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Believe there's an issue the voluntary sector should be looking at?

Know of an initiative we should mention?

We welcome all feedback about *Computanews* so if we've missed something out send us your thoughts or news, or submit an article for inclusion in a future issue.

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computanews

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Editorial & Production:
Miles Maier



Universal House
88-94 Wentworth Street
London E1 7SA

Editorial:
020 7426 4473

Email:
computanews@lasa.org.uk

Web Site:
www.lasa.org.uk

ICT Knowledgebase:
www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk

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Lasa

Lasa has been providing the voluntary and community sector with high quality and impartial ICT advice since 1984.



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newsbits

Lasa ICT training

Lasa has combined with LVSC to offer a selection of one day courses for:

- *Accidental Techies* (28 Oct, 28 Nov)
- *Costing and Funding ICT projects* (19 Nov)
- *ICT accessibility* (12 Dec)
- *Web 2.0 tools* (27 Jan '09) and
- *Setting up a website* (16 Feb '09).

Find out more about LVSC's training courses at:
<http://tinyurl.com/6yvz9p>

ICT case studies

Over 50 case studies highlighting innovative uses of technology including Connecting Dorset, Lasa's web office experiment, and Bristol Wireless can be downloaded from
www.ichub.org.uk/caseStudies/

New Knowledgebase articles

The ICT Knowledgebase is a free resource for non-profits containing over 300 articles on all aspects of ICT. Read the latest articles on exploring the world of Wikis, using Apple Macs in a Windows environment, and a guide to Microsoft licensing. Find more articles at:
www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk

Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations

Catch a video of Clay Shirkey discussing his best selling book on how social media sites like MySpace and Facebook are changing how people interact with each other and organisations. Watch the video at:
www.thersa.org/events/vision/vision-videos/clay-shirkey

City Bridges

City Bridge Trust recently announced some new funding streams as part of its five year review. One new stream, Strengthening the Third Sector, identifies "new and strategic approaches to the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT)." as a key area key area of second tier support. Find out more at:
<http://tinyurl.com/5gcm3w>

YouTube non-profit channel

Video is a powerful way to show your organisation's impact and needs, and with a designated "Nonprofit" channel on YouTube, organisations can now deliver their message to the world. The channel is open to UK and US registered non-profits. Find out more at:
<http://uk.youtube.com/nonprofits>

Business Planning

Free & inexpensive tools for creating organisational charts

Flowcharts, diagrams, floor plans, technical drawings and organisational charts provide a convenient and easy way to quickly communicate often complex information.

Gliffy is a web-based tool that allows you to quickly create and share charts and diagrams. Gliffy Basic is free, but comes with adverts and the Gliffy logo embedded in exported diagrams. Paid for monthly subscriptions come ad free and include group collaboration features. All versions export to JPG, PNG and the SVG (scalable vector graphic) file format for importing into Word documents or presentations.

Zoos offers set of web based drawing tools similar to Word and can be used for basic diagrams. Also check out Floorplanner, Flowchart and Org Plus as more specialised alternatives to Gliffy.

The free and open source **Dia** project is roughly inspired by Microsoft Visio, and can produce a wide range of diagrams and charts. It also exports to useful formats like EPS, PNG and SVG.

At the other end of the scale, businesses have traditionally used either **Microsoft Visio** (from £180 for Visio 2007 @ amazon.co.uk) or the basic draw functions in **Word** to create flow charts and diagrams.

Tips150

SWOT Analysis



- Gliffy** [www.gliffy.com]
- Zoos** [<http://www.ajaxsketch.com>]
- Floorplanner** [www.floorplanner.com]
- Flowchart** [www.flowchart.com]
- OrgPlus** [<http://ondemand.orgplus.com>]
- Dia GNOME** [<http://live.gnome.org/Dia>]
- Microsoft Visio** [<http://office.microsoft.com/visio>]

Computanews now accepts advertisements

If you offer a technology product, service or event aimed specifically at the voluntary sector you can draw attention to it through the pages of **Computanews**.

Computanews is a specialised magazine covering the use of technology within the voluntary sector. It has a key audience of:

- organisation managers and trustees
- staff responsible for their own organisation's IT
- Circuit Riders who provide advice and technology support to other organisations.

The circulation of **Computanews** is currently around 2,500 copies per issue, distributed 4–6 times a year. We anticipate that the circulation will increase now that it is becoming available as a free, downloadable file.

