking with almost three million calories burned. In less than three months, it saved more than 30 tonnes of carbon dioxide thanks to users choosing footpaths over cars, buses, taxis or underground services, half of which are for journeys of less than two km.

Judging from the feedback, users are particularly pleased knowing how many calories they will burn if they leave their cars at home. Three-quarters of users say the site is fast, easy to use and well designed, while 90 per cent say they are likely to recommend the service to others.

"There's a huge sense of accomplishment with the site," Wallace says. "It had been burning away as an idea for years. It was all developed on a hunch. An informed hunch, yes, but we didn't really know how popular it would be until it was out there."

Walkit.com: www.walkit.com



Face yourself: giving up unnecessary car journeys is good for you - and the health of the planet

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFICIENCY COMMENDED

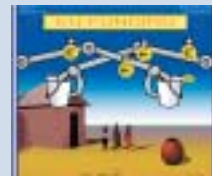
Developed by Manchester digital multimedia agency Stardotstar, **DingDing** is the first of two commended entries in the Climate Change & Environmental Efficiency category.

DingDing is an educational website designed to promote public transport to children through online and offline educational activities. Developed in partnership with the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE), which also funds the project, the aim of the website is to counter-balance the negative messages about public transport that children receive.

Closely aligned with the national curriculum, DingDing is aimed at children at key stages 1, 2 and 3 (five to 14 years old). It provides learning through game-like modules and lesson plans based on a public transport theme – from route planning and environmental issues, through to behavioural issues, road safety, travel training and, shortly, school travel plans.

"It is part of a long-term solution to a long-term problem – to counter negative perceptions of public transport delivered to children through media, parents and peers," explains Gerard O'Brien, director of Stardotstar.

Launched in 2003, the project grew out GMPTE's desire to



increase their engagement with children, who were often excluded from traditional methods of public consultation, such as public meetings, and yet were regular public transport users. It offers users a range of fun activities and educational games that support teachers with free national curriculum-friendly content, in a way that is specifically designed to give children (and their families) the knowledge to explore public transport and to question society's reliance on the car, before they themselves are sucked into it.

The second commended entry was the **Water Game**, an awareness campaign based around an online game, developed jointly by two charities, Tearfund and WaterAid. The charities have campaigned together for many years on water and sanitation issues. The aim of the Water Game campaign, which ran throughout the second half of 2005, was to raise awareness of the issues

surrounding the aid money EU countries give to water and sanitation projects, and to encourage people to petition the Secretary of State for International Development to address this during Britain's six-month presidency of the EU in late-2005. It also tied in to the Make Poverty History campaign, with which both charities were involved. The game itself was created using Flash technology. It was placed on both charities' websites and, as well as being educational and fun, it pointed users to a facility to personalise and generate a letter to the international development secretary.

Over the six months, the game was played nearly 70,000 times and around 20,000 letters were sent to Hilary Benn, the international development secretary.

"The game certainly had an impact on the Department for International Development and resulted in a number of conversations between Hilary Benn and Tearfund/WaterAid on the topics raised. We also know that many officials within the department enjoyed playing the game," says Nick Harris, new media manager at Tearfund.

DingDing: www.dingding.org.uk
Water Game: www.tearfund.org/watergame

Message from the category sponsor

"The climate change and environmental efficiency category, sponsored by UK CEED, focuses on how information and communication technologies can be used to reduce the use of energy, water and other resources and enhance our understanding of the natural environment. The quality and breadth of the projects entered in this category are a tribute to the ingenuity and vision of the individuals and organisations involved and provide a vivid illustration of how the technologies can deliver tangible environmental benefits."



UK CEED
UK Centre for
Environmental
Efficiency

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION WINNER ONECLICK TECHNOLOGIES LTD

Plugging the energy drain

OneClick Technologies has come up with a simple solution to the problem of computers left on stand-by

If you were the first into the office this morning, the chances are that you saw ranks of computers, monitors, printers and photocopiers winking back at you: office equipment left ticking over on stand-by over night, churning out heat and burning vital energy for no real reason.

Leaving electrical equipment on stand-by is a huge waste of energy and money. Studies show that five to 10 per cent of electrical consumption by developed nations is wasted in the workplace, while an average home will have up to 12 electrical gadgets on stand-by at any one time, the biggest culprits being TVs and computers.

