

Connecting Communities to the Internet: Evaluation of the Wired Up Communities Programme

David Devins, Alison Darlow, Andrew Petrie and Tom Burden

Policy Research Institute
Leeds Metropolitan University

Research Report

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David Devins

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2000, £10 million was allocated from the Capital Modernisation Fund to develop a series of pilot projects for the Wired Up Communities Programme (WuC). WuC sought to achieve the objectives outlined in the Modernising Government White Paper (Cabinet Office 1999) to ensure that those people and communities¹ that currently experience social exclusion are not further excluded from engaging with online consumer and government services (DTI 2000). The aim of WuC was to bridge the digital divide by enabling communities to use ICT to access jobs, learning opportunities, government and other services. WuC was implemented in two stages and seven pilot projects were funded reflecting a variety of technological (PC/set-top box) and spatial (urban, rural, coalfield) characteristics. Each project sought to provide ICT to enable home access to the Internet and to develop associated services to help to overcome barriers to use of the Internet.

Evaluation of the Wired Up Communities Programme

In October 2000 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned the Policy Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University to undertake an evaluation of the WuC Programme. The main aims of the evaluation were to:

- assess the impact of the WuC Programme
- identify which approach(es) work best.

There were several discrete but inter-linked research elements associated with the evaluation methodology. These included a review of relevant documentation, interviews with key stakeholders; baseline and follow up surveys (completed 6-9 months after the initial survey) of between 160-200 individuals in WuC pilot communities and matched comparator areas (MCAs); and further qualitative research to explore the implementation and initial outcomes of the programme.

The 'digital divide'

A review of the literature reveals vigorous debates surrounding the nature and magnitude of the 'digital divide'. Various groups (e.g. white working class males in a coalfield area, ethnic minorities, women, homeless, refugees, single parents) have been identified as being at risk of further exclusion if they do not have 'access' to the Internet. Economic and educational factors (which are themselves closely related) have been identified as key determinants of technology ownership and Internet use. The market mechanism is seen to exacerbate the problem and consequently government action is required to mitigate the impact of 'the divide'. However, 'access' to the Internet is seen to be much more than use of the necessary technology. The concept of access in the home embraces individuals' and households' resource constraints in terms of financial, motivational and skill capabilities along with other situational factors which impact to varying degrees and at different times. It also includes 'supply side' issues in terms of the lack of relevant content for many disadvantaged groups.

Programme development and implementation

The WuC programme was largely 'experimental' in nature in the sense of avoiding prescription in terms of delivery structures and outputs. Partnership was a key characteristic in the delivery of WuC but the nature and depth of partnership activity across the programme is highly variable. For example:

- Two of the urban WuC projects were situated in 'New Deal for Community' areas and were integrated, to varying degrees, within existing regeneration partnership structures which include public, private and community sector organisations. Both these areas (along with one further urban area) had Education Action Zones. A strong regeneration partnership with a track record in delivering ICT projects also existed in another urban WuC area. Partnerships in two rural areas appeared to be formative and emergent rather than embedded through joint working over a period of time. The partnership in the coalfield area consisted largely of the Borough Council and two private sector suppliers who came together to implement the WuC project.

¹ A community was defined as those living in relative proximity and made up of no more than 4000 people

- Revenue funding was required to fund a small project team and associated development activities such as the provision of training, community engagement and local website development and management. Securing this funding proved problematic for several areas and in some instances contributed to scaled down outreach/training activity and implementation slippage at the local level.
- Private sector involvement in the project was highly variable. Strategic involvement (in terms of playing a key part in the original proposal) was apparent in four WuC areas. All the areas worked with the private sector as suppliers of equipment to the local project. Technical support was also provided through supplier 'help lines'.

The sourcing and roll out of the technology along with the development of a community website proved to be the primary focus for local project implementation.

The development of training and support for local participants varied in scope and depth across the WuC areas. Technical support services and basic training in the use of the technology by the installation team was funded through WuC. Further training and support activities were largely contingent upon the use of the existing education infrastructure, volunteers or the attraction of funds for bespoke delivery. Examples of training interventions included:

- Two areas where delivery of WuC equipment was contingent upon attending an introductory training course
- Development of bespoke courses to meet the needs of new users of the technology and the Internet
- The provision of additional courses already available in the local community
- Intensive one to one support delivered in the home or at a local community centre.

Initial outcomes of the WuC Programme

An assessment of the initial outcomes of the WuC programme is based on the analysis of a two-stage survey of between 160-200 residents in each WuC area and interviews with local and national stakeholders. Analysis of the results from the baseline survey

confirms many of the characteristics of the 'digital divide' prior to the WuC intervention. For example Internet users were more likely to be qualified (above NVQ level 3), in employment and younger than non users.

The follow up survey results provide an indication of the use of the technology provided through WuC. A survey response rate of 72% was achieved and 835 respondents contributed to the follow up survey. Whilst response rates varied within areas, no response bias was apparent at the programme level. Key findings include:

- Three quarters of respondents (74.5%) receiving the technology had used it to access the Internet.
- However more than a quarter (25.5%) had not used it to access the Internet with almost half of these reporting that they are 'not interested' in the Internet. A further 10% reported that they did not have the necessary skills to use the Internet.

The provision of the technology had a positive impact on those who had used it. 85% of those using the WuC technology to access the Internet suggested that their use had increased since receiving the technology. Almost half suggested that they used the Internet daily and just over four in ten people used it to shop or bank online. The majority of users (82.0%) had continued to use the Internet once the period of subsidy provided through WuC ended.

A short-term objective of the WuC programme was to encourage the development of ICT skills and to support the learning of local adults and children. In respect of this:

- Almost one half (47.6%) of respondents reported that they had received some training to use the technology or the Internet.
- A substantial proportion of those with school age children (68%) had used the WuC technology to help their children with their homework or other learning related activity.

A medium term objective of WuC was to promote economic inclusion and improve the employment prospects of people. Whilst it may be too early to assess the contribution of

WuC to this objective, the research provides an indication of the short-term outcomes associated with the project. These are as follows:

- 46 respondents (5.8% of all respondents to the follow up survey) suggested that their employment situation had changed in the period between the baseline and the follow up survey.
- The direction of change is variable with some moving into work, some out of work and some into education. 16 people reported that they had made the transition from out of work into employment and ten of these attributed the change in status (at least partially) to the use of the WuC technology which had enabled them to search for employment opportunities and investigate prospective employers.

The long-term aim of the programme was to improve social cohesion through greater use of the Internet. The survey investigated the extent to which the Internet had been used to find information about, or communicate with, a variety of local organisations. It was found that:

- 15% of Internet users have used it to *find* information about a range of democratic and community based organisations with less than 5% using it to *send* information to such a group.

Towards an assessment of programme performance

The assessment is based around performance to date in terms of the four aims and objectives outlined by DfES at the outset of the programme:

Access

Organising and managing the supply of technology into peoples' homes has proved to be a major challenge for all the local projects at various times. Discontinuities in supply and condensed local implementation timeframes have contributed to the difficulties facing those implementing the project locally. In one area dependent upon the development of an innovative 'set-top box', no technology had been delivered into residents' homes by October 2002. Delays in construction work associated with the

infrastructure underpinning the 'set-top box' had a major impact on the implementation timescale.

Despite considerable marketing, promotion and outreach work, the remaining projects had struggled to reach the high level of 'penetration' aspired to by the programme and several WuCs had expanded the eligible area. The reasons for 'lack of take up' appear many and varied. A survey of 100 non-participants in each area suggests that 'lack of interest' and the fact that they already have Internet access in the home (and in the view of the respondent that they would not be eligible) have been key inhibitors of local demand.

The primary research in the local WuC areas found:

- There was a wide variation in the propensity of respondents to use the technology between WuC areas. In three areas more than 90% of recipients had used the technology to access the Internet. However, in two areas almost 50% had not used it to access the Internet.
- The technological platform appears to be a major (but not the only) contributory factor with lower levels of use associated with recycled PCs and set-top box technologies. Other factors include 'lack of interest', lack of skills and knowledge, and other access problems associated with modems or passwords.

Broadband services were being developed by three WuC areas and whilst none of the areas have been able to offer coverage to the *whole* community within the programme period, each area had a system up and running in a limited area with a view to future roll out.

Training and learning

- Participation in training was highest in the areas where it was a pre-condition associated with receipt of the technology.

- It was lowest in the rural and coalfield areas where training was not a requirement for participation in the project.
- However lack of training in the rural areas has not affected the propensity of WuC recipients to have used the technology to access the Internet.
- The impact of training activity on the propensity to use the technology is not clear as those not receiving training are almost as likely to use the WuC technology to access the Internet as those not receiving training.

Employment and social cohesion

Whilst individual movement within the labour market is low, in all but one WuC more than half of respondents had used the technology to undertake a search for labour market related information. A website was developed or enhanced in each WuC, however the development process was problematic and the extent to which it engaged local people in content production was variable.

Indications of deadweight and additionality

The comparison of experiences of respondents in the WuC areas and the MCAs provide an insight into the additionality associated with the Programme:

- 59% of respondents in the WuC areas (compared with 9% of respondents in the MCAs) used the Internet at home for the first time in the 6-9 month period between the baseline and the follow up survey.
- WuC has had some success in attracting 'non-active learners' to become involved in training activity. 35% of respondents to the follow up survey in the WuC areas had undertaken some training for the first time in almost two years compared with only 6% of respondents in the MCAs.

Summary

In common with other policy interventions emphasising the use of ICT, the programme has been subject to major implementation slippage. At the time of the evaluation, no equipment had been delivered into the residents' homes in one WuC and several WuCs have had to extend the local spatial boundary in order to distribute the technology they had acquired. The pilot project has illustrated the difficulties associated with wiring up 'a

whole community' within the WuC framework and this experience was captured to inform policy development and good practice.

There have however been notable successes in encouraging participants to get online and/or to stay online. The majority of respondents to the surveys in the WuC areas had used the technology to access the Internet. Almost half of the participants received some training to develop skills and knowledge to use the Internet. However, in spite of being provided with the technology in the home, a quarter of survey respondents had not used it to access the Internet. The technological platform appears to have been a major (but not the only) contributory factor with low levels of use associated with recycled PCs and set-top box technologies. Other factors included 'lack of interest' and lack of 'skills and knowledge'.

WuC is an example of an approach which aimed to develop more collaborative policy interventions between local and national government. There are clearly issues associated with policy and practice emerging from the experience to be considered at the national and local level. These include:

- Development of strategic aims and objectives and the link with operational implementation within and between policy interventions to achieve a 'joined up' approach to local development and implementation.
- The multiple and moveable nature of disadvantage and the 'digital divide'.
- The challenge of funding 'blended' and resource intensive approaches required to support the development of IT and information processing skills of (in particular) new and novice users of the Internet and the development of 'community'.
- The need to retain a policy emphasis on those who are 'not interested' or have 'lost interest' in the use of the Internet as part of a balanced policy (including bandwidth) portfolio.
- The development of improved understanding of 'communities' and the role of ICT in their development within the context of government policy.
- The need for a full cost-effectiveness assessment and comparison with related interventions prior to national roll-out.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Wired Up Communities Programme

In March 2000, £10 million was allocated from the Capital Modernisation Fund to develop a series of pilot projects for the Wired Up Communities Programme (WuC). WuC sought to achieve the objectives outlined in the Modernising Government White Paper (Cabinet Office 1999) to ensure that those people and communities² that currently experience social exclusion are not further excluded from engaging with online consumer and government services (DTI 2000). WuC provided the opportunity to pilot and test approaches to connecting communities by providing them with appropriate technology in their homes. The programme complemented other area based government initiatives such as New Deal for Communities and Education Action Zones along with other national interventions such as learndirect and ICT Learning Centres which seek to promote the use of ICT.

1.1.1 Overview of Programme

The WuC programme was implemented in two stages and seven pilot projects were funded reflecting a variety of technological, geographical and community characteristics. One project was funded under phase one of the programme, which ran from October 2000, with the remaining six projects funded under phase two agreed in July 2001. A summary of the characteristics of the projects funded under WuC are set out below (Table 1.1) with a more detailed summary of each project contained in Appendix 1.

Table 1.1: Characteristics of WuC areas

Phase	Area name	Geographic Characteristics	Number of households	Number of beneficiaries
1	Kensington, Liverpool	Urban area	4,200	2,000
2	Alston, Cumbria	Rural area	1,200	1,080
2	Brampton, South Yorkshire	Coalfield area	1,500	1,200
2	Carpenters Estate, Newham	Urban area	750	750
2	Blackburn East	Urban area	2,800	2,400
2	East Manchester	Urban area	4,500	4,500
2	Framlingham	Rural area	4,500	1,350

Source: Individual Project bids/Project sponsor interviews

The programme was originally funded to March 2001 but was extended to December 2002 to provide more time for programme development and local implementation.

1.1.2 Aims and Objectives

Four inter-related objectives were stated for the programme. These are outlined below:

Objective 1: Access

- To contribute to the social exclusion agenda by enabling most people in disadvantaged communities to have access to ICT.
- To allow people in disadvantaged communities easy access to the full range of government and other services through the internet.

Objective 2: Learning

- To increase ICT and other skills in disadvantaged communities and support the learning of local adults and children.

Objective 3: Employment

- To promote economic inclusion and improve the employment prospects of people in the communities through improving their access to jobs and training.

Objective 4: Social Cohesion

- To help communities use new technologies to develop and sustain community co-operation, capacity and mutual support.

The objectives were identified in the following hierarchy (Table 1.2) outlined in the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) WuC evaluation strategy:

Table 1.2 – Timeframe of evaluation objectives

	Objective	Timeframe
O1	Access	Immediate
O2	Learning	Short term intermediate
O3	Employment prospects	Medium term intermediate
O4	Social cohesion	Ultimate

Source DfEE WuC Evaluation Strategy

1.2 The Evaluation of the WuC Programme

The Policy Research Institute (at Leeds Metropolitan University) was commissioned by the DfEE, now known as the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to evaluate the Wired Up Communities Programme in October 2000. This Final Report summarises the evaluation process, reviews the context and nature of the programme and reports the findings from the primary research undertaken in the communities. The report

² A community was defined as those living in relative proximity and made up of no more than 4,000 people

concludes with a review of the performance of the programme to date and a discussion of the policy challenges to be addressed in the future.