To place an advert, or for more details about rates and dates, please email: computanews@lasa.org.uk or phone: 020 7426 4473

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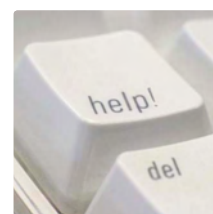
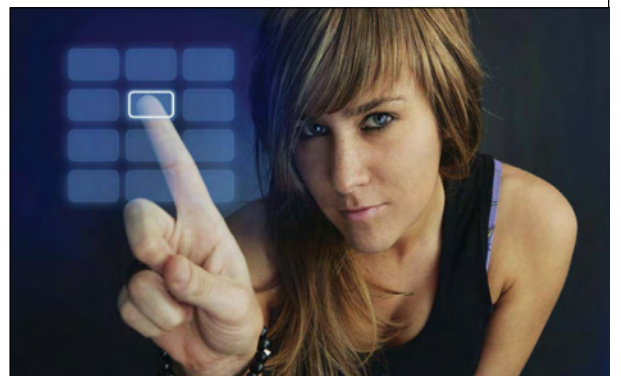
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Mobile 2.0 for the voluntary sector

(continued from page 1)

Travel alerts

Transport for London provides a free (<http://tinyurl.com/6ypdc9>) SMS alert service for London travellers. The AA (<http://www.aatrafficalerts.co.uk/>) provides also provides a national alert service for road users – text messages cost 50p each to receive.

Promotion

San-Francisco based company Reactee (<http://reactee.com/>) has launched a line of t-shirts that “Text Back” to help promote



causes. At the Reactee web site users create shirts with

their own personalised message such as “Stop Global Warming” and choose a unique keyword that appears on the shirt. People who see the shirt can then respond to it by texting the keyword to an SMS short code provided by Reactee at which point they receive a custom text message response created by the user.

Accessibility

The RNID's TalkByText Mobile edition allows deaf people to send SMS text messages from their mobile phone to a PC, doing away with the need for organisations to maintain expensive TextPhones. RNID's software is compatible with Nokia mobile phones.

(Source: <http://www.ictrnid.org.uk/tbtmb.html>)

MOBILE SOCIAL NETWORKING

Non-profits and causes have been quick to recognise the potential of mobile social networking, with Facebook, MySpace and Bebo all being used to promote and advocate social causes.

Causes

Facebook's **Causes** application, “connects thousands of people with common interests in humanitarian efforts.” You can browse through social causes which include relief efforts, environmental causes, political causes, educational efforts, and more. The **Red Cross's Causes Page** helps raise money and awareness for the relief efforts in China. There is also a similar service on MySpace called **Impact**, which is more like a portal for non-profit group activity, featuring news, videos and events.

The UK Government has also launched a new £3m advertising campaign against youth violence. The campaign ads – designed by teenagers – show the dangers of carrying a knife by featuring graphic images of real injuries inflicted by knives. The ads have been designed for a variety of channels including mobile phones and social networking sites like Bebo (<http://www.bebo.com/itdoesnthavetohappen>)

Micro-blogging

Micro-blogging is a form of blogging that allows users to write brief text updates (usually 140 characters) and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or subscribers. Many non-profits are using micro-blogging services like Twitter (<http://m.twitter.com>) or Jaiku (<http://jaiku.com/mobile>) to update their friends or colleagues with ‘news headlines’ or ‘news flashes’ – these could be calls for emergency aid and assistance.

Citizen journalism

Citizen journalism or “user-generated” content has become a powerful way of quickly spreading breaking news stories – the London bombings of 2005, the China earthquake and the Myanmar cyclone of 2008 – and influencing opinion.

One of the best known is CNN's iReport (www.ireport.com/) which promises unedited, unfiltered news. Last May 2008, CNN featured 915 user reports drawn from more than 10,000 submissions and both numbers are expected to grow.



South Korea's Ohmynews (<http://www.ohmynews.com/>), which started life in 2000, pioneered the concept of citizen journalism.

The BBC (<http://tinyurl.com/c5emj>), Sky News (<http://tinyurl.com/6enel8>) and ITN (<http://itn.co.uk/contact.html>) all accept “user-generated” content under a variety of royalty-free, non-exclusive licences.

Media sharing

These tools bridge the mobile phone and the web, allowing you to connect, share and publish content with friends and online communities through a mobile phone.

Tools like Itsmy.com (<http://www.itsmy.com/itsmy/>), Shozu (<http://www.shozu.com/>) and Kadoink (<http://www.kadoink.com/>) offer the possibility that organisations could exploit these channels to share their movies, photos and other stories to mobile audiences.