On average, a standard desktop computer set up with a printer, scanner, monitor, broadband modem and sub-woofer speaker will easily waste £30 worth of electricity per year. Times that by the millions of computers in the country and you begin to get an idea of the scale of the problem.

The Energy Saving Trust estimates that the UK lost close to £750 million last year through electrical equipment being left on overnight or over a weekend. In terms of environmental damage, in producing that wasted energy power plants would have had to release carbon dioxide levels equal to that of 120,000 four-wheel drive vehicles.

Whether the problem is a costly habit or down to a plain lack of awareness, OneClick Technologies has found a simple solution. It has come up with the IntelliPlug. As the name suggests, IntelliPlug is an "intelligent plug" which saves energy by turning off all other devices when the main computer is switched off.

The plug's inventor, Peter Robertson, is dead against electrical wastage. At the request of the Government-backed Energy Saving Trust (EST) - set up after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 - he has channelled three years of his time and effort into finding a way to say goodbye to stand-by.

"I noticed the huge waste of energy due to electrical equipment and peripherals always being left switched on even when the office was empty," he says.

"And with increasing awareness of the number of items left on stand-by 24 hours a day, many people are wondering what they as individuals can do about it."

The IntelliPlug looks like any normal three-way extension plug. It is designed for use with a desktop computer and its peripheral equipment, either directly or indirectly via other extension blocks. It may not look much, but it makes a massive difference.

Monitors, printers and speakers automatically power down when the desktop PC is switched off. Simple yet innovative, the plug delivers a significant reduction in electrical power use and slashes electricity bills, helping the environment and the bank balance.

OneClick's patented auto-calibration feature determines the "on" and "off" power levels of the master PC and adjusts the switch-off thresholds for peripheral equipment accordingly. It also features surge protection to guard delicate electronic equipment against potentially dangerous high voltage spikes in the mains supply. No software is required and it cuts standby consumption from a typical 35 watts to as little as 0.4 watts.

"IntelliPlug is ideal both for offices and for the home, where children often have games consoles and sub-woofers that are never switched off," says Robertson.

He says an energy saving of around 10 per cent per household and business will significantly lower energy bills while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. The plug's low cost - around £17 - means that each unit should pay for itself in energy cost savings within a year.

The small start-up company Robertson set up to develop and market IntelliPlug employs just eight people in Derbyshire.

He says designing the plug was a long and arduous struggle, but he is hopeful that his work will have an important effect on the environment, on businesses and on households.

"It was a three-year project with many sleepless nights," he says. "But the sense of achievement was phenomenal."

OneClick Technologies:



Small but perfectly formed: IntelliPlug delivers a significant reduction in electrical power use, both cutting bills and helping the environment

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION COMMENDED

Zybert Computing has developed a low energy PC server for SMEs that minimises the negative impact on the environment. The Z1 GEM uses only 45 watts in operation - around one quarter of the power consumption of a typical server, and has been designed to meet or exceed all national and EU regulations relating to the development and disposal of electrical equipment.

Furthermore, the maintenance contract for the Z1 GEM includes the offsetting of the carbon emissions generated by operating the server 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by funding renewable energy and energy reduction programmes through Zybert's partner, Climate Care.

"The aim was to generate the most environmentally-friendly IT solution for SMEs. The Z1 GEM hardware and software has been specifically developed to minimise environmental impact. The power it uses in operation - 45 watts - is equivalent to a dim domestic light bulb and considerably less than competitive products. This has been achieved through optimising the Linux software suite for energy conservation, as well as using low-power components, such as the VIA CPU that uses only one watt when idle - which is



most of the time," says Richard Zybert, the managing director of Zybert Computing.

The Zybert server also reduces emissions in other ways. The server ensures that all files and emails can be backed up and archived from the server, allowing all other PCs in the office to be turned off at night. Zybert also provides a SPOK (Secure Portable Office Key), which allows users to remotely and securely access their office server from any internet-connected PC, without the need to configure software. The SPOK means that users can easily work remotely with minimal technical

support, helping companies reduce carbon emissions through home working schemes.