A project board was established to oversee the evaluation research. The group was chaired by a representative from DfES (Analytical Services) and included a member of the DfES policy team developing and implementing WuC along with members of the Policy Research Institute.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

The main aims of the evaluation were to:

1. Assess the overall impact of the Wired-Up Communities Programme to inform decisions about future roll out.
2. Identify which approach(es) work best.

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology drew on a variety of primary/secondary information and qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. There were several discrete but inter-linked research elements associated with the evaluation methodology which are outlined below.

1.4.1 Review of the programme.

Relevant documentation (Project Bids, Local Project Progress Reports provided to DfES) was reviewed and a series of in depth face to face interviews carried out with key stakeholders engaged in the WuC programme. Key actors were identified by DfES and included members of the project board and national/local stakeholders.

1.4.2 Survey research in the WuC areas

A two-stage survey of project participants formed an integral part of the evaluation of the outcomes of the programme on individuals and their communities. The survey was based on interviews with participants in the WuC programme in each pilot area. A structured questionnaire to establish a baseline was designed and agreed with the WuC Evaluation project group in April 2001. This was piloted and adopted with minor amendments. A further questionnaire was designed to collect information on the experiences and impact of the technology. A follow up survey was conducted in each WuC area 6-9 months after the baseline survey.

As the programme progressed it became clear that not all residents would participate in the local WuC project and in February/March 2002 some research was undertaken to ascertain reasons for non-participation. A face to face survey of 100 residents who did not register an interest in each local WuC was undertaken using a structured questionnaire. Interviewers from the Market Research Agency, Bostock Marketing Group, conducted all these interviews.

1.4.3 Matched comparisons

To provide a basis for comparison of the impact of WuC, matched comparator areas (MCAs) were selected and a structured questionnaire collected data on a comparable basis to that collected in the WuC pilot area. A review of the MCA selection process is outlined in Appendix 2. A follow up survey to assess impact was undertaken 6-9 months after the baseline survey in the MCA. As in the WuC pilot areas, interviewers from Bostock Marketing Group, conducted the interviews in the MCAs.

1.4.4 Qualitative data collection in the WuCs

Further qualitative research was undertaken with members of the local communities to explore implementation issues and the use of the WuC technology. Site visits and in depth interviews were conducted with representatives of the local partnerships and discussion groups held with members of the local community receiving the technology. Descriptive case studies were developed for each WuC to capture the local context and these are included in Appendix 1 of this report.

1.4.5 Reporting and dissemination

Working papers were produced scoping the programme, developing research methodologies, exploring the nature of home-school links and developing a framework for tracking Internet use. These were discussed with the WuC Evaluation Group. Interim reports were provided in September 2001 and June 2002. A copy of the executive summary is available at <http://dfes.gov.uk/wired/docs>. These reports charted the development of the programme and provided an overview of the issues emerging from the primary research. Reviews of the evaluation methodology and updates on progress have been presented at the WuC Conferences in May 2001 and April 2002 (<http://www.thewiredupcommunity.org.uk/>). This evaluation report and an accompanying

Good Practice Guide have been produced to coincide with the end of the WuC programme in December 2002.

1.4.6 Evaluation timetable

The evaluation has been subject to delay and slippage, reflecting the pace of programme implementation. Table 1.3 illustrates the variance between the timetable outlined in the invitation to tender and the actual timing of the evaluation activities.

Table 1.3 Evaluation Timetable

	Planned*	Actual
Commission evaluator	Mid Aug 00	Jan 01
First phase evaluation	Mid Aug 00	May 01
First phase early evaluation findings (baseline sweep 1)	Oct 00	Jul 01
Second phase evaluation begins	Dec 00	Aug 01
Second phase early evaluation findings	Jan 01	Mar 02
Phase 1 follow up activity (Sweep 2)	Feb 01	Nov 01
Phase 1 case studies	Feb/Mar 01	Mar 02
Phase 2 follow up activity (Sweep 2)	May 01	Sept-Nov 02
Phase 2 case studies	May/Jun 01	Sept - Nov 02
Report and dissemination	Jul/Aug 01	Dec 02-Jan 03

*Source: *DfEE WuC Evaluation Strategy*

There were considerable delays at the outset of the programme as the nature of the programme evolved and the scale and scope of the programme and the evaluation was discussed. There were also delays in the phase 2 WuC area project tendering process and in the agreement of pilot project contracts which were eventually agreed in July/August 2001 (against an original plan which envisaged a December 2000 start date). The end-date for the programme and the evaluation was further extended to December 2002.

1.5 Section Summary

The aim of WuC was to bridge the 'digital divide' by enabling the most disadvantaged communities to use ICT to access jobs, learning opportunities, government and other services.

The DfES commissioned the Policy Research Institute to undertake an evaluation of the Programme. The main aims of the evaluation were to:

- Assess the overall impact of the Wired-Up Communities Programme to inform decisions about future roll out.

- Identify which approach(es) work best.

There were several discrete but inter-linked research elements associated with the evaluation methodology including review of relevant documentation, interviews with key stakeholders; baseline and follow up surveys of individuals in WuC pilot communities and matched comparator areas; and further qualitative research to explore the performance and impact of the programme.

2 CONTEXT: THE 'DIGITAL DIVIDE'

This section of the report introduces the policy rationale underpinning government intervention to alleviate what has become known as the 'digital divide'. It draws on a range of literature to provide an introduction to its scope and scale and to draw attention to the contested nature of the 'digital divide'.

2.1 Introduction

New information and communication technologies (ICTs) are widely regarded as the impetus for radical social, economic and political changes. These technologies include interactive and multimedia communications, Internet and World Wide Web, video conferencing, computer-aided design, and technologies such as electronic surveillance and consumer profiling. All have potential to impact on the nature and experience of interpersonal relations and the form and substance of economic competitiveness and social cohesion.

The PAT 15 report (DTI 2000) discussed the future impact of these technological developments. Over time, it is expected that ICTs will contribute to changes in the whole pattern of peoples' lives as completely as broadcasting, telephony, and high-speed transport did in the past. Individuals can expect easy access to a wealth of information, entertainment, and to cheaper, more individually tailored goods and services, with new opportunities for choice, participation, lifelong learning and leisure.

It is not uncommon for the Internet to be perceived as the main telecommunication media of tomorrow and broadband media (e.g. high quality video conferencing, television quality netcasting) to hold great promise for improving a variety of public services through, for example, multi-media e-learning and tele-healthcare (Utsumi et al 2001). Much of the literature assumes that once people have access to, and have used the technologies, they will embrace them wholeheartedly. Data about future growth in the number of users is extrapolated to imply further meteoric growth in the future. For example whilst it took 13 years for television to reach 50 million people it has taken less than half that time for 275 million people to be online and exploit the world wide web (e-skills NTO 2001).

There are a range of technologies which are driving the development of access to the Internet. Third generation mobile phones (UMTS), Internet Broadcast and Internet games consoles are some of the more recent developments. The fast developing nature of these converging technologies is a constant factor in considering access to the Internet and future applications of digital services. Internet access through the set-top box/television is seen to offer the potential to become a further major route for access to the Internet in the home. The take up of digital TV is cited as a major achievement with 20% of UK households using Digital TV in 2000 (OfTel 2000), although its efficacy and popularity as a means of access to the Internet are contested. Whilst a range of technologies which enable access to the internet are available, the PC remains the most common device used to access the Internet (TV and mobile remain niche markets accounting for 4% and 3% of Internet users respectively (OfTel 2001a)). The most common telecommunications link from the home to the Internet is through a fixed phone line. Over four in five (83%) of all Internet customers use ordinary phone line/dial up access with only 2% of current Internet users in the home subscribing to Broadband services (OfTel 2002a).

However, if the precedent of past technological revolutions in communications is followed, those who adopt them early will disproportionately enjoy the social and economic benefits. Most private sector activity, particularly in the development of the telecommunications infrastructure has been placed on the development of the most lucrative markets, thus excluding people and places which are least profitable (Graham and Marvin 1994). Content providers generally remain focussed on the development of commercial sites for the most affluent members of society (Golding and Murdock 2001). Whilst the cost of technology is ever decreasing it is argued that the market mechanism is insufficient to overcome consumer disparities and that active measures are required to attempt to close this widening gap (Booz-Allen and Hamilton 2000). Research suggests that the use of the Internet is far from ubiquitous. Surveys commissioned by the DfES to assess trends in ICT access and use (DfEE 2001a, Russell and Stafford 2002) suggest that whilst more and more people are using the Internet, a substantial proportion of the adult population (45%) still have not used the Internet to date. The danger is seen to be that these people remain at the 'foot of the ladder' without taking the first step upwards.

The characteristics of social exclusion such as non-participation in social and economic activities, isolation and perceived lack of opportunity are exacerbated through a lack of

information and communication (DEMOS 1997). Whilst lack of access to ICT is not the cause of social exclusion, it has the potential to worsen the relative position of excluded individuals and groups (Phipps 2000). However, the social and economic implications of the new ICTs are complex and frequently contradictory (Gibbs 2001). They may create or destroy employment or lead to increased skills or deskilling. They can support distance learning or working and yet further increase the footloose nature of capital investment (Castells 1996). Some studies show that the Internet creates new forms of community (Hampton and Welman 2001, Gardner and Oswald 2001) while other studies conclude that they lead to diminished human interactions (Nie 2000).

Nevertheless, it is argued that for people living in low-income neighbourhoods, gaining and exploiting technology skills can lead to opportunities to participate fully in the local and national economy. The arguments for social inclusion and for economic development in the Information Age are mutually re-enforcing. Lack of access to ICTs leads to, or reinforces, disadvantage at a number of levels. For children, not having access to computers and the Internet at home or in the community may make it hard to keep up at school and this may impact on their attainment. For adults, computer literacy can be important for re-entering the labour market. For the community as a whole, lack of access to communications networks can limit the use of better quality services, make it harder to access opportunities in other areas, and reduce the possibilities for enhancing local social cohesion (DTI 2000). It is argued that people who lack access to relevant hardware and software and a basic understanding of ICT will also lack the confidence that they can continue to learn as the technologies evolve (OECD 2000). This places them at a considerable disadvantage in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

This analysis provides the rationale for policy intervention and in March 2000 the UK government made a commitment to achieve 'universal access' to the Internet. The government has set targets to make all Government services available electronically by 2005 (Office of the e-Envoy 2001). Electronic service delivery is seen to offer huge opportunities to improve public services through the provision of more convenient, more joined up, more responsive and more personalised services (PIU 2000). However, for those who lack the technology or the skills to use it, the government emphasis on online provision may create a wider gap than already exists (Servon and Horrigan 1997). Furthermore there are concerns that a substantial proportion of people will remain

'offline' (National Audit Office 2002) and that parallel systems will be required, adding to cost and complexity and reducing the potential savings of e-government.

2.2 'Access' and the digital divide

In 1995 the National Telecommunications and Information Administration in the United States of America issued the first in a series of reports (NTIA 1995) that drew attention to what has become known as the 'digital divide'. This characterises a divide between those who use and have used technology to access the Internet and those who do not and whilst the number of people connecting to the Internet is rising in general, subsequent reports draw attention to the divide widening over time (NTIA 2000).

The rapid growth in commercial and public sector organisations offering goods and services via the Internet has led to concerns that sections of the population may be 'left behind' either through an inability or unwillingness to use computers and the Internet. The legitimacy of these concerns is underlined by statistics illustrating a continuing 'digital divide' on the basis of socio-economic factors, demographics and/or geography.

Research evidence (e.g. NTIA 1998, 2000) reinforces the existence of 'a divide', however there are vigorous debates about the nature and magnitude of the problem and how measures should be linked to action. Whilst Internet use is generally growing across all sections of society, patterns of differentials are apparent (and are in some cases still growing), reinforcing inequalities. For example, almost 7% of homes do not have a fixed phone line, with those who are economically excluded least likely to have a fixed line (OfTel 2002c). Further analysis suggests that in some housing estates fewer than 30% of households have a telephone (Speak and Graham 2000).

Research associated with key groups at risk of further exclusion due to the development of the digital society was undertaken to underpin the influential PAT15 Report in the late 1990s. Groups included white working class males in a former coalfield area (Shaddock 1999), disabled people (Carey 1999), older people (Aldridge 1999) and women (Women Connect 1999). Other high risk groups include ex-offenders, the homeless, refugees, those with incomplete education, single-parent (often mothers) families and many families headed by young adults. (This does not mean that all people in such 'high risk' categories are living in hardship or that others who fall outside these groupings have escaped poverty and isolation).

Further research commissioned by DfES provides analysis of the 'digital divide' (Russell and Stafford 2002) and draws attention to:

- Women, those aged over 55, and members of social class DE are less likely to have used the Internet.
- Those residing in 'more deprived areas' are less likely to have used the Internet.
- Growth in Internet use is greatest among social class AB.

Other studies have pointed to the importance of income and educational qualifications as factors affecting the use of the Internet. Findings from analysis of the British Social Attitudes Survey (Gardner and Oswald 2001) suggests:

- Those earning more than £32k are five times more likely to have used the Internet than someone earning £10k.
- Those with a university degree are eight times more likely to have used the Internet than those without any qualifications.

Geographical location is also cited as further evidence of a divide. In the UK, Internet use is not spread evenly over the country and has been recognised as a matter of policy concern (Hewitt and Pinder 2000). For example people in London and the South East (four in ten) are far more likely to have access to the Internet than people in, for example, the North East (two in ten).

Rural communities (both affluent and deprived) suffer from geographical isolation and their location limits the provision of quality telecommunications services. For example they are often served by low bandwidth, unreliable connections and suffer from service interference from agricultural equipment such as electric fences (Cullen 2001). To some extent lower rates of home access reflects income and education effects, however the pattern exists even when these are taken into account (Gardner and Oswald 2001).

Policy debates have focussed generally on the issue of 'access' in terms of financial (the technology is seen as too expensive to buy and/or run) and technical problems associated with its complexity and diversity (Liff 2000). A body of evidence is emerging

which suggests that the key determinants of Internet use in the home are household income and educational attainment³ (Gardner and Oswald 2001, Sullivan et al 2002).

The emphasis on financial factors represents a simple and intuitive determinant of 'access'. The level of disposable/discretionary income affects the individual's ability to make the initial investment for the required technology and associated peripherals and to pay for subsequent maintenance, running costs and upgrades as deemed necessary by the user(s) (OfteI 2000). Further cost barriers include the cost of purchasing training to provide the skills necessary to use the internet effectively (Carey 1999). There are concerns that some users will have to 'self disconnect' because of a lack of ability to pay for services, something that is not monitored or reported by private sector providers (Drakeford 1997). Furthermore, whilst the costs of telephone ownership have decreased, connection and local call costs - the greatest barriers to poorer users - have increased, having a disproportionate impact on low income neighbourhoods (Speak and Graham 2000).