Other favourites include Youtube (<http://m.youtube.com>), JuiceCaster (<http://juicecaster.com/>) and vpod.tv (<http://studio.vpod.tv/>).

LOCATION BASED SERVICES

Location based services (LBS) are able to pinpoint your location and direct you to nearby services – such as a Post Office or train station or a specific address.

Nokia Maps 2.0 (<http://europe.nokia.com/A4509271>) is one of the most popular GPS navigation systems for mobiles. It also offers guides for drivers, multimedia city guides and satellite images. Google Maps (<http://www.google.com/mobile/>)

and Yahoo! Maps (<http://m.yahoo.com>) have also mobilised their map services for mobile phones and allow users to find local points of interest.

A more social version of LBS enables you or a friend to pinpoint each other's location, find local events and listings, and even make recommendations of things you might like in your area. Fire up your mobile browser and check out Rumble (<http://www.rumble.com/>), buddyping (<http://www.buddyping.com/>), loopt (<https://loopt.com/>), or Buzzd (<http://www.buzzd.com/>)

FUTURE TRENDS IN MOBILE 2.0

The next wave in the evolution of the mobile web is likely to see innovation in the following areas:

Mobile banking: M-banking is helping people on low incomes or in rural areas to access banking and trading services.

Transactions: The ultimate in always available convenience, it's already here and booming with mobile web versions of Amazon, Ebay, iTunes and McDonalds.

Health: Health services will increasingly engage with mobile platforms – from appointment booking, reporting symptoms to monitoring health. Mobile health services are already spreading through remote areas of east Africa.

CONCLUSION

According to financial analysts, worldwide spending on mobile phones continues to buck the economic downturn – mostly driven by a combination of cheap hand sets, affordable tariffs, and the iPhone media frenzy. By contrast PC makers and retailers are facing hard times with desktop machines seen by consumers as expensive, complex and difficult to maintain.

Mobile use of web services is also increasing – particularly social networking, text services, location based services, transactions and multi-media messaging with video. These all have non-profit applications and organisations need to look closely at the best tools to help them campaign, advocate, and connect with supporters.

The miracle mini laptop: The Asus EeePC

The ultra-portable Asus EeePC 7" laptop has been garnering rave reviews since it first arrived in the UK in December 2007. It went on to sell a reputed 300,000 units worldwide by the end of the year, an incredible uptake rate for a device with no pedigree, made by a brand that few would recognise. Morgan Killick, Managing Director of ESP Projects Ltd, takes a closer look at the EeePC 4G 701 version.

So why the fuss? For a start, any miniature laptop, selling for £200 is far cheaper than the competition. The device's motto – Easy to Learn. Easy to Work. Easy to Play – has genuine merit and the Eee PC may have the potential to become the simple, affordable computer that millions are crying out for.

It is important to stress at the outset that with very little internal storage, no CD or DVD Drive and only a slim chance of being able to install your favourite Windows applications on it, the Eee PC is not intended as a replacement for high-end systems. Nevertheless, thanks in part to its Open Source software, it may yet have some other role for you.

Hardware, mouse, keyboard & screen

At less than 9" by 7" the EeePC occupies about a third of the space of a conventional laptop and weighs less than 1kg. All you need to do to get it going is fit the battery and plug it into the mains with the supplied charger. The Eee PC boots in about 20 seconds.

Unsurprisingly, at 7" wide the screen is small and not of stunning quality. But it is just big enough for those with good eyesight to be able to work even whilst sitting on the train. The keyboard, touchpad and mouse buttons are just big enough to be operable after a short learning curve.

Connectivity & ports

The EeePC has a Memory Card slot, built-in speakers, webcam and microphone and headphone sockets – great for people who use Skype to make free or cheap Internet phone calls. It also features the usual networking options – a dial-up modem, Wired and Wireless Networking. The Memory Card slot is very handy for extending the storage capability beyond the tiny 2Gb of free disk space.

It also comes with a monitor port (VGA) and three USB ports, so if you do plan to use it at your regular desk, you can easily plug in an external monitor, mouse and keyboard. These also offer the potential of connecting other peripherals such as printers, external CD/DVD drives and memory sticks.