The second commended entry in the Environmental Innovation category is Microsoft Windows Vista. Windows Vista is the latest PC operating system from Microsoft. It was in development for four years until the first previews in autumn 2006. Assessing the environmental performance of software is difficult because it interacts with hardware and networks. The commendation in this category is for a specific feature of the software, which is its standby function. This means that a computer running Vista should be

switched off more than a standard PC set up, and so use less energy. The result could be as much as a third of a tonne CO2 reduction per PC, per year, on a Windows Vista PC compared to a PC running another operating system.

Windows Vista computers can be put on standby and resumed to full working order in less than three seconds. During standby, the computer uses a tiny amount of power to maintain its state. Currently, 30 per cent of business users leave their PC turned on overnight and with a screensaver running during the day. Computers running Windows Vista can now be managed to automatically turn off during these idle times and therefore use less power - which in turn reduces carbon emissions.

"With an estimated 40 million computers in the UK and increasing year on year, our project is to educate, inform and help all our clients and users to be environmentally conscious and save up to 30 per cent on carbon emission produced by their PC," says Paul Stoddart, Windows client product manager at Microsoft.

Zybert Computing:
www.zybert.co.uk
Microsoft Vista:
www.microsoft.com/windowsvista

Message from the category sponsor

"PC Pro has promoted green computing since 2005, with our Switch IT Off campaign encouraging thousands of UK schools, businesses and individuals to turn off unnecessary computing equipment. Our partnership with UK CEED's SustainIT programme to create a new category of environmental innovation is a natural progression of this, and should further encourage all IT companies to put environmental considerations at the heart of their strategy."



IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES WINNER GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL DIRECT & CARE SERVICES

Watch out Jamie Oliver!



On the cards: the Fuel Zone Points reward scheme in action

Glasgow City Council has come up with an innovative scheme to promote healthy eating in Scottish schools

Jamie Oliver may have grabbed the media's attention with his school dinners campaign, but in Glasgow, improving the diet of school pupils is something that they have been doing very successfully for two years.

The Fuel Zone Points reward scheme run by the Direct & Care Services team at Glasgow City Council aims to improve the dietary habits of secondary school pupils by offering them reward points for eating healthily. The points can then be exchanged at the end of the school term for various rewards, such as cinema tickets, video games, portable DVD players and digital music products. The rewards are chosen by pupils via an on-line catalogue on the Fuel Zone website.

The project has been implemented in partnership with Glasgow Young Scot Card (GYSC). The Fuel Zone scheme utilises the GYSC as a loyalty card where points are accumulated from purchasing healthy items from a special Fuel Zone menu in the school's cafeteria.

At the end of term when a reward is selected from the on-line catalogue, the information is fed in to a central database that automatically deducts the

points from the pupil's card. The website also offers a wide range of related information: pupils can check their account to see how many points they have accumulated and they can browse the Fuel Zone menu to check the points allocation for each food and drink item.

Ordering a reward is straightforward. Once the pupil has registered on the website - as around 8,000 have already done - they get a username and password, which is all the information they require, other than points, to receive an award. Once they have placed an order for their reward they receive electronic confirmation to their e-mail address. The website is 100 per cent content-managed by the Direct and Care Services

department, which controls the various reward and promotion changes, the ordering process and rewards dispatch.

The Fuel Zone concept has transformed school meals within the city of Glasgow and around 65 per cent of pupils now choose a healthy option. Such has been the success of the scheme that a similar version - the Blueberry Reward Scheme - is being piloted at Glasgow Caledonian University, where Direct and Care Services has the catering contract. The early signs are that the Blueberry scheme will be just as successful as Fuel Zone, and thousands more young people in Glasgow will be enjoying a healthier, more nutritious diet.

Fuel Zone: www.fuelzone.co.uk

COMMENDED

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency's Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making project aims to improve public access to the Agency's information and increase engagement with its decision-making processes through an on-line public register of information.

Prior to the launch of the on-line register in 2003, an average of two to three visits per day were made to its paper-based registers. Since then, daily searches have risen from 250 in 2003, to 2,000 in 2005. It now averages 5,000 searches a day, with a peak of over 8,000.