However the financial cost of purchase and use of ICTs is not the only factor which inhibits the use of the Internet. Research in the USA found that almost six in ten non-users are *not interested* in getting online. Whilst 40% of non-users report that they perceive the Internet to be 'too expensive', the majority cite a variety of reasons such as they believe that the Internet is a 'dangerous thing' or that they are not missing anything by staying away from the Internet (Lenhart et al 2000). Furthermore, there is some evidence of users moving away from the Internet as they become disenchanted or unconvinced of the value of using it (Katz et al 2001, Wyatt 2000, Lenhart et al 2000). Recent reports claim that lack of relevant content rather than access to technology is now the critical barrier to bridging the digital divide for many disadvantaged communities (Hellawell 2001, Lazarus and Lipper 2000). Lack of local information, lack of non-English sites and lack of content created by ethnic minorities have all been identified as barriers to use of the Internet by members of disadvantaged communities in the United States (The Children's Partnership 2000).

This review has largely focussed on 'access' in terms of ownership of the technology to enable use of the Internet, which clearly oversimplifies the issue. A single measure does

³ Other studies have shown that educational attainment and income are themselves closely

not adequately capture the dimensions of the 'digital divides' apparent in society. Even exploring the 'digital divide' within the confines of technology, there are differences apparent in terms of age of equipment, processing power of equipment, nature and number of peripherals and, arguably most importantly, bandwidth. How long people use the internet for, their ability to use it, what they use it for, how they use it and the value they gain from it are further examples of key dimensions of access. The term 'connectedness' is used to reflect the multi-level and contextual use of the internet (Norris 2001, Jung et al 2001) and is increasingly relevant in discussions associated with 'access' and the 'digital divide'.

In general, the Internet is accepted as being an integral part of life in the 21st Century for many and seen to bring a positive contribution to the economy and society. Therefore public policy choices are surrounded by uncertainties associated with which ICT's provide the most (cost) effective means of Internet access or how and where access should be provided. These have continued to emerge throughout the WuC programming period as policy options are considered and instruments enacted. Whilst it is convenient to talk of a 'digital divide' it is clear that there are multiple and reinforcing divides in relation to the use of the Internet and its impact on both the individual and communities which researchers and policy makers continue to explore.

2.3 Section summary

This section of the report draws on a range of literature to introduce the nature of the 'digital divide'. The review reveals debates surrounding the nature and magnitude of the 'divide'. Various groups (e.g. white working class males in a coalfield area, ethnic minorities, women, homeless, refugees, single parents) have been identified as being at risk of further exclusion and economic and educational factors (themselves often closely related) have been identified as key determinants of Internet use. However 'access' is seen to be much more than use of the necessary technology whether it be telecommunications, computing or television technology in the home, at work or somewhere else. The concept of access in the home embraces individuals' and households' resource constraints in terms of financial, motivational and skill capabilities along with other situational factors which impact to varying degrees and at different

correlated see for example Campbell 2000

times. It also includes 'supply side' issues in terms of the provision of content (or lack of) to address the interests of disadvantaged groups.

3 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WUC PROGRAMME

This section of the report reviews the development and implementation of the WuC Programme. It is based on a review of documentation associated with the original project bids from the local communities and interviews with more than forty stakeholders involved with the development and delivery of the programme at the local and national level.

3.1 Programme design

The programme was largely 'experimental' in nature, in the sense of avoiding prescription in terms of the delivery structures and outputs that should be achieved. The programme provided a flexible framework within which local areas could develop their own WuC projects and outcome targets (subject to Capital Modernisation Fund funding constraints) and the aims and objectives of the Programme.

The WuC programme was managed by a small project board which met regularly in the initial stages of the project to provide a steer on the emphasis of the programme and the selection of pilot areas. Once the parameters of the programme were established, the DfES facilitated programme design at the local level through attendance (by a representative of the DfES Policy team) at local project management group meetings where the DfES representative provided input during the drawing up of project plans and contracts. The DfES have continued to contribute to local project development through attendance at the local project steering groups and through the provision of consultancy support for several of the pilot projects at various times throughout the implementation process.

At the national level, targeting of the WuC programme was undertaken through the project selection process and the subsequent allocation of funds to specific spatial areas. The process for area selection was based on contacts sought through Government Offices for the Regions (RGOs). RGOs were asked to put forward communities which were suitable for involvement in the WuC programme. The project board went through a selection process to determine which would be the most suitable areas for the WuC programme. Selection was based on a range of criteria (e.g. geographical location, existing partnership structures, type of preferred technology, expected penetration rates in the local community) and subsequently bids were sought

from local areas. The bids were assessed by the project board and appropriate areas identified.

3.1.1 Aims and Objectives

The WuC programme was developed to test the impact of wiring up a community and to assess the extent to which it could overcome the 'digital divide' and facilitate the use of online consumer and government services. There was, however, some uncertainty in relation to the aims of the programme, particularly in the formative stages and a period of national/local dialogue ensued.

One of the key national stakeholders suggested that WuC started off as a relatively simple idea, namely, to compare the effectiveness of using different technologies such as PCs and set-top boxes to wire-up disadvantaged communities to help overcome the 'digital divide'. Of particular interest was the extent to which the use of the Internet supported the development of employment and employability. However, Ministerial interest in the potential of the programme in the formative stages highlighted issues associated with a broad ranging remit including the contribution of the programme towards achieving NGfL (National Grid for Learning)⁴ targets and the development of community capacity more generally. The potential for 'expert systems' to support decision-making was investigated through, for example, an 'all embracing webservice' which would help unemployed people to identify job opportunities, source childcare if needed, provide transport information and calculate the effects on benefits of pursuing a job opportunity. However, following initial investigation, this type of service appeared beyond technological and institutional capability at the time. A much simpler WuC website (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/wired>) was developed to provide information about the programme and local projects were encouraged to develop their own local content as a mechanism to encourage local capacity building. Further uncertainties surrounded the development of other aspects of the programme. For example, the recognition of the potential of home access to the Internet to encourage children to learn from guardians (and vice versa) led to an emphasis on 'home-school links' within the programme. However, the concept of 'home-school links' remained ill-defined for some time (BECTA 2001, DfES 2001a) and eventually a 'schools based project' emerged in the WuC areas

⁴ Initiated in 1998, the National Grid for Learning (now called the ICT in Schools Programme) is the Department for Education and Skills schools-related ICT programme

which was led by the Local Education Authority or Education Action Zone, as appropriate, with links being made through the local project management groups.

The programme generally provided a flexible framework within which local areas could develop their own projects and targets. Each of the seven projects developed their own priorities within this framework and many have welcomed and contrasted favourably this approach with the requirements of other funding streams which often require the achievement of predetermined quantitative targets (e.g. new jobs generated). All the local projects had multiple aims, which transcend the economic and social agendas to varying degrees. The aims and objectives of the local projects were couched in different, often general terms. For example:

'The project will seek to demonstrate how individual access to the Internet can transform opportunities for people living on the Estate by supporting new ways of accessing education, work, leisure and other services' (Carpenters Estate)

The objectives articulated by another local project in a rural area are very different, namely to:

- Improve access to ICT in public places and provide assistance to users to overcome any fears they have
- Test accessibility of Government resources especially in relation to employment and education
- Help people to find work
- Encourage Lifelong Learning
- Deliver government and community information services in innovative ways
- Support the work of Government and European programmes (SRB, O2, LEADER+ Programme, Rural Development Programme)
- Engage in bottom up community regeneration
- Improve community cohesion

A review of the local project bids and conversations with local stakeholders revealed similarities and differences between the aims and objectives of the projects. For example, two projects articulated a relatively strong employability/employment dimension to the project. The Local Employment Service was a key partner in the Brampton project which sought to link local people with local job opportunities. A key aim of the Alston Cybermoor project was to develop ICT skills associated with broadband access to generate employment opportunities for local people and to promote economic inclusion. Other projects placed greater emphasis on the general development of the local community (e.g. Blackburn) through home access. One project focussed on the

development of the infrastructure to enable provision of high bandwidth local services via innovative technology (e.g. Carpenters). The two remaining projects (Liverpool and East Manchester) came under the umbrella of New Deal for Communities and sought to contribute to the wide ranging local regeneration agendas. However all the projects had multiple and interlinked objectives.

3.2 Review of local projects

The local projects had different forms of partnership, adopted varying technologies, encouraged participation and attempted to overcome financial and skills related barriers to Internet use in a variety of ways. These issues are explored below:

3.2.1 An overview of the organisation and management of local projects

Government policy is increasingly based on a 'partnership approach' to intervention, including some combination of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Partnership was a key element in the delivery of WuC and the nature and depth of partnerships across the programme, and within the WuC projects, is highly variable. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the lead organisation, accountable body and other key partners represented on the management group of each local project. The Local Authority was the accountable body in all but one of the WuC areas.

The management and organisation of local projects are summarised in each of the local case studies contained in Appendix 1 of this report. These case studies form the basis of the following summary of partnership and management related implementation issues.

Several of the WuCs were situated in areas undergoing considerable regeneration activity and subject to other area based interventions. For example two of the areas (Kensington and East Manchester) were designated 'New Deal for Community' areas although examination of the individual case studies reveals that the extent to which the WuC project was integrated into regeneration activities varied widely. Both these areas had Education Action Zones as did a further area, Blackburn East. Newham Council has played a major role in the maintenance and regeneration of Carpenters Estate which is adjacent to a further major regeneration scheme in the East of London. In East Manchester and Newham the WuC group also contained key representatives responsible for ICT developments in the area more generally. In contrast the WuCs in

the two rural areas were developed by local community organisations with the Local Authority role largely limited to ensuring accountability and the number of agencies or institutions and the extent of partnership working was much less evident than in the urban areas. There was little evidence of multi-agency partnership working in the coalfield area (Brampton), however the Borough Council played a key role in the development and implementation of the WuC project.

Table 3.1: Partnership bodies

Area	Lead organisation	Accountable body	Steering Group Partners
Kensington, Liverpool	Kensington, NDC	Liverpool City Council	Kensington Regeneration, Community representatives, Private sector contractors John Moores University - Centre for Digital Content, Excite Education Action Zone, GONW, DfES
Alston, Cumbria	Voluntary Action Cumbria (VAC)	Cumbria County Council	Community representatives, DfES
Brampton, South Yorkshire	Rotherham Borough Council	Rotherham Borough Council	Granada Media, Granada Learning, Community representatives, DfES
Carpenters Estate, Newham	Newham Council	Newham Council	Carpenters Road Tenant Management Association, Newham College of FE, University of East London, MASE Integration and Communications Ltd, DfES
Blackburn East	Blackburn East Community Help (BEACH)	Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council	Blackburn Regeneration Partnership, Blackburn College, Blackburn Partnership, Bootstrap Enterprises, DfES
East Manchester	East Manchester NDC	Manchester City Council	East Manchester Residents Forum, New East Manchester Ltd, East Manchester Education Action Zone, Various Private Sector Organisations, DfES
Framlingham	Suffolk ACRE	Suffolk ACRE	District Council, County Council EEDA, Community representatives, DfES

Source Local project managers

Two of the WuC areas had seen ICT-related developments over a period of years prior to WuC and as a result the partnerships had reached a level of maturity based upon common experiences associated with the development and delivery of ICT projects. For example in East Manchester an initial pilot project (known as East Serve) provided 300 PCs to residents and developed a community website. In Newham the Local Authority had been heavily involved with 'Newham Online' which was set up as a network of local organisations and individuals working together to ensure that the area benefited from the opportunities presented through ICTs. There had been much less ICT-related

development activity in the other WuC areas, and as such, the strategic leadership was largely emergent and the partnerships formative.

Each local project convened a management group to oversee the implementation of the project. Several partners outlined in the original bids did not participate in the delivery of the project whereas some partners not mentioned in the bid subsequently became involved in the management of the local project. This occurred for a variety of reasons including the evolving nature and focus of the local project and the implementation timeframe. The local context is summarised in more detail in the individual case studies (Appendix 1).

Revenue funding was required to fund a small project team and associated development activities such as the provision of training and community engagement. This appeared to be less of an issue in East Manchester and Newham. In East Manchester, WuC was part of the much wider support infrastructure including UK online centres, the Education Action Zone and the local Further Education providers were already a key element of the local regeneration partnership. In Newham the emphasis of WuC was placed in the first instance on the development of the telecommunication and interface technologies as opposed to the engagement of the local community or training provision. This was already available through the UK online centre on the estate and through the outreach of local Further and Higher Education providers more generally. In Blackburn the Further Education College played a key role in the development of the training element of the project and the Local Authority helped to identify and access streams of revenue funding. Obtaining revenue funding in the rural areas proved to be a considerable challenge. For example, in Framlingham the limited resources resulted in a smaller project implementation team than had been planned. Limited resources also hampered community development and outreach work in Brampton.

Highly variable private sector involvement was evident in the programme. Strategic involvement of private sector organisations (in terms of playing a key part in the original proposal) was limited to four WuC areas. The private sector played a leading role in the strategic development and implementation of WuC in Brampton. However the key private sector partner went into receivership during implementation halting local implementation for several months. In East Manchester a small private sector consultancy played a strategic role in the development of an initial pilot, providing PC

technology to residents and the development of a community website. They worked closely with the East Manchester NDC regeneration partnership as part of a much wider and deeper renewal programme and contributed (as a supplier) to the technical aspects of website development in three of the other WuC areas. The local private sector ISP went into liquidation during the delivery of WuC in East Manchester and this halted local implementation for a period of time.

In Framlingham a local web-design company contributed to the development of the project and sits on the local steering group. There were again problems with private sector suppliers as the PC supplier went into receivership and caused delays in local implementation. In Newham, the Local Authority had existing links over time with several private sector suppliers, most notably within the context of WuC, MASE Integration and Communications Ltd (infrastructure providers). Whilst there were delays in the development of the innovative technological solution being provided through WuC, the relationships with the private sector have endured through WuC. It has developed further links with other private sector organisations such as PACE and Microsoft.