EeePC software

Asus have thought hard about what people actually use computers for. Their conclusion is that – in many situations – you simply don't need half the stuff that Windows can do. Using Open Source software, the EeePC comes with a suite of familiar programs – web browser, email, instant messaging/skype, and multimedia software for photos, videos and music – that are easy to use. For those needing office functionality, it also comes with the open source Open Office suite of Word

Integration with a Windows network

A quick guide to integrating your Asus EeePC

- 1 The EeePC does not necessarily need to integrate with Windows. It will simply plug into a LAN or use WIFI to access the internet, and will not share files or resources.
- 2 With some tweaking, the EeePC has the potential to become part of any Windows network. It uses Samba to share files and Cups to use Windows printers.
- 3 You can install selected Windows applications on your EeePC (as with any Linux system) using a third party package called Crossover Linux. I even managed to install Outlook 2003 and hook mine up to an Exchange Server!

Processor, Spreadsheet and PDF reader installed.

This interface is so easy to use that it could be operated by the most technophobic of people. Moreover, there is nothing to install, configure or for that matter 'break', making the EeePC ideal for situations where you need to allow multiple or unsupervised users to borrow a computer.

Email & Internet

The Eee PC comes with links to popular web mail services such as Gmail and Yahoo. It also has the popular Thunderbird program to connect to more corporate mail servers. Many will already be familiar with the Firefox web browser. The small screen size means most web pages will need some scrolling around to navigate, but this was manageable.

Speed & battery

The speed of the Eee PC for everyday tasks is one of its greatest strengths. Simply put, it will run as fast, if not faster than, your regular PC. However, battery life is disappointing as I was unable to get more than about 2 hours from it. Future versions of the Eee PC will focus on this.

Conclusion

For just £200 the Eee PC 4G – 7" laptop is great buy for voluntary and community sector organizations:

- **Highly mobile** – with wireless connectivity and a weight of just 0.92kg you can take it anywhere. It's also robust enough to withstand the everyday knocks of being carried in a bag.
- **Low cost office** – the Eee PC offers low cost access to basic office functionality – Internet, email and word processing.
- **Easy to use** – the Eee PC was easy to set up to keep secure, and acquire software.

For more information about how to get the most from the EeePC have a look at eee user (<http://www.eeeuser.com/>), and the EeeUser Wiki community documentation project (http://wiki.eeeuser.com/home#the_eeeuser_wiki).

About the author

Morgan Killick is the Managing Director of ESP Projects Ltd (<http://www.espprojects.co.uk/>), a Social Enterprise proving ICT support to the Non-for-Profit Sector. This article was adapted from <http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/asuseeepc> under Creative Commons.

Computanews celebrates

150 ISSUES

Computanews started life 150 issues and twenty four years ago as a Greater London Council (GLC) funded computer newsletter for advice services.

As we look back over 150 issues of **Computanews**, computing power and storage has increased exponentially, Microsoft's Bill Gates has been and gone, the GLC has been reincarnated as the GLA, data protection remains a hot issue, life without the Internet is unthinkable and we still struggle with what kit to buy and where to go for help and advice when it all goes wrong.

Back in January 1984 as the first Apple Macintosh went on sale and work began on the free and open source GNU operating system, **Computanews** was discussing the benefits of computing, the GLC's I.T. for Londoners campaign, and the proud acquisition of a new Intertec Superbrain II computer by a Citizens Advice Bureau.

Two years later, 1986 saw the abolition of the GLC and the close-run survival of **Computanews** through funding from the London Boroughs Grant Scheme (or the Richmond Scheme as it was then known).

A decade later we were welcoming Windows 95. And were also right that this new fangled thing called the Internet would transform how we work.

Twenty four years after the first issue of **Computanews**, questions over which database to buy, training, data protection, free and open source software and where to go for ICT advice and support are still as relevant today as the first time we covered them.

So join us and celebrate the unique contribution **Computanews** has made to informing voluntary and community sector ICT. Here's to the next 150 issues of **Computanews**.



Lasso Women's Co-operative (1987) where **Computanews** artwork was produced by pasting up phototypeset galleys in pre-WYSIWYG days...

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NACAB Information System on Computer?

The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux are to investigate whether extensive computerisation can improve the use of information in CAB advice work.

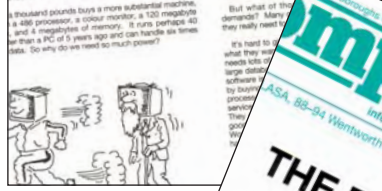
They have appointed a team from the Studies Institute to look at how the current system (produced both on paper and microfiche) is used in bureaux, the monthly reports required, as well as the production and operations at NACAB HQ. Other key areas will be the way bureaux use information produced by NACAB and the potential for sales of the information system to other bureaux such as solicitors and local authorities.

