
KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY (KITIF)

BIRMINGHAM

Background

Keeping IT in the Family (KITIF) was established to increase Internet and Communication Technology (ICT) skills in families and communities. It targeted Aston, a deprived Birmingham neighbourhood. The project was originally developed as a pilot digital inclusion initiative between Digital Birmingham and Microsoft.

The Keeping IT in the Family project worked in partnership with a number of schools in Aston, using the children to help teach their older family members ICT skills. The children were given a 'toolkit' for use at home - a set of illustrated comic guides to help them teach other family members how to use the computer for useful everyday tasks such as e-mailing and shopping online.

What is the overall goal and specific objectives of the project?

Research has shown that there is a growing awareness of the benefits gained when older family members are taught how to use computers and the internet by their children.

The toolkit provided enabled both parents and other adults to assess their progress and celebrate achievement. It was designed, in the first instance, for use within the Aston area of Birmingham with a focus on pupils aged 9 to 12 whilst also appealing to adults. The toolkit was developed in such a way as to make it replicable in different geographical regions with different cultural compositions and target age ranges with the minimum of tweaking.

The second phase focuses on furthering the digital inclusion agenda, by opening up a whole new world for older family members by engaging the secondary school provision.

Groups/people that benefit from the project:

- 250,000 children in the City of Birmingham;
- Parents/family members of the 250,000 children;
- Children, Young People and Families Directorate of Birmingham City Council;
- The Children's Trust Board;
- Teachers/teaching practitioners;
- Community groups/individuals who need/want the resource.

Who is responsible for the project's implementation?

Phase one of the KITIF project was funded by Microsoft, with Citizens Online as the delivery agent and Birmingham City Council the customer - facilitated and project managed by Digital Birmingham and focused on the neighbourhood of Aston within the Birmingham area.

Phase two is funded by Becta and again managed and delivered by Digital Birmingham.

How does the project work?

Year groups of school pupils are briefed and inducted in the use of the KITIF toolkit and presented with their own personal copies (also available online and CD), which the pupils take home. The first five units take the students and their 'family pupils' through the basics of how to use a computer, set up an email account, how to search the internet, security and shopping online and digital photography. The second section of the toolkit moves beyond familiarisation and engagement with the technology and explores how these can support the users in their everyday lives focussing on: healthy living, online safety, accessibility, publishing content and use of social networks.



What are the results of the project (so far)?

Phase one saw the first five units trialled with over 400 pupils aged from 8-13 years, who had already benefited from the Computers in the Home initiative in Aston.

Later, 250,000 pupils aged 11-13 from 26 of Birmingham's Computers for Pupils programme were inducted in the use of the resource and how to pass their knowledge and skills onto the wider community.

To further promote the guides in schools, Digital Birmingham ran a competition where the child educators were invited to submit their stories about their family teaching sessions. The winner, 13 year old Sherbaz, had taught his 60 year old grandma to use the computer with the result that the grandma had signed up for a computer skills course at the local school. A video of the winner and his grandma can be seen at: <http://www.digitalbirmingham.co.uk/family/news/keeping-it-in-the-family-competition-winner-announced>

Was the project evaluated and were there any follow-up activities?

Keeping IT in the Family has been so successful that Digital Birmingham has received additional funding from [Becta](#), the government agency leading the national drive to ensure the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning, and is expanding the scheme further. The aim is to extend this Aston pilot by linking it to the Governments' Computers for Pupils (CfP) programme so as to reduce the digital divide, support greater social inclusion and encourage more people to have the confidence and skills to benefit from IT connectivity.

The comic-style guides were welcomed by the children who were eager to share them with their family and it even prompted one school drama group to create their own video resource (Ref: <http://www.digitalbirmingham.co.uk/family/video-and-audio-stories>)

There are many stories of family members shopping online for Christmas presents for the first time, using email to keep in touch with family members abroad or looking at news in Zimbabwe where extended family members lived.

The guides are freely available to download from the website as well as being shared with national partners such as DC10plus, Microsoft and Becta for them to promote through their own community networks and are available as resources from all Birmingham libraries.

What lessons did you learn?

The pilot project surpassed its original goals and we found the comic-style toolkit was engaging pupils much older than the originally intended target group. As it was geographically transferable, it led to the development of Phase Two and the extension of the initial induction target group to secondary school pupils.

It was also found that the subject matter of the toolkit was easily transferable and the developers are currently exploring how to effectively use different topic areas e.g. environmental issues - energy efficiency agenda, etc.

How is the project funded and what resources (financial and human) are dedicated to its delivery?

Becta funding for Phase Two was £38,000 which included development and production of the toolkit in a variety of mediums, project management and officer costs and any associated PR. A number of these were one-off initial costs and would not be incurred in future year roll-out. However development of new topics would require some initial set-up costs.

Personnel required for roll-out: Project Manager, Project Officer and Marketing/PR Manager

Who is the contact officer for the project?

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If you have an example of a good practice that you would like to include in the database, please send an email to caroline.greene@eurocities.eu.