In other areas the private sector were less involved in the strategic development of the WuC project but played a key role as suppliers of hardware, software and technical assistance. There were examples of private sector suppliers adapting practice to accommodate the aspirations for WuC. For example the equipment suppliers in several WuCs provided training for local people to enable them to install the equipment. However most areas reported examples of technical problems associated with the equipment provided and the quality of the technical support provided through suppliers help desks.

3.2.2 Type of technology

One of the key aims of the WuC Programme was to 'test' the appropriateness of a range of technologies available to connect people with the Internet during project implementation. The sourcing and 'roll out' of the technology was the primary concern of the local project teams. In the phase 1 area (Kensington), a technical team was recruited to set up the technology in the home and respond to maintenance and technical problems. A similar approach was adopted in Brampton and East Manchester where an Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) was used to employ local people to install the equipment in residents' homes and provide further technical assistance. In Alston a

local supplier was used on a temporary basis to install the equipment. The private sector provider played a key role in providing training to develop the skills of the local people who subsequently installed the equipment. In Blackburn and Framlingham the whole process was subcontracted with the equipment supplier delivering, installing and setting up machines in residents' homes. In some instances the installation process was used as an opportunity to assess skills levels and encourage involvement in further training.

The technologies underpinning the local projects are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Technology

	Interface Device			Telecommunications	
	New PCs	Recycled PCs	Set-top boxes	Dial up connection	Broadband
Kensington, Liverpool		*		*	
Alston, Cumbria	*			*	*
Brampton, South Yorkshire			*		
Carpenters Estate, Newham			*		*
Blackburn East	*			*	
East Manchester	*	*	*	*	*
Framlingham	*			*	*

Source DfES monitoring information

Several projects (Kensington, Framlingham, Blackburn) were initially based upon the use of 'recycled PCs'. However problems associated with the reliability of the hardware and its relatively low specification (below the minimum specified by some providers, e.g. NTL) were identified through the experiences of the Phase 1 project. In the light of this experience, two phase 2 projects (Framlingham and Blackburn) swapped reliance upon recycled PCs to a preference for new PCs. Alston also provided new PCs to its residents. East Manchester offered a combination of set-top box, new and recycled PCs and networked computers. The PCs in all areas were typically 'entry level' multi-media devices with a 600Mhz-1Ghz processor, 128 RAM, 20 Gb Hard disc with dial up access to the Internet.

Brampton and Newham adopted 'set-top box' technology. The Brampton project used technology already available in the marketplace ('Net Gem Box') supplied by ITV Digital. Newham adopted arguably the most innovative technological approach in the Programme using a unique set-top box to provide PC functionality (through Microsoft software) along with broadcast technology to provide high bandwidth services (such as

video on demand and video games). In the other areas, Alston, Manchester and Framlingham, the projects sought to develop the infrastructure to enable broadband services to be provided to a limited spatial area within their WuC.

3.2.3 Developing local content

The development of a website providing local content became a priority, second only to the roll out of the technology in the community in most of the WuC areas. A range of different methods have been adopted across the programme. For example visioning and online games workshops were used to engender local interest in Kensington (www.l7kensington.com) and to provide the basis for further development. These were used to identify opportunities and to start up small teams to lead on mini-projects to develop local services. These included the development of local approaches to:

- e-government
- education, employment and lifelong learning
- business development
- local content.

This model, to involve the community in developing ideas and a strategy for development, was also adopted to varying degrees in Framlingham and Alston. In Framlingham a DfES-funded consultant provided some support for early development. In Alston the project team sought to engender local interest through a variety of awareness raising and networking activities.

In the urban areas (East Manchester, Newham and Blackburn) WuC built on established ICT developments, which were very different in scale and scope across each community. The local Authority in Newham were heavily involved in long term developments to realise the potential of ICT and WuC provided the opportunity to develop broadband links between service providers and residents which could be used to deliver services in the home. A Carpenters Website existed prior to the WuC intervention, however the Media Trust (<http://www.mediatrust.org>) had also been active in the area, encouraging the development of local content for distribution across the network and the site has been re-launched (www.newham.org.uk/wired). In East Manchester, an Internet Site existed (Eastserve1) and had developed interactive personalised access to local services (e.g. Benefits, housing, requests for council

services, Police Information). This was further refined during the WuC programme and the website further developed (www.eastserve.com) to deliver services in line with the priorities of the local New Deal For Community Programme. In Blackburn, an existing community web-site had been developed and WuC provided the impetus to plan, refine and develop it further (www.Beonline.org.uk). A website existed in Alston prior to WuC and WuC was seen as an opportunity to build upon this (www.cybermoor.org.uk). No website existed prior to WuC in the other rural or coalfield areas, but sites were subsequently developed in Framlingham (www.suffolkonline.net) and Brampton (www.pit2net.co.uk). Websites generally incorporated a mix of community information and links to statutory bodies although they were very different in style and content.

3.2.4 Engaging the local community

A variety of approaches to engage individuals from local communities were used both within and between projects. Projects established a physical presence in the local community and developed a range of outreach services contingent upon local priorities.

One of the first steps taken by the phase 1 project (Kensington) was to develop a physical presence in the high street. This provided tangible evidence of the presence of the initiative and acted as a focus for the project. Several phase 2 areas (Blackburn/Newham) already had established community centres which acted as a focus for the delivery of the project. East Manchester could call on a network of local learning centres to promote the project and deliver training. In Brampton, the local Miners Welfare Club was refurbished and was used to provide a local support centre.

The resources and approaches associated with outreach work were highly variable. All projects raised awareness and encouraged participation through for example awareness raising events, leafleting, a freephone number, press releases and promotion through local learning centres. The following are examples of other approaches adopted by the local WuCs:

- Use of a freephone telephone number to register an interest in the project.
- Close working with the Education Action Zone and local schools to promote interest in the project.
- Use of specialist agencies (e.g. Media Trust) to encourage local people to develop their own local content for a community broadcasting channel.

- Community Forum to take account of the interests of the local community in the development and implementation of the local project and to promote the project within the community.
- Research on the doorstep to promote the project, assess potential demand and identify constraints/barriers.
- Use of a local social enterprise to talk to members of the local community and encourage local residents at most at risk of exclusion to participate.
- Recruitment of community champions to promote the project and to provide additional community based support.

3.2.5 Overcoming financial barriers

One of the key barriers to the use of the Internet amongst disadvantaged communities has been identified as the cost of the technology. WuC has helped to address this 'access barrier' to varying degrees. In all but one of the WuCs, the interface hardware, along with some software (usually MS Office or derivative) and peripherals (such as printers) were delivered and installed in the residents' homes free of charge. In East Manchester a complex set of charging arrangements existed dependent upon the residents' preferred choice of technology. A local Credit Union was able to provide the necessary finance for residents if required.

Residents were generally provided with three months free Internet access as part of the 'offer' (the exception being the Phase 1 project). However in some instances, where residents were currently using cable telecommunications, the local supplier limited this access to set-top box devices.

In order to smooth the costs of Internet use in the home once the free trial period finished, one of the projects adopted an innovative scheme based on the use of 'plastic cards' which were used to credit a user account. These 'Splash Plastic' cards (based on a similar 'pay as you go' system adopted for mobile phones) could be 'topped up' at a variety of local outlets including shops and post offices. Broadband services were in varying stages of development in four of the WuC areas and at the time of publication it is planned to offer these services at rates below those currently available in the local area.

3.2.6 Training and support for local participants

The development of training and support for local participants varied in scope and scale across the WuCs. Technical support services and basic training in the use of the technology was largely funded through WuC. Further training and support activities were largely contingent upon use of the existing infrastructure, volunteers or the attraction of funds for bespoke delivery.

The extent to which skill development was an integral element of the WuC project varied across the WuC areas. In East Manchester and Blackburn it was integrated into the development and delivery of the local WuC project. Involvement was instigated through the registration process. For example, on registration in East Manchester, residents were invited to attend a three-hour training course delivered through a variety of community centres, UK online centres and the local College. Following completion of the course residents received the PC. In Blackburn all recipients of the equipment had to attend an initial awareness raising session before they were eligible to receive a WuC computer. All participants were encouraged to undertake further training both through informal 'drop in' sessions delivered by tutors from Blackburn College in the local community centre and more structured courses of study (ECDL and CLAIT). Both Blackburn and East Manchester undertook training of local people to encourage them to become involved in training delivery and to develop community ICT skills capacity more generally.

The scale and scope of integrated, structured training activity observed in Blackburn and East Manchester was less evident in the other areas. However, some training was planned and delivered. For example, in Brampton the local College of Further Education provided an introductory Internet course delivered in the local community centre. In Alston, residents were signposted to introductory courses delivered in the local primary and secondary schools. In Framlingham bespoke courses were commissioned, as existing courses were felt to be too advanced and these were marketed and promoted by the project team and delivered through local venues.

Informal training opportunities were provided to varying degrees in each of the WuC areas. These included 'drop in' sessions at the local community centre and one to one coaching in the home (particularly for those who had physical limitations). Local community 'champions' also offered informal support in the community.

3.3 Section summary

The WuC programme was largely 'experimental' in nature in the sense of avoiding prescription in terms of delivery structures and outputs that should be achieved. It funded seven area based pilot projects to provide ICT to enable home access to the Internet and to develop associated services which help to overcome barriers to use of the internet. Partnership was a key characteristic in the delivery of WuC but the nature and depth of partnership activity across the programme was highly variable.

The sourcing and roll out of the technology along with the development of a community website proved to be the primary concern of local project implementation. The development of training and support for local participants varied in scope and depth across the WuC areas. Technical support services and basic training in the use of the technology by the installation team was funded through WuC. Further training and support activities were largely contingent upon the use of the existing education infrastructure, volunteers or the attraction of funds for bespoke delivery.

4 INITIAL OUTCOMES FOR BENEFICIARIES IN THE WUC AREAS

This section of the report draws largely on the primary research conducted in the WuC areas to assess the initial outcomes of the intervention on local residents receiving WuC technology. The characteristics of respondents are reviewed and the baseline data is used to explore the characteristics of Internet users. The data from the follow up surveys is used to investigate the outcomes associated with the aims and objectives of the WuC programme.

4.1 Characteristics of respondents

Administrative data from the local projects provided the sample base for the survey in each local area. Each local project provided a list of at least 600 people who had registered an interest in the project. A doorstep survey was conducted with a random sample of project participants using a structured questionnaire containing 46 closed questions and 10 open questions. Between 160 and 216 interviews were completed in each area to establish a baseline position in terms of use of the Internet, current and past learning activity, and measures of social cohesion prior to the local implementation of the programme. Follow up interviews were completed 6-9 months later to explore the use and utility of the technology adopted to access the internet and the impact of its use on a range of 'proxy' measures of learning, employment and social cohesion. A high response rate of 72% was achieved across the programme for the follow up survey, however there was variation across the individual projects with response rates ranging from 63% in East Manchester to 84% in Brampton (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Local survey response

	Baseline N	Follow up N	Response rate
Alston	163	118	72.4%
Blackburn	209	157	75.1%
Brampton	196	164	83.7%
Carpenters	201	N/a	N/a
East Manchester	176	111	63.1%
Framlingham	205	139	67.8%
Kensington	216	146	67.6%
Overall	1366	835	71.7%

No follow up survey was undertaken in the Carpenters WuC area as very few set-top boxes had been delivered into residents homes by October 2002. A survey is planned to be completed in March 2003. Thirty-five respondents who had registered for the

technology but had not yet received it were removed from the analysis. The analysis of outcomes is based on the resulting sample of 800 WuC residents who had received the technology in the home at the time of the follow up survey. Analysis of the socio demographic characteristics of the two samples reveals little response bias across the programme. The profile of respondents to the baseline and follow up surveys is outlined in Table 4.2. The respondents to the baseline survey in Carpenters are not included in the following analysis as no responses are available from a follow up survey.

Table 4.2: Characteristics of respondents: Baseline and Follow up in WuC areas

	N=1165	N=800
	Baseline	Follow up
Gender		
Male	563 (48.3%)	397 (49.6%)
Female	602 (51.7%)	403 (50.4%)
Ethnicity		
White	1076 (92.4%)	751 (93.9%)
Non white	83 (7.1%)	49 (6.1%)
Declined to answer	6 (0.5%)	
Age		
16-24	55 (4.7%)	36 (4.6%)
25-44	583 (50.0%)	383 (47.9%)
45-64	368 (31.6%)	264 (33.0%)
65+	158 (13.6%)	116 (14.5%)
Declined to answer	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1)
Qualification		
Below NVQ3	741 (63.6%)	523 (65.4%)
NVQ3 or above	321 (27.6%)	202(25.3%)
Other	103 (8.9%)	75 (9.3%)
Employment Status		
In work	607 (52.2%)	403 (50.4%)
Out of work	339 (29.1%)	242 (30.3%)
Retirement	187 (16.1%)	135 (16.8%)
Other	30 (2.6%)	20 (2.5%)
Health		
Long term illness/disability	173 (14.8%)	119 (14.9%)
Type of area		
Coalfield	196 (16.8%)	153 (19.1%)
Rural	368 (31.6%)	243 (30.4%)
Urban	601 (58.7%)	404 (50.5%)

Source: Baseline (n=1165) and follow up (n=800) survey of Individuals 2001/2002

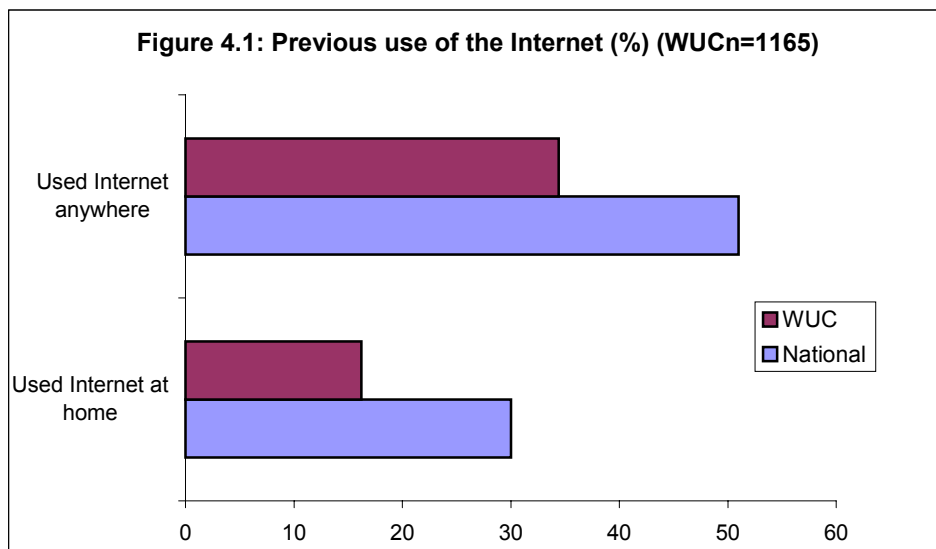
The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents were obtained through self-classification, although several characteristics have been compiled through aggregation of specific responses contained in the questionnaire. For example, research has identified those with a qualification level below NVQ level 3 as at risk of social exclusion and the data has been coded and aggregated to enable the analysis to reflect this policy

priority. In relation to employment status, those 'out of work' include people claiming unemployment benefit as well as respondents identifying themselves as 'retired' but of working age, those suggesting that they are 'looking after home and family' and those who are not working due to ill health or disability. This is because those not in the workplace (including for example women returners and people with disabilities) have been identified as particularly at risk of exclusion from digital access. 18 respondents were classified as 'other' and the majority of these are in full time or part time education.