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Information Systems for Advice
LASA, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA Tel: 071-377 2748

PRICES FALL But the Cost Remains the Same

Prices of computers has fallen dramatically; but the cost to software developers to keep pace with the hardware has not. Manufacturers of software are now being forced to charge more for their products than they did five years ago. It is not as much as they did five years ago, but it is still a significant increase.



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on of organisational work, more than expected.

WHAT DO READERS USE THEIR COMPUTERS FOR?



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computane

Information systems for advice
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THE REAL COST OF WINDOWS

Windows had some enthusiasm for its early adopters, but it is now becoming a real cost to users. The real cost of Windows is not the price of the software, but the cost of the hardware and the time spent learning to use it. The real cost of Windows is the cost of the hardware and the time spent learning to use it.

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MEMORY WOES

While some of the advertised memory requirements of the two systems are reasonable, many can't cope with the amount of memory required. The amount of memory required is a key factor in the choice of a system. The amount of memory required is a key factor in the choice of a system.



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DATA PROTECTION REGISTRAR QUESTIONS ID CARDS

The Registrar has issued a new guidance note on the use of ID cards. The Registrar has issued a new guidance note on the use of ID cards. The Registrar has issued a new guidance note on the use of ID cards.

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World Wide Web - A Standard for Advice?

The World Wide Web is becoming a standard for advice. The World Wide Web is becoming a standard for advice. The World Wide Web is becoming a standard for advice.

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WINDOWS 98

Windows 98 was launched at the end of June, but with nothing like the hullabaloo of Windows 95. Windows 98 was launched at the end of June, but with nothing like the hullabaloo of Windows 95.

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WHOSE INFORMATION?

The advent of the Internet presents major opportunities and challenges for advice services. The advent of the Internet presents major opportunities and challenges for advice services.

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100 ISSUES

When the first issue of Computane was published in December '82, an advice agency with a computer was a great rarity; now it's unusual to find an agency that doesn't have at least one PC.

ESSES

Introducing Lasa's London Region ICT Infrastructure Project

Lasa is launching a new project to develop an accredited framework of skills, competencies and principles for London circuit riders. Circuit Rider Ian Runeckles reports.

Over the past few years, Lasa has been involved in a number of projects which push the envelope building ICT capacity in Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) particularly with regard to establishing Circuit Riding as a viable method of supporting and developing VCS ICT.

Following on from running two successful "hands-on" Circuit Rider projects and assisting with development of other initiatives, part of Lasa's role in the ICT Hub partnership was to initially examine what the needs of the VCS were with regard

to support and how Circuit Riding could fit into that. What emerged was that organisations were concerned with the quality of the service they received and knowing that they could trust their support provider to understand their needs.

The Circuit Rider conference in Birmingham in January 2007 first floated the idea of an accredited training programme for Riders and during the next year the foundations started to be laid down. Earlier this year, Lasa published a series of principles for Riders to sign up and work to – see the story on these in the last **Computanews (149)** or visit <http://www.ukriders.info/principles> – and is (as this piece is being written) about to publish tools to help build Circuit Rider competencies. This attempts to move the agenda from Riders theoretically knowing what they should know to actually laying it down in black and white in order to assist with personal development and growth in a format relating to certain



"standards" for organisational ICT. Post ICT Hub the next stage is to put in place an accreditation framework and training path for Riders...

This new project, funded by the Lottery for three years, will carry this work forward for London-based Riders and others involved in VCS ICT such as internal support staff, accidental techies and generic development workers. The aims of the project are to:

- 1 increase the understanding** in VCS infrastructure organisations that ICT is a capacity building issue;
- 2 develop a sustainable capacity building programme** to improve Circuit Riders use of tools and resources;
- 3 ensure a Circuit Rider training framework is in place** in order to provide a quality-assured professional service to frontline groups in London;
- 4 train Circuit Riders** (and others) through standardising and assuring the quality of Circuit Rider skills for VCS organisations; and
- 5 help increase the investment in ICT** from funders and frontline groups by the collation of 15 case studies which demonstrate the effectiveness of Circuit Rider ICT support services to frontline London VCS organisations.

The work is being led and project managed by Lasa but will bring in a wide variety of VCS ICT participants including an advisory group made of representatives from London voluntary sector infrastructure organisations such as LVSC, Superhighways and IT4Communities.

Lasa will be developing materials and resources as the project progresses all of which will be available online at www.ukriders.info and there will be updates posted on the UKRiders list <http://lists.lasa.org.uk/lists/info/ukriders>

For more information on how to get involved contact Ian Runeckles at Lasa: iruneckles@lasa.org.uk 020 7426 4473