UK Online e-government project

The South West UK Online e-government project ran for 10 months from November 2005 to July 2006. The project created a unique online partnership covering three sectors - central government, two tiers of local government and the voluntary sector - to provide mediated access to e-government services for disadvantaged customers.

Following the project, a survey of individuals who took part showed that 45 per cent of the sample reported major improvements to their lives, with nine per cent finding a job as a direct result.

Environment Agency Public Registers: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/publicregisters
UK Online: www.ufi.com/ukol

Message from the category sponsor

"The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) is delighted to support the eWell-Being Awards for a third year. This year's wide range of entries demonstrates how national, regional and local government are utilising ICT to deliver improvements in customer services and public service delivery. The awards provide an opportunity to identify and promote the hard work and commitment, and reward them for their projects that deliver tangible social and environmental benefits using ICT."



INNOVATION IN THE THIRD SECTOR WINNER ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF

Accessible communications

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf has developed a new way to make and receive text calls via PC

RNID TalkByText is a computer-based textphone solution that lets users make and receive calls in text via their PC. It is both an alternative to traditional textphones and an accessible communication system for use within organisations.

Traditional textphones are not mainstream devices. A textphone has a keyboard that you use to type what you want to say and a screen so that you can read what the person on the other end of the phone line is typing back to you. You can also use a textphone to call people who use standard voice phones by using a text relay service, where a third party listens in to the call and transcribes what is said in real-time.

But textphones are expensive, limited in their use and complicated to use.



In contrast, TalkByText is a Microsoft Windows-based application that brings real-time text to the PC and can also be used to call landline and mobile textphones. TalkByText provides character-by-character text, essential for proper conversation and for making calls via text relay.

There is no additional hardware or software, apart from the TalkByText software itself. Using the familiar windows interface, users can set up a central address book that keeps track of

who is available and makes making calls as simple as clicking an entry in the address book.

Calls to external phone numbers are routed via BT TextDirect, which provides a text relay service, so users can easily make a text call to a voice phone.

Unlike e-mail or SMS messaging from mobile phones, which are non-conversational supplementary forms of communication, TalkByText is a direct alternative to voice telephony.

Hearing people use a variety of communication systems, both conversational, such as voice telephony or video conferencing, as well as non-conversational ones, such as SMS, e-mail or message boards. The method used to communicate depends on the context, as well as on the abilities and preferences of the users. In this context, real-time text telephony as provided by TalkByText is about giving deaf

and hard of hearing people the same communication choices as hearing people.

"TalkByText can be used in customer service centres, hospitals, council offices, or any organisation that wants to receive and make conversational text calls. It makes the phone system accessible and equivalent for people who use real-time text to communicate," Says Luke Crossley, research project manager at RNID.

RNID: www.rnid.org.uk/talkbytext

Category sponsor



COMMENDED

Patient Opinion

Patient Opinion brings people power to the NHS. It is a website where patients can share their experience of services and read what others are saying. Patient feedback is routed directly to local health service managers to help them improve services.

The service currently covers all NHS and private hospitals in England and there are plans to extend it to other services and across the UK. Set up with funding from the Department of Health, income is now generated through subscriptions from healthcare organisations.

Hope Foundation

The Hope Foundation's IT for ALL project targets disadvantaged

people in Middlesbrough, a target group which has high proportions of ethnic minorities, single parents, unemployed, physically and mentally disabled and recovering drug and alcohol users among others.

The project was launched by volunteers in 1995 to provide opportunities to gain IT skills, increase employability and reduce social and economic exclusion. Providing ICT facilities, structured training and e-learning opportunities, the project supports over 500 people every year, introducing many of them to IT for the first time.

Patient Opinion: www.patientopinion.org.uk
Hope Foundation: www.hope-foundation.org.uk

INCLUSION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP & INNOVATION WINNER DIGITAL FIFE

Getting the community online

Digital Fife's revolutionary project is helping local groups and charities create their own dedicated websites

Community websites are springing up across Fife in Scotland thanks to a ground-breaking project and its clever software. Digital Fife, set up by the local council, has so far helped around 120 local groups and charities to overcome the headaches and costs involved in establishing an internet presence.