The information collected through the survey was supplemented by qualitative information collected through nine discussion groups conducted in the communities. At least one group was conducted in each area and the groups were used to explore a range of issues associated with the WuC process and use of the Internet.

4.2 Use of the Internet prior to WuC

The baseline survey established the position across a range of relevant issues including current use of the Internet, learning activity and participation in local groups prior to the WuC intervention. Figure 4.1 provides an illustration of the use of the Internet in the WuC areas prior to the intervention and contrasts this with nationally available statistics.



Overall just over one third of respondents (34.4%) had used the Internet prior to participating in WuC. This is well below national levels as indicated in recent surveys. A National Statistics Omnibus survey (ONS, 2001) covering the period January to March

2001 (about the time the second phase projects delivered equipment to the WuCs) indicates that 51% of adults in Great Britain have accessed the Internet at some time.

Under one in five respondents in the WuC areas (16.2%) had accessed the Internet from their home. Comparisons with national data suggest that residents in the WuCs overall were less likely to have accessed the Internet at home than those in Britain more generally. Estimates of home access at a national level vary from 30% reported in the Benchmark Survey (DfEE 2001) to 37% in the National Omnibus Survey (ONS 2001).

4.2.1 A profile of Internet Users in the WuC areas prior to the intervention

Analysis of the characteristics of those WuC residents who had used the Internet previously at home, at work or in a variety of other locations confirm some of the dynamics of the 'digital divide' identified in section 2 of this report. The analysis investigates the probability of previous use of the Internet, comparing it with the average overall for the WuCs and applying a statistical test (chi-square) to measure the variation and test for significance. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

The likelihood of Internet users being younger, 'better qualified' and having school age children is confirmed by the baseline survey. The survey results suggest that there are highly significant differences associated with age, qualification and school age children in the household and the propensity to have used the Internet. There are also significant differences apparent in terms of employment status, with those in work more likely than others to have used the Internet previously.

The data suggest that whilst men are more likely to be users of the Internet than women, the difference is not statistically significant. The analysis also suggests that the majority of Internet users came from a section of the community which classed itself 'white' in terms of ethnicity.

Table 4.3: Profile of the characteristics of respondents who had previously used the Internet (n=1165)

	Had used the Internet before WuC (%)	Had home access before WuC (%)
Gender		
Male	51.9	60.8**
Female	48.1	39.2**
Ethnicity		
White	92.0**	95.8**
Non-white	7.5	3.7*
Refused	0.5	0.5
Age		
16-24	9.0**	3.2
25-44	57.6**	52.9
45-54	29.2**	36.5**
65 and over	4.2**	7.4**
Highest Qualification		
Below NVQ level 3	43.9**	39.7**
Level 3 or above	45.6**	48.1**
Other	10.5	12.2
Employment Status		
In work	62.8**	72.5**
Out of work	26.9	18*
Retired	4.2**	6.3**
Other	6.0	3.1
Health		
Long term illness/disability	10.0**	9.5**
School age children		
Yes	53.6**	53.7**
No	46.4**	46.3**

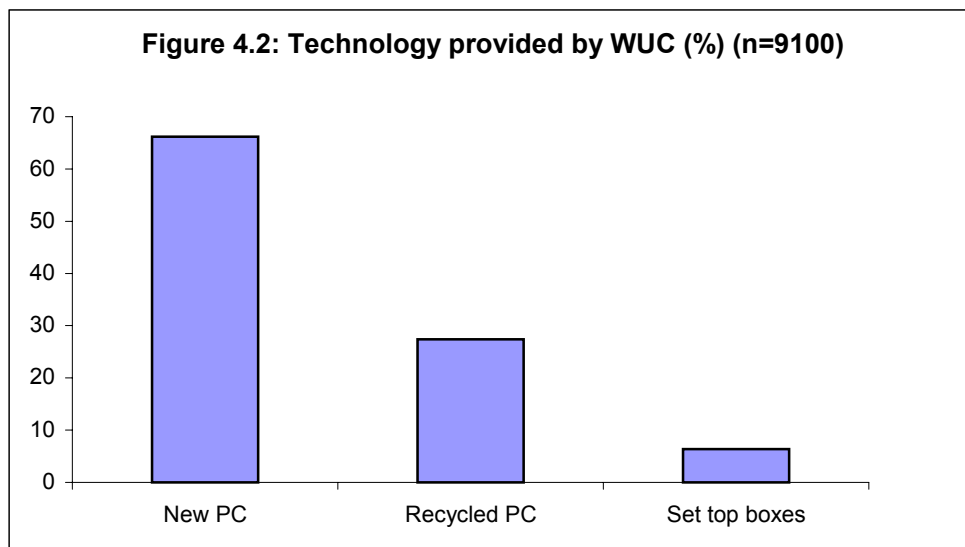
Source: Baseline survey of Individuals 2001(n=1165)

** Significant at the 99% level * Significant at the 95% level (Chi Square test)

The findings associated with the use of the Internet at home also reinforce the notion of a 'divide' in this context. Those with 'higher qualifications' and those with school age children in the household were more likely to be users of the Internet at home. However some further differences are apparent in the data. Whilst there is little difference in relation to gender associated with Internet use from any location, men were significantly more likely than women to have accessed the Internet in the home. By age, those aged between 45-55 were significantly more likely to have access to the Internet in the home, whereas those above 55 were significantly less likely to have accessed the Internet in the home. Furthermore those out of work joined those that are retired as a group who are significantly less likely to have access to the Internet in the home.

4.3 WuC technology and the use of the Internet

According to programme monitoring information provided by DfES, by October 2002 the WuC programme had delivered 9,100 PCs and set-top boxes into seven communities containing in the region of 19,450 households. Most homes were connected via a PC, with 6058 homes receiving new PCs and a further 2509 receiving recycled PCs. A further 583 set-top boxes were delivered to homes in one WuC area (Figure 4.2).



The technologies delivered to the residents responding to the follow up survey in the local areas are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: WuC technologies received by respondents to the follow up survey

	N	% all respondents
PC	491	61.4%
Set-top box	151	18.9%
Recycled PC	155	19.4%
Laptop	3	0.40%
	800	100.00%

Source: Follow up survey of Individuals 2002(n=800)

More than six in ten respondents to the follow up survey in the WuCs received new Internet ready PCs with dial up access to the Internet. This broadly reflects the proportion of new PCs delivered across the programme. These were provided in four of the WuC areas namely Alston, Blackburn, East Manchester and Framlingham. Almost 20% of respondents received set-top box technology (which was readily available in the market). These respondents were all located in Brampton. A further 17% of all respondents received recycled PCs and the majority of these were located in the Phase

1 area (Kensington). Comparison with the programme monitoring data provided by DfES suggests that the research sample contains a higher proportion of set-top box users and a lower proportion of recycled PC users when compared with the programme overall.

The aim of the WuC programme was to ensure that communities are not further excluded from engaging with online consumer and government services. Consequently it is not the provision of the technology itself which is the key outcome but the extent and range of use that the technology is put to by those receiving it.

4.3.1 Use and non-use of the WuC equipment

Just under three-quarters of residents receiving the WuC equipment had used it to access the Internet. However more than one quarter (25.5%) have not used the WuC technology to access the Internet. The majority of these (84%) were resident in three areas (Brampton, Kensington and East Manchester). Analysis of the text responses within the questionnaire and the comments at the discussion groups held in the local communities revealed multiple explanations for non-use.

By far the most common explanation provided for non-use relates to a 'lack of interest' in the Internet. Almost half of the respondents who did not use the WuC technology to access the Internet reported that they were 'not interested' in what they thought it had to offer or said that they had 'not had the time' to look. These respondents generally valued the technology (whether it be set-top box or PC) for applications other than using the Internet. Set-top box users tended to emphasize the free premium channel which came with the set-top box. Others, who had obtained a PC suggested that they got it to 'do their books', to play games on or 'to catch up with their children'.

A further 10-15% of non-Internet users reported that they did not have the necessary skills or knowledge to use the Internet. 10% said that they had other technology in the home which they used to access the Internet (this was particularly prevalent where residents had been provided with set-top box technology). A further 10% noted problems associated with the link to the Internet infrastructure ranging from problems with modems, extensions to telephone points and valid password/user-names to enable connection.

As one might expect, the majority of those who used the WuC technology to access the Internet (85%) suggested that their use had increased since getting the technology in the home. There appear to be a relatively large proportion of regular Internet users with almost half (48.9%) reporting that they used the Internet at least once a day. A further 30% reported that they used it at least twice a week. However, almost one in five (17%) used the Internet less than once a month.

A substantial proportion of respondents who were Internet users appear to have developed some confidence in the Internet, with more than four in ten (41.8%) people suggesting that they had used the Internet to shop or bank online. A much smaller proportion (6.4%) had used the Internet to request information and receive a response from a local council or any other government department.

4.4 Training and learning

A short-term objective of the WuC programme was to encourage the development of ICT skills and to support the learning of adults and children. The WuC programme sought to help to overcome some of the Internet access barriers associated with user skills through the development and provision of local learning opportunities. The surveys in the WuCs provide an indication of the impact of the intervention on the recipients training activity and (where appropriate) the support they provide for their children's learning in the home.

Almost half (47.6%) of the respondents had received some training to help them use the Internet. However, the majority of respondents (52.4%) reported that they did not receive any training. The training typically covered basic use of the technology provided through WuC and the development of a variety of skills to enable the resident to search the Internet or communicate with others by, for example, sending e-mail. The vast majority of the respondents (96%) undertaking training were satisfied with the training provided. The small minority who were not satisfied articulated a range of reasons. For example:

'The training was too advanced' or alternatively

'the training was too basic'

'It was not long enough, they went through it too quickly'

'attended a course for 3 days but didn't continue due to difficulties understanding English'

A further dimension of the impact of the WuC intervention of particular interest to policy makers is the extent to which it supported adult and child learning. The research developed limited indicators to gain a flavour of learning in the home in relation to supporting homework. 45% of respondents (n=361) who had received the WuC technology had school age children at home. The majority of these (69.8%) had used the WuC technology to help their children with their homework or learning related activity.

4.5 Employment prospects

A medium term objective of WuC is to promote economic inclusion and improve the employment prospects of people. Whilst it may be too early to assess the contribution of WuC to this objective at this time, the survey provides an indication of the short-term outcomes associated with the project.

Only 46 respondents in the WuC areas (5.8%) suggested that their 'employment situation' had changed in the six to nine month period between the baseline and the follow up survey. The direction of the change is multiple with people moving from full time to part time work and vice versa, moving from full time education to work, moving from registered unemployed into work or out of work but not claiming benefit. Arguably of most interest to policy makers are those who moved from a position out of work into work which reflects a positive outcome associated with alleviating economic exclusion. The survey results suggest that sixteen people had moved from a position out of the workplace into work. Eight had returned to work after a period of 'looking after home and family', two had moved from full time education into full time work and four had moved from registered unemployment into full or part time work. One had returned to full time employment following a period of ill health and a further retired person had obtained a part time job. Seven people had moved out of the workplace due to a variety of circumstances including looking after home and family or illness.

Ten people attributed the change in status at least partially to involvement in WuC. Eight of these people suggested that the WuC technology had been used to 'look at job opportunities' on the Internet. One specifically noted the opportunities posted by the Job Centre. One further respondent reported that they had used the WuC technology to develop ICT skills at home.

4.5.1 Searching for information

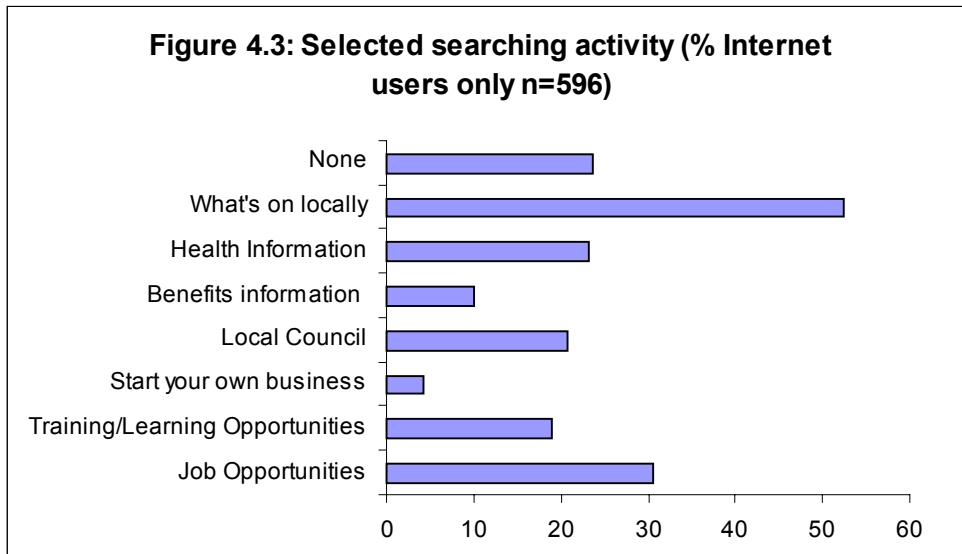
Information has a key role to play (alongside other services such as training, advice and guidance) in connecting people to the labour market. For example, information on welfare benefits and job availability are key inputs into the decision-making of individuals in disadvantaged communities when they are seeking employment opportunities. The Internet provides the opportunity for individuals to widen the scope of their job search and to search out vacancies for themselves along with access to training opportunities and other important sources of labour market information.