The software, WebSpringer, has been specially developed with input from local people by HOP Associates, based in Cambridge. WebSpringer provides an affordable and flexible solution, allowing small organisations to take control of their own web content without needing to use web design companies or complex web design software. With WebSpringer, all editing is done through a standard internet browser, with no special software to install, and the results are instant.

Sheena Watson, project manager with Digital Fife, explains that, "the software was specified, designed and tested with direct input from community groups and the websites have features that they asked for such as videos, quizzes, surveys and forums."

"We now have groups in some of the hardest to reach communities taking advantage of the opportunity and this has helped to foster partnership working and networking. People from community groups have received support to act as champions and cascade skills and abilities into the wider community."

The project also provides online learning opportunities and Watson says it has got people involved in learning almost by stealth.

"Initially people get involved because they want to do something for their group rather than themselves, but a number of people have now gone on to college or taken part in additional learning as a result," she says.

Barbara Linton, 63, from Kirkcaldy, is a good example of the influence of Digital Fife. Not too long ago, she knew very little about computers but she now has a number of awards for online learning and carried off the Fife Adult Learner Award in 2006.

Linton helps to run the Fife branch of Headway, a national brain injury association and joined a beginners' class at her local library so that she could use the organisation's computer.

She then heard about Digital Fife and set about creating a website for her group. This gave her a taste for more computer knowledge and in addition to passing online learning modules she has used WebSpringer to set up a website for a community centre in a nearby town.

"The WebSpringer software is great. You can watch a video that shows you exactly what you need to do and there's a voice telling you what to do as well," says Linton.

As with most community projects, Digital Fife has faced its fair share of challenges and one of the first was convincing people that they really could create their own websites without coming to grips with HTML or web authoring tools.

"We overcame the problem by holding large showcase events to demonstrate WebSpringer's capabilities," says Watson.

Digital Fife, which aims to engage hard-to-reach groups such as young people, carers and the unemployed, is now working with LearnDirect, as well as Volunteering Fife and CVS Fife. So far more than 400 people have taken online learning modules and there are plans for 14 new learning modules to give people skills such as marketing their organisation or holding online surveys for their local community.

The project has received a total of £300,000 from lottery funding and European Social Funding, with matched funding from Fife Council. It also received £102,000 from Communities Scotland.

"WebSpringer is a unique tool for working in the field of regeneration," says Watson. "It allows community groups to have access to state-of-the-art technology, the full power of the internet and associated training and support."

The last word goes to Barbara Linton: "It really should win awards. It's brilliant and it has helped so many people."

Digital Fife: www.digitalfife.com



Silver surfers: so far more than 400 people from a variety of backgrounds have taken online learning modules

INCLUSION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP & INNOVATION COMMENDED

You wouldn't normally expect to find huge demand for straw on a deprived housing estate close to Bristol city centre.

But committed fundraisers at the **Knowle West Media Centre** can't get enough of the stuff at the moment. Their new eco-friendly media centre will have straw walls for insulation and they have launched a drive to persuade sponsors to "buy a bale".

The £3 million building, due to open next year, will include photography, video and multimedia facilities as well as a large auditorium and managed office space for local businesses.

Already, the centre's Ecomedia Project has launched a wealth of initiatives to engage local people with the new centre and get them involved in environmental schemes.

Activities include archimedia, environmental film making, the Knowle West going green group, a quarterly newsletter and the use of the Knowle West website and issues forum. The aim is to harness community participation and ICT to investigate, document and find solutions to local environmental issues.

Working in partnership with artists, businesses and groups across the city, the media centre is developing projects for people to



MICHAEL DONALD

express their ideas, learn new skills and bring about change.

Local people have also made environmental and local history films and taken part in digital storytelling, while young people produce a regular newsletter for the estate.

Emily Nicholson, environmental and sustainability programme manager for the centre, says that Ecomedia Project links social, economic and environmental aspirations that come from the community itself.

To date, dozens of local people have put forward ideas for

environmental improvements and signed up to a web-based local issues forum. A project to create an eco-friendly street on the estate will be documented through a digital story telling and photography project.

Another commended project gives people in Northern Ireland the chance to pass on their views to policy makers.

Tackling Social Policy Issues Online is an e-consultation project run by independent advice network **Advice NI**, which holds e-consultations on a range of social issues.

By engaging frontline advice workers and people from disadvantaged communities, it is improving the links between policy makers and ordinary citizens.

So far, it has run six e-consultations on topics such as debt, tax credits and charges on personal banking in Northern Ireland.

Following the e-consultation on bank charges, Advice NI gave evidence to the Competition Commission which found unfair competition in terms of personal banking in Northern Ireland.

Patricia Donald, head of ICT with Advice NI, says that the e-consultations have given a voice to people who would not normally take part in the consultation process.

They open up debates to people who might be daunted by the language and size of consultation documents and benefit the environment by saving on paper.

The project is now being developed into a social economy project and has just won its first competitive tender to run an e-consultation covering access to affordable housing.

Any profits will be ploughed back into Advice NI which deals with over 230,000 enquiries per year.

Knowle West Media Centre: www.kwmmc.co.uk
Advice NI: www.adviceni.net

Message from the category sponsor

"Exploring how the innovative use of technology and new ways of partnering might tackle issues relating to social exclusion, has been core to the work of the Digital Challenge programme. Communities and Local Government is therefore delighted to be sponsoring this Innovation and Partnership award. We applaud the good practice and innovation which has surfaced through the eWell-Being Awards and are confident it will be of great interest to the Digital Challenge and Inclusion network members."



The National eWell-Being Awards 2006/07

The SustainIT initiative was established by national charity UK CEED (www.ukceed.org) to investigate and promote the role that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can play in:

- Reducing social exclusion
- Empowering and supporting communities
- Protecting the environment through greater resource efficiency and enhanced understanding of environmental change.

Since its launch in 1999, SustainIT has become the leading source of authoritative research, policy advice and guidance and dissemination in these areas (see www.sustainit.org for a comprehensive evidence base).

The National eWell-Being Awards

SustainIT's National eWell-Being Awards is the only awards programme that seeks to demonstrate how Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can help improve people's lives and reduce our impact on the environment.

The Awards are now entering their sixth successful year. Since the first Awards were launched in 2002, over 600 high quality entries have been received from a diverse range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Over 700 people have attended the prestigious award ceremonies and 500,000 copies of the awards brochures have been published by the national media partners.

In addition to the eWell-Being Awards, SustainIT carries out a broad programme of activities including:

Teleworking, focusing on how telework schemes, and supporting activities such as conferencing, can be designed to create business, environmental and social benefits. The programme has surveyed many thousands of respondents in BT and other organisations, developed case studies and guidance materials, and provided practical assistance for implementation within organisations. SustainIT also co-ordinated the EU SusTel project, the world's most comprehensive study of the social, economic and environmental impacts of new ways of working (see www.sustel.org).

Broadband, a large scale study of the impact of broadband on small businesses in the UK's 'flagship' actnow project in Cornwall, as well as 36 case studies on broadband use at businesses and community organisations for the Northwest Regional Development Agency.

Online sustainability toolkits, interactive online tools that enable organisations to assess projects, plans and proposals against a defined range of sustainable development criteria. The toolkits have been used by over 1,500 individuals and organisations across three regions – the East of England, East Midlands and North West.

UK CEED

The UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development (UK CEED) is a charity and company limited by guarantee. It was founded in 1984 by a group of far-sighted leaders from the business, government and scientific communities with the aim of demonstrating the business case for good environmental practice.

The Centre undertakes research, provides policy advice and guidance to government and business, implements demonstration projects and conducts educational and engagement activities. Most of the Centre's projects are developed in-house and supported by partners in the public and private sectors. The projects fall within the following core business areas: Environmental Industries, Low Carbon, Resource Efficiency and SustainIT.

Partnership

UK CEED works in partnership with a wide range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. If you are interested in being involved as a sponsor or entrant in the 2008 eWell-Being Awards and SustainIT's wider programmes please contact Richard Craven on 01733 312286 or email r.craven@ukceed.org

SustainIT would like to thank all those who took the time to enter projects this year and also the judges for their hard work and enthusiasm. We would also like to thank AOL, Brother, BT, DCLG, ICT Hub, IDeA, and PC Pro for their support of the Awards. We look forward to welcoming many new entries for next year's awards.

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