One participant in the local discussion group noted:

'I could use it to look at potential jobs and go on to investigate the companies offering them' (Female, mid thirties, 3 children)

The surveys investigated the extent to which people used the Internet to search for different types of information which may effect their social or economic situation. The results are summarised in Figure 4.3. The results enable comparison between the likelihood of using the Internet to search for, for example job opportunities, with other search activity of interest to policy makers.

Almost one third of respondents who had used the Internet reported that they used it to search for job opportunities. Almost one quarter used it to search for health information. However the most 'popular' use in terms of the options presented to the respondents was to use the Internet to search for 'what's on locally'. One in five people had used it to search for information from the local council. However, over a quarter of Internet users had not used the Internet to search for any of the options presented to them as listed in Figure 4.3.



Respondents were asked to report the extent to which they had used the Internet to look at a selection of government websites and the results are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Respondents visiting selected websites

	% of Internet users
www.worktrain.gov.uk	4.49%
www.nhsdirect.gov.uk	8.97%
www.childcarelink.gov.uk	2.72%
www.local wuc site)	68.9%
www.dss.gov.uk	6.25%
www.learndirect.co.uk	18.43%
www.ukonline.co.uk	6.09%

Source: Follow up survey of Individuals 2002(n=800)

Almost one in five Internet users (18.43%) visited www.learndirect.co.uk. However far fewer people visited the other government sites with less than 10% visiting www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk and less than 5% visiting the website which is designed to link citizens with employment and learning opportunities (www.worktrain.gov.uk). The local website developed by each of the WuC projects was the most 'popular' and was visited by 68.9% of Internet users in the WuC areas.

4.6 Social Cohesion

The long-term aim of the programme was improved social cohesion through greater use of the Internet in WuC areas. In order to gain an insight into the level of 'community involvement' in the local areas, respondents to the baseline survey were asked if they were actively involved with any one of a range of named groups (listed in Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Community actions undertaken by respondent in last three years

	%
Contacted a local councillor	5.3
Contacted a member of parliament	2.7
Signed a petition	8.8
Stood for election in any organisation	1.3
Attended a public meeting	8.8
Done some voluntary work	13.2
Helped in fund raising	10.3
Voted in an election	62.5
None of the above	26.8

Source: Baseline survey of Individuals 2001(n=1165)

The Internet has the potential to facilitate communication between local people and a variety of groups and the survey data allows investigation of practice in local communities. The findings from the follow up surveys suggest that a small proportion of Internet users used the technology to find information about a variety of community groups. The results are summarised in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Used the Internet to find /send information

	Find information Internet users (%)	Send information Internet users(%)
Residents'/Tenants' Association	3.85%	0.48%
Trade Union	1.28%	0.64%
Political Party	0.80%	0.16%
Self Help/Support Group	1.28%	0.64%
School Governing Body/PTA	2.40%	0.96%
Youth Activities/Club	1.76%	0.64%
Religious Group	1.44%	0.16%
Sports or Social Club	4.81%	0.96%
Women's Group or organisation	0.96%	0.16%
Other	0.96%	0.32%
Not used for the above	86.06%	95.83%

Source: Follow up survey 2002(Internet users only n=596)

The survey suggests that about 9% of people used the Internet to find information about sports or social clubs and in the WuC residents'/tenants' associations. Generally, finding information about the range of (prompted) community groups through the Internet was uncommon with almost 90% (86.06%) of Internet users in the WuCs reporting that they did not use it to find out information about any community group. Communicating directly with a group via the Internet was even more uncommon with less than 5% of Internet users using the technology to send information to a group.

4.7 Section summary

This section of the report has drawn on primary research undertaken with residents in the WuCs to explore the initial impact of the interventions. Analysis of the results from the baseline survey confirms many of the characteristics of the 'digital divide'.

The follow up survey results provide an indication of the use of the technology provided through WuC. Key findings include:

- Almost three quarters of respondents (74.5%) receiving the technology had used it to access the Internet.
- However more than a quarter (25.5%) had not used it to access the Internet with almost half of these suggesting that 'they are not interested in it' with a further 10-15% suggesting that they did not have the necessary skills to use the Internet.
- The provision of the technology had had a positive impact on those who had used it. 85% of those using the WuC technology to access the Internet suggested that their use had increased since receiving the technology. Almost half reported that they used the Internet daily. A substantial proportion of adults developed some confidence in the Internet as evidenced by just over four in ten people using it to shop or bank online.

A short-term objective of the WuC programme was to encourage the development of ICT skills and to support the learning of local adults and children. The findings suggest that:

- 47.6% of respondents reported that they had received some training to use the Internet.
- the majority (69.8%) of those with school age children had used the WuC technology to help their children with their homework or other learning related activity.

A medium term objective of WuC was to promote economic inclusion and improve the employment prospects of people. Whilst it may be too early to assess the contribution of WuC to this objective, the research provides an indication of the short-term outcomes associated with the project. These include:

- 46 respondents to the follow up survey (5.8%) reported that their employment situation had changed in the period between the baseline and the follow up survey.
- The direction of change was variable with some moving into work, some out of work and some into education.
- Arguably of most interest to policy makers are those that have moved from a position out of the workplace into work. 16 people reported that they had made this transition and ten of these attributed the change in status (at least partially) to the use of the WuC technology which had enabled them to search for employment opportunities and check out prospective employers.

The long-term aim of the programme was improved social cohesion through greater use of the Internet. With respect to this the analysis indicates that:

- 73.2% of respondents reported that they had undertaken one of a range of 'community actions' (including contacting local councillor, attending a public meeting, doing voluntary work) in the three years prior to WuC.
- The survey of use of the WuC technology suggests that only 15% of Internet users used it to find information about a range of community based organisations with less than 5% using it to send information to such a group.

5 AN ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

This section of the report provides an assessment of programme performance. It focuses on the extent to which the desired outcomes associated with the aims of the programme have been achieved. The assessment of the initial outcomes on those residents participating in the programme is based on the primary research conducted in the WuC areas and in the matched comparator areas (MCA). Whilst the comparisons between the WuC programme and the MCA data provide the most robust measures of performance, comparison between the WuC areas provide routes for useful discussion in order to learn from some of the issues emerging through the implementation of the programme. However, caution is advised where direct comparisons are made between the WuCs, as factors such as differences in the aims of local projects and the socio-demographic profile of residents can have a significant impact on the outcome measures of the intervention at the local level. The commentary is based around performance in terms of the four aims and objectives outlined by DfES at the start of the programme.

5.1 'Access'

Organising and managing the supply of technology into residents' homes proved to be a major challenge for all the local projects at varying times. Discontinuities in supply and condensed implementation timeframes contributed to the difficulties facing those implementing the project locally. The time taken in the development and roll out of an innovative technological approach in one WuC area was such that no technology had been delivered into residents' homes by October 2002. The delivery of the technology by area is summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Characteristics of WuC areas

Area name	Units delivered	Number of beneficiaries	% attained
Kensington, Liverpool	2,000	2,000	100
Alston, Cumbria	667	1,080	61.7
Brampton, South Yorkshire	568	1,200	47.3
Carpenters Estate, Newham	0	750	N/a
Blackburn East	2,384	2,400	99.3
East Manchester	2,159	4,500	47.9
Framlingham	1,345	1,350	99.6

Source: DfES programme monitoring information (October 2002)

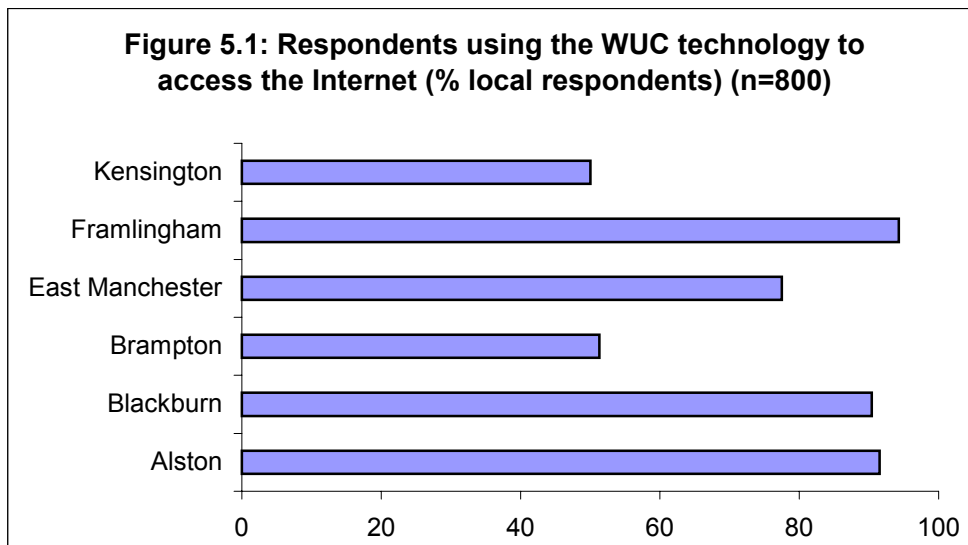
After high levels of initial demand for the WuC technology, most projects struggled to reach the high levels of penetration they originally aspired to achieve to wire up 'a whole

community'. After considerable promotion and outreach work, a couple of areas widened the area they originally targeted in order to distribute the units they had contracted to supply. Consequently measuring 'penetration' is problematic given the changing implementation boundaries and a lack of reliable local monitoring information and there are concerns which have been voiced by both local and national stakeholders that the intervention has not reached those most at risk of exclusion. This highlights a tension between the need to deliver the programme within a set timeframe and the intensive approach often required to engage those most at risk of social exclusion.

Research conducted with 100 non-participants in each of the WuC areas in February/March 2002 provides an insight into the reasons for non-participation in local projects. The research identified some intervention process issues in terms of promotion and marketing of the local project and information flows between the community and the local project team. However the characteristics of the local areas present different challenges with the level of inward and outward migration, existing levels of home access, and negative perceptions associated with the value of using the Internet all affecting the propensity of residents to engage with WuC.

Broadband access was provided in four of the WuC areas although it had not been developed and implemented across an entire WuC area during the programme period. In Newham the technical infrastructure has been designed from the outset to provide high bandwidth services to all residents in the tower blocks (but not low-rise housing stock). In East Manchester a Wireless System was being developed and should cover the whole area by March 2003. In Alston a radio based infrastructure was developed and piloted in a limited area and was planned for roll out in December 2002. In Framlingham a pilot project based on wireless connections was being developed in one of the local villages with a view to future roll out to other villages. No broadband access was evident in the remaining WuCs (Blackburn, Brampton, Kensington).

The overview of the initial outcomes of the programme gained from the follow up survey in the WuCs found that 74.5% of respondents receiving WuC technology had used it to access the Internet. There is, however, wide variation associated with local areas in the extent to which residents have used the WuC technology to access the Internet which implies that some approaches have been more effective than others in encouraging use of the Internet. This is illustrated in Figure 5.1.



The proportion of people using the WuC technology to access the Internet exceeds 90% in three of the six WuC areas which suggests that the local intervention has been effective in encouraging home-use of the Internet in these areas. What is more there is evidence that the majority of users (82%) across the programme had continued to use the Internet once the period of subsidy had ended. There were also encouraging signs that they planned to use the Internet in a relatively sophisticated way with about a half expecting to use the internet to shop or bank online. About a quarter expected to use it to communicate with their local authority and about one in five expected to use it to 'learn at home'. Over half expected to use it to find out 'what's on locally'.

5.1.1 What about those who have stayed away?

In spite of the provision of free technology in the home, about a quarter of respondents to the follow up survey had not used the WuC technology to access the Internet. A contributory factor, particularly apparent in the areas where using the WuC technology to access the Internet is lowest (Brampton and Kensington), is associated with the type of technology provided through the project. In Brampton the set-top box technology was criticised for its slow speed by users and this is likely to have filtered through to non-users in the community. This, coupled with the way in which the technology was marketed in Brampton, which emphasised the entertainment aspects of the set-top box and the 'free premium channel' accompanying the WuC technology, may have limited interest in the Internet searching application at the outset. In Kensington the unreliability of the refurbished PCs affected confidence in the technology. However other factors

conspired to affect initial use of the Internet. For example free or subsidised access to the Internet was not included in the service offered in Kensington and the cost (real or perceived) of this has put people off. Reasons for higher levels of non-use of the Internet in East Manchester are less transparent although the use of recycled PCs, persistent hardware problems and issues with the ISP are likely to have influenced the propensity to use the Internet.

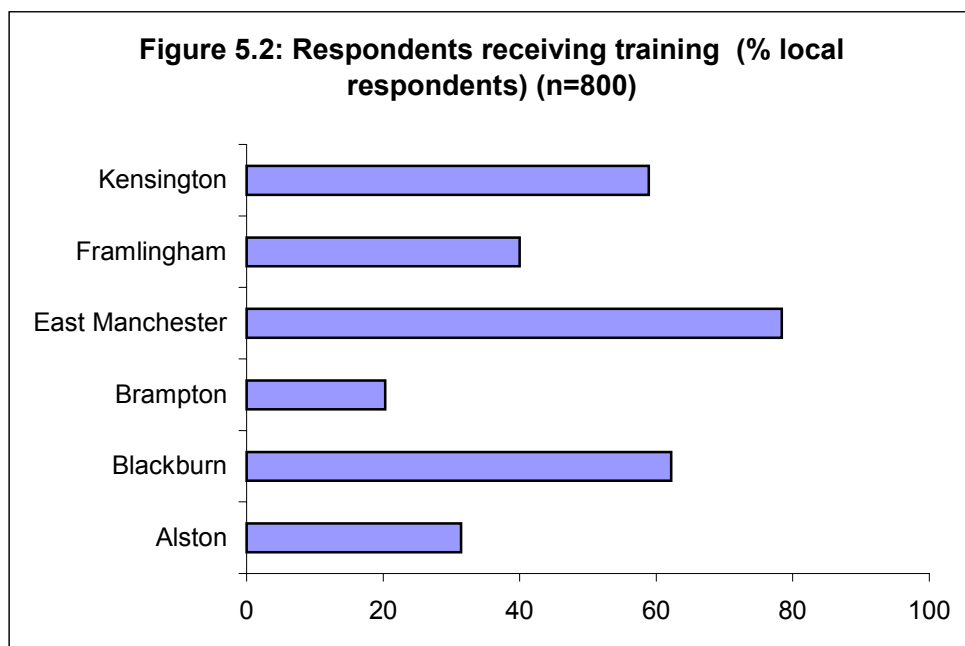
In order to investigate the extent to which non-use was attributable to technological or other factors the survey respondents were asked if they were completely satisfied with the way in which the WuC equipment had worked. Whilst the majority suggested that they were completely satisfied (66.4%) a substantial minority reported one problem or another. About one third of these problems related to the hardware provided by WuC. This was often related to monitor or hard-drive quality and reliability. A further one third reported problems 'online' largely due to faulty modems or 'incorrect' passwords which totally restricted access to the Internet. Almost half the respondents not using the technology to access the Internet cited a 'lack of interest' or 'lack of time' as the main explanation of non-use.

5.2 Training and learning

Training formed a key element in some but not all local projects. Two aspects of programme performance are explored in the following section of the report, firstly the incidence of training in each area and secondly the impact of the training on the propensity of residents to use the Internet.

5.2.1 Incidence of training

There were major variations in the extent to which respondents report that they have received training to use the technology provided through WuC. This is illustrated in Figure 5.2.



The variation in the incidence of training may be explained at least partially by the structure of the local project or the local infrastructure more generally. In the areas with the highest level of training (East Manchester and Blackburn), recipients of the WuC technology were required to attend introductory courses or sessions prior to receiving the technology. This may have resulted in respondents being more likely to engage in training activity in these areas. In Blackburn and East Manchester members of the WuC partnership played a key role in the development and delivery of training opportunities which were integrated in the WuC project. In Kensington, the WuC Learning Centre established in the early stages of the project remained underutilised by the community for a number of months. However the discussion groups in Kensington suggested a range of courses already available locally and within easy reach by public transport which people had used to develop their computer and Internet skills.

WuC respondents living in the rural areas were less likely to have received some training than their counterparts in the urban areas. This may be partly explained by the structure of the project and problems associated with transport and local delivery of training often apparent in rural areas. WuC participants were not required to attend events prior to delivery of the equipment. In Alston WuC participants were signposted to training centres situated in the local schools and one of the local centre managers reported 'a significant short term demand for introductory courses' but little impact on more

structured forms of study. In Framlingham the project adopted an approach which aspired to meet the needs of WuC participants through the conduct of a training needs analysis at the time of installation. Consequently provision was developed towards the end of the programme (in line with local implementation of the project more generally). The training needs analysis led to the development of bespoke local provision delivered through local outlets which have added to the portfolio of provision available locally. However it is worth noting that the relatively low level of training activity in the rural areas does not appear to have affected the recipients' propensity to use the Internet. In both the rural areas more than 90% of WuC respondents have used the technology to access the Internet.

The lowest take up of training was apparent in the coalfield area (Brampton). This reflects both the type of technology provided through WuC and the lack of local provision that existed until very recently (October 2002). The use of the set-top box was seen to be largely intuitive and little training in the use of the technology to access the Internet was offered through the team delivering the set-top boxes into residents' homes. Furthermore, delivery by local providers through the community centre was not in place until towards the end of the project.

5.2.2 The initial impact on use

Whilst there are many factors which influence the use of the Internet, the development of the required skills and knowledge is a fundamental pre-requisite of use and training is a key process by which these skills are developed. However the survey data suggests that the training provided through the WuC project was insufficient in its own right to engender interest in the Internet in some instances as just over a half of the respondents who suggested that they did not use the Internet had received some form of training through WuC. The Initial analysis of the responses to the survey suggests that the propensity to use the Internet was only marginally affected by the training received by an individual. 72% of people who had not received training had accessed the Internet in comparison with 77% of those who had received training. The uptake of training did not appear to affect the frequency of Internet use with three-quarters of both those receiving training and those not receiving training reporting that they accessed the Internet at least once a week. 30% of those receiving training compared with 33% of those not receiving training reported that they used the Internet at least once a day. These findings draw attention to the importance of both the nature of the training

received and other individual motivators or inhibitors which affect an individual's choice associated with their use of the Internet, all of which are worthy of further investigation.

The open questions in the survey, the local discussion groups and interviews with stakeholders in the local communities have helped to uncover some of these inhibiting factors which led to restricted or non-use of the Internet. Some participants in the local discussion groups suggested that there was insufficient training both in terms of technical skills and Internet searching skills, which limited their use of the Internet. Others suggested that they 'don't know what they don't know' and this limited usage. Many of those involved in the delivery of local projects drew attention to the intensity of support required by new and novice users in the home. This resulted in considerable pressure on local project teams, as users were unable to use the technology to their satisfaction and reported 'technical problems' which were subsequently diagnosed as 'user problems'. A key finding from the research is that in spite of providing the technology into the home, the local projects were unable to convince a significant *minority* of residents of the value of using the Internet, to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to overcome other constraints of usage.

There is however little doubt that a positive experience of training or support can engender interest in the use of the Internet. The discussion groups noted the importance of the form of local delivery which needs to be sensitive to learner needs:

'Although I can access the Internet and I've got lots of friends and relations on the Internet I'd rather pick up the phone and talk....I'm not so confident using it and it was difficult to ask questions in class as everyone seemed to know so much more than me'

'I think to make the best use of the computers you need some one-to-one support for people who need it. The community champions could do this. Going to classes is sometimes a problem as you don't like to say things in front of other people.'

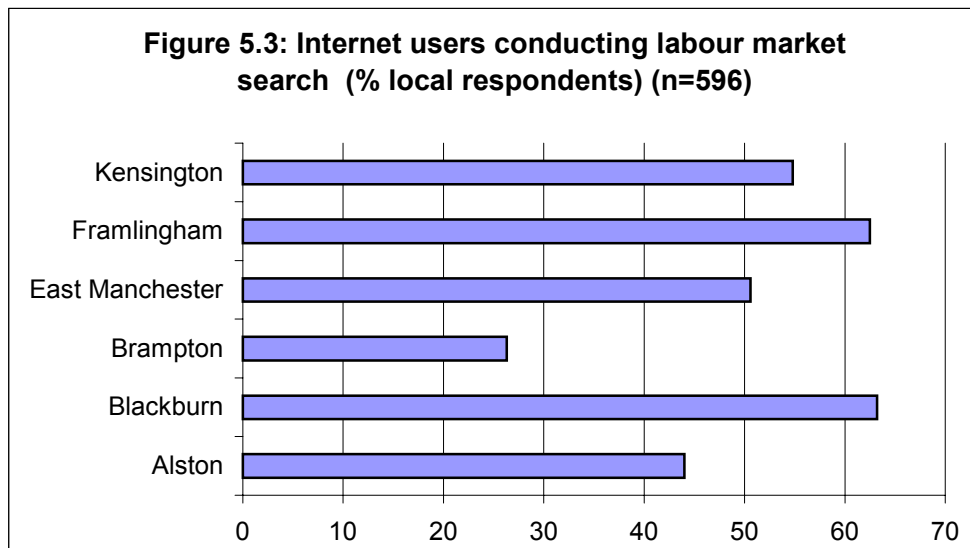
'Drop-in centres would be useful for providing support. You need to use different methods for different groups, computers are becoming second nature to children, but it's different for older people, they may need more help in learning new skills.'

'I would like to go to a class for people who were anxious and lacking in confidence. It would need to be organised on a one-to-one basis.'

5.3 Employment and information search

Only 16 people moved from 'out of work' to 'in work' during the 6-9 month period between the baseline and follow up surveys. However it is clear that providing people

with access to the Internet affected the way in which searching for labour market information was undertaken. In order to investigate searching for labour market information at the local level, responses from the survey were combined to provide a composite indicator of 'labour market' searching. The composite indicator is based on the inclusion of those who indicated that they had searched for job opportunities, training or learning opportunities, information about business start up or benefits information in the follow up survey. These respondents were identified as 'labour market searchers' and analysed by local area to provide an indication of the use of the WuC technology for this purpose. The results are presented in Figure 5.3.

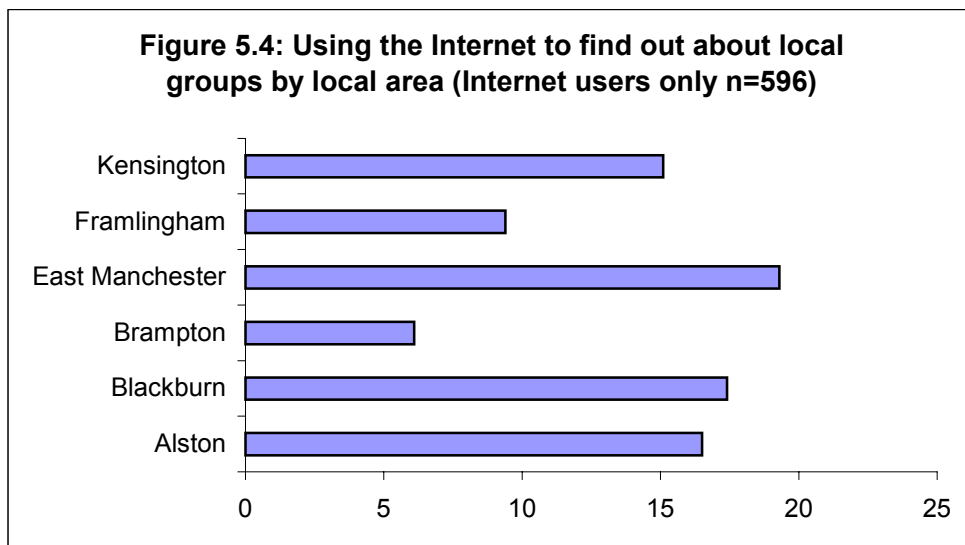


The incidence of using the Internet to search for labour market information is governed by a variety of personal, social and economic factors, some of which may be influenced by the local project through the provision of support services or other information. The data suggests that just over half of respondents had used the Internet to search for at least one type of 'labour market' information. Respondents in Blackburn and Framlingham were most likely to have used the Internet for this type of activity although the reasons for this are unclear. However, respondents in Brampton were far less likely to have used the Internet for these activities than respondents in other areas. In Brampton it appears that the low use of the Internet for such purposes can be attributed with some degree of certainty to a combination of factors including the technology provided through the WuC project, the low level of interest in the Internet, and the lack of local support services integrated with the project.

5.4 Social Cohesion

Within the context of the WuC programme, the development of local content was seen to be a key 'first step' towards fostering greater social cohesion in the communities. However the development of local content proved to be a problematic process for several of the WuC areas due to a combination of factors. In particular, local projects commented unfavorably on the standard of service provided by private sector suppliers. The supplier supporting the development of a community website in three WuC areas did not deliver to the expectations of the local project teams. This was particularly disconcerting in one area which had engaged a number of local people who were interested in developing local content but who subsequently became disenchanted with the experience of working with (to them) ineffective technological applications. Generally the local projects reported that they had to undertake considerable development work to encourage residents to come forward and continue to contribute to the development of local content. This proved to be a time consuming and resource intensive task for several local projects. However all the projects have been able to develop a website or portal and continue to develop local content to varying degrees.

In order to investigate a further aspect of social cohesion a relatively simple composite measure of Internet use was developed from the responses to the survey in the local WuCs. This measure was based on the consolidation of affirmative responses to using the Internet to find information about any of the named groups listed in Table 4.7 and the results are presented in Figure 5.4.



Respondents to the follow up survey were more likely to have used the Internet to find information in East Manchester and least likely to have used it in Brampton. However it is difficult to get a sense of 'connectedness' from the survey of local residents participating in WuC. The discussion groups suggested that there was some impact on local connectedness with examples of people using the equipment to support local voluntary work. However more generally it was the power of the Internet to overcome great distances that was greatly valued. For example

A 60 year old man who had a visual disability had used the Internet to search for information relating to his medical condition and had found some information about a form of medication he had not tried. He had obtained some of this from the United States and reported it to have been useful.

Whilst we cannot make a judgement on the medical efficacy of the treatment, in the opinion of the individual at the time, it had been beneficial. The impression gained from the local discussion groups was whilst there were some examples of using the Internet to contact 'local' people or to use it to develop new 'friends' over the Internet, the majority of people use it to communicate with existing family and friends.

'I've a daughter in New Zealand and I found a website about the place she lived and it helped me to get a sense of her life over there'

5.5 Towards an assessment of deadweight and additionality

The surveys in the WuC areas provide an insight into the experiences of those engaged in the local projects and present a generally positive, if mixed (at the local level), view of the impact of the programme. Arguably of most interest to policy makers is the extent to which WuC has encouraged people to use the Internet for the first time and to subsequently remain online. This is assessed in two ways: first by exploring deadweight within the WuC areas and secondly by comparing the change in activity of residents in the WuC areas with the activity of residents in matched comparison areas.

5.5.1 Encouraging the first steps

The survey of non-participants identified that many residents did not participate in WuC because they already had the necessary technology to access the Internet in the home. However, the baseline survey suggested that some people who already had home Internet access did come forward and receive technology through WuC. Table 5.2 presents survey results associated with previous use of the Internet at home for each of the WuC areas at the time of the baseline survey.

Table 5.2: % who had previously used the Internet by WuC area (All respondents n=1165)

	Had used the Internet at home before WuC (%)
Alston	22.1%
Blackburn	15.3%
Brampton	20.9%
East Manchester	6.8%
Framlingham	27.8%
Kensington	5.1%
Overall	16.2

Baseline survey of WuC respondents 2001 (n=1165)

The data illustrate a wide variation in exposure to the Internet prior to the WuC intervention across the WuC areas. Just over a quarter (27.8%) had used the Internet at home in Framlingham whereas home use was far less common in areas such as East Manchester and Kensington.

To some this might reflect an element of programme deadweight with a substantial minority of respondents already having used the Internet at home. However it appears that residents who had home-access generally used equipment which was below the specification offered through WuC or they wanted technology so that other people in the household could use it. Users of the Internet prior to the WuC intervention formed an

important element of wiring up a *whole* community and therefore represent only a partial indication of deadweight.

However it is (arguably) the impact of the programme on participants who did not previously have home access that is of most interest to policy makers in an assessment of the effectiveness of the programme.

5.5.2 Bridging the 'divide': Comparing residents in WuC and non-WuC areas

Surveys were conducted in four matched comparison areas selected using the process outlined in Appendix 2 of this report. Baseline and follow up surveys were undertaken in the areas about three weeks after the surveys in the matched WuC area. The survey response rates are summarised in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Local survey response

	Baseline N	Follow up N	Response rate
Regent (Kensington)	206	141	68.4%
Cudworth (Brampton)	203	140	72.9%
Wigton (Alston)	208	149	72.6%
Middleton West (East Manchester)	206	136	49.0
Overall	823	566	68.7%

Baseline (n=823) and follow up (n=566) survey of MCA respondents 2001/2002

The sample attrition has been relatively small overall with almost 70% of respondents to the baseline survey contributing to the follow up survey. There is some variation between areas with the lowest response rate apparent in one of the urban areas. This mirrors the experience of the surveys in the WuC projects. The characteristics of the MCA follow up survey sample are compared with those of the WuC survey sample in Table 5.4.

Table .5.4 Characteristics of respondents: Baseline and Follow up in WuC areas

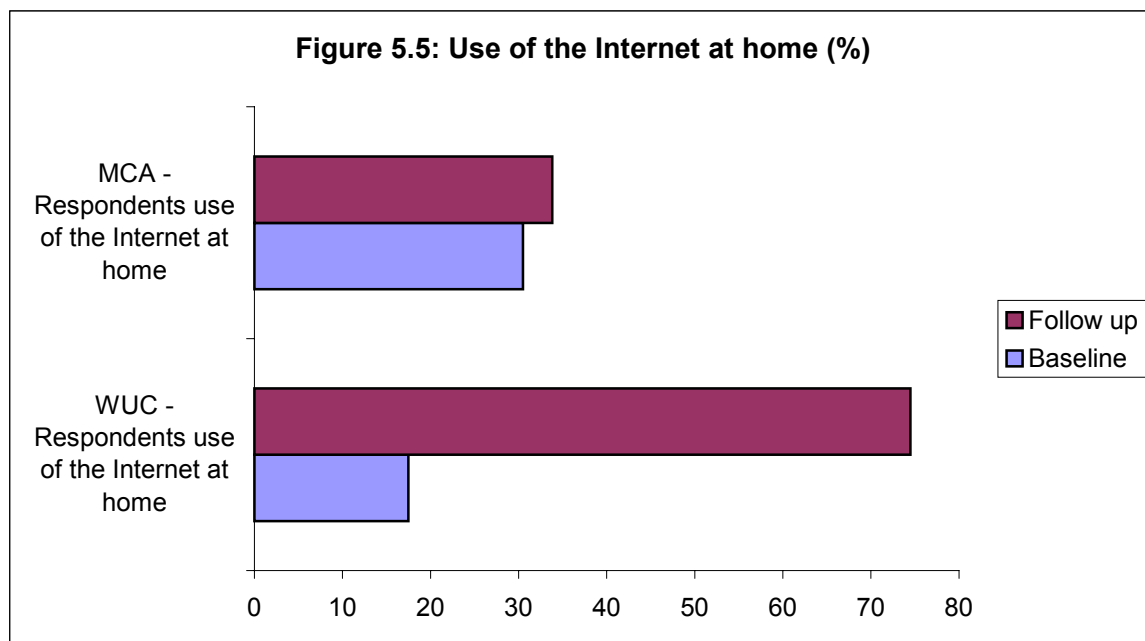
	N=800	N=566
	WuC Follow up	MCA Follow up
Gender		
Male	397 (49.6%)	251 (44.4%)
Female	403 (50.4%)	314 (55.6%)
Ethnicity		
White	782 (94%)	554 (97.9)
Non white	49 (6%)	12 (2.1)
Age		
16-24	36 (4.6%)	49 (8.7%)
25-44	383 (47.9%)	283 (50.1%)
45-64	264 (33.00%)	144 (25.5)
65+	116 (14.5%)	89 (15.8)
Declined to answer	1 (0.1)	
Qualification		
Below NVQ3	523 (65.4%)	361 (63.8)
NVQ3 or above	202 (25.3%)	160 (28.3)
Other	75(9.3%)	45 (8.0%)
Employment Status		
In work	403 (50.4%)	286 (50.5%)
Out of work	242 (30.3%)	151 (26.6%)
Retirement	135 (16.9%)	108 (19.1%)
Other	18 (2.3%)	21 (3.7%)
Health		
Long term illness/disability	121 (14.5%)	84 (14.8%)

The characteristics of the respondents to the follow up survey in the WuC and MCA were broadly similar. There was little difference in relation to qualification, health and employment status. Whilst there were differences in gender, ethnicity and age, these lie within normal sampling error and the conclusion to be drawn is that the samples provide a relatively sound basis for comparison at the programme level.

Comparing the experience of the residents within the WuC and MCA areas is used to gain an initial insight into the additionality and the counterfactual⁵ associated with key measures of the short term objectives associated with the WuC programme namely 'access' and 'training activity'.

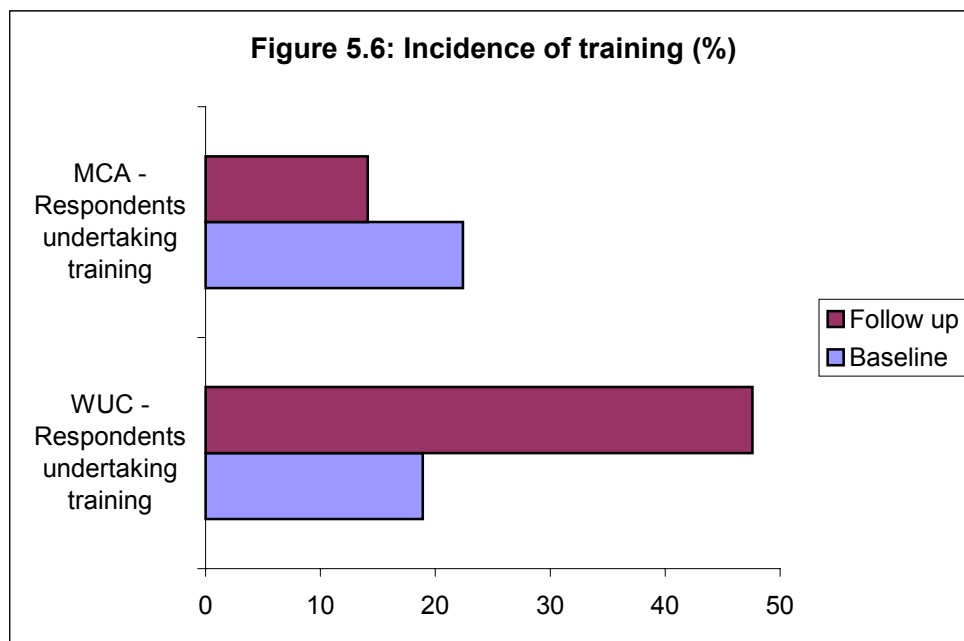
Figure 5.5 illustrates the change in the use of the Internet by respondents to the follow up survey in the WuC and MCA areas.

⁵ the result of non-implementation of the programme intervention



The data illustrates the marked difference in the propensity of residents to use the Internet at home following the WuC programme. As one would expect, this was far greater amongst WuC participants than residents in the MCA. In terms of home use of the Internet, WuC has played a significant role in raising levels of home use to beyond the national average, whilst use in the MCA remained at or just under the national average. 59% of respondents in the WuC area compared with just 9% of respondents in the MCAs used the Internet at home for the first time during the period between the baseline and the follow up survey. Whereas less than a quarter of respondents in the WuCs had not used the technology to access the Internet the majority of respondents in the MCA (59.6%) remain non-users at home.

Similar positive outcomes associated with the incidence of training are apparent when the experience of residents in WuC areas is contrasted with the experiences of those in non-WuC areas. Whilst the proportion of respondents in the MCA undertaking training decreased in the time between the baseline and the follow up survey, the training activity undertaken by respondents in the WuC areas increased dramatically. This is illustrated in Figure 5.6.



The survey data clearly indicates that residents in a WuC area were far more likely to have undertaken some training than residents in the MCAs. Whilst over half of the respondents in the WuC and MCA had not undertaken any training in the twelve months prior to the baseline survey, nor in the 6-9 months between the baseline and the follow up, these 'non-active trainers' are much more likely to live in a non-WuC area. Whilst almost half the follow up respondents in the WuC (45.4%) did not undertake training in the twelve months prior to WuC nor during the period between the baseline and the follow up survey, almost three quarters of respondents in the MCAs reported that they did not undertake any training in the same period. This suggests that the way in which the projects funded under WuC were designed had some degree of success in attracting those who we have classed for the purposes of this analysis as 'non active trainers'.

5.6 Section Summary

This section of the report has provided an assessment of programme performance based on comparison between WuC areas. The assessment suggests that:

- There was a wide variation in the propensity of respondents to use the technology between WuC areas. In three areas more than 90% of recipients used the technology to access the Internet. However, in two areas almost 50% had not used it to access the Internet.

- The explanations for reasons for non-use are many. However a contributory factor appears to be the technology platform with those using set-top boxes and recycled PCs far less likely than those using new PCs to have accessed the Internet.
- There was also a wide variation in training activity, which is at least partially explained by the structure of the local project. Those areas which integrated training activity within the WuC project exhibited the highest incidence of training reported by participants.
- However the impact of training activity on the propensity to use the technology is not clear as those not receiving training were almost as likely to use the WuC technology to access the Internet as those who had not received training.

The comparison of experiences of respondents in the WuC areas and the MCAs provides an insight into the additionality associated with the programme:

- 59% of respondents in the WuC (compared with 9% of respondents in the MCA) had used the Internet for the first time in the 6-9 month period between the baseline and the follow up survey.
- Whilst almost half the respondents in the WuC areas had not undertaken any training in the twelve months prior to the baseline survey nor during the 6-9 month period between the baseline and the follow up survey, a far greater proportion (71%) had not undertaken any training in the MCA in the same period.

6 REFLECTIONS ON DELIVERY (2000-2002) AND LOOKING FORWARD

The WuC programme funding period concluded in December 2002 and there are clearly issues associated with policy and practice to be considered at the national and local level. Some of these issues are introduced below:

6.1 Policy design and development

The genesis of the programme occurred in the late 1990s at a time when interest surrounding the potential contribution of technology, and particularly the Internet, had reached a new summit. The programme was originally based on the relatively simple idea of providing people in disadvantaged communities with a range of technologies which enabled access to the Internet and subsequently 'testing' the use and value of these technologies. As the intervention was further developed, this experimental aspiration was linked with more directive policy aims within the WuC framework as interest in specific outcomes emerged to varying degrees. Furthermore WuC was a programme which provided an example in practice of the development of more collaborative approaches between national Government Departments and local partners. Two issues are explored below, first, the role of aims and objectives within the programme and, secondly, the timeframe for implementation:

6.1.1 Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the programme and the local projects were multi-dimensional and not always articulated precisely. Key aims associated with the 'digital divide', learning, employability and social cohesion are based on concepts which can be used in a variety of contexts with a range of meanings and as a result they lack clarity and precision at the operational level. Overall there was a reluctance to engage in the process of goal refinement in the early stages of the programme development. This was ostensibly due to concerns that the process may have stifled the more innovative aspects of the programme and local project development. The common ground between the objectives of all the local projects and the objectives of the programme as a whole was their broad and imprecise articulation, a characteristic of current policy identified by others (Walker 2001). The linkages between WuC, whilst arguably clear at the strategic level, given common policy objectives, were often far from clear and established at the local level. This presents clear challenges for those seeking to 'join up' services at the operational level.

The absence of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely objectives (SMART) associated with the aims of the programme inevitably presented challenges for the evaluator and policy makers at the local and national level who sought to assess the extent to which the local projects and the programme as a whole were successful. Equally, in the absence of a broader established strategic framework, their absence inhibits the development of a sustainable partnership at the local level. Given the government's current emphasis on devolving responsibility, this may be an area of considerable interest to policy makers.

6.1.2 Timeframe

The extent to which the aims of the programme have been achieved needs to be considered within the context and timing of the development and delivery of the programme as a whole. The development of initial project bids was a time consuming process in some instances, as local projects sought to gain agreement from partners to act as the accountable body and to secure revenue funding to enable implementation of the project. The recognition of the need to comply with a raft of regulations further affected the time taken to plan and agree detailed implementation. Local projects were also asked to consider further dimensions within the programme framework which were not articulated at the outset of the programme. These included the development of home-school links and the sustainability of the WuC at the end of the capital funding period. The contracts for phase 2 projects were not agreed until July 2001, as against December 2000 in the original implementation plan for the programme, leaving a condensed time for delivery (circa eight months) at the local level. WuC is not the only ICT based policy intervention to face these challenges (c.f. Hall Aitken Associates 2001) and the planning of policy which seeks to use technology to encourage learning and alleviate social exclusion should recognise the time it takes to plan, resource and implement such programmes.

6.2 Overcoming the 'divides'

One of the central concepts underpinning WuC has been the notion of a 'digital divide'. However this is a multidimensional term and it is increasingly recognised that there is not one 'divide' but many. 'Divides' are associated with the ownership and use of different technologies, access to learning opportunities and a range of hardware, software and information processing skills and are often interrelated. Furthermore, as steps are

taken to bridge one divide, new divides in terms of technology ownership and use, resources, content, skills and capabilities surface. It has been suggested that technological fixes will solve some problems but create others and leave many unaffected (Gorard and Selwyn 1999). Within the context of the WuC programme the Internet is seen to offer great potential for the delivery of educational and government services. However history provides a cautionary tale in respect to the role of technology and education. Radio, telephone, television and cable were each in turn predicted to be the next great educational technology both for the classroom and for at home instruction yet all evolved into media whose primary function is entertainment (Light 2001).

There are examples of 'good practice' within WuC in terms of the delivery of flexible training and learning but challenges remain for those designing, developing and funding training interventions to encourage lifelong learning (LSC 2002, Clarke 2002a). This is particularly the case for new or novice users of ICT who often require considerable support if they are to make the most of the opportunities the Internet presents and not to have negative preconceptions reinforced through their initial experiences. The ability to use and manipulate technology and recognise and obtain the required information along with the skills to be able to organise and transfer information into productive knowledge are fundamental components of 'access' and just as important as technical user skills (Liff 2000). Appropriate skills also include the ability to apply and communicate this knowledge to meet personal, economic, political and social needs and goals (Gordo 2000). Encouraging this practice will help those who are unconvinced of the value of the Internet to recognise the positive contribution that it can make to their lives.

Whilst there is little doubt that understanding, skills and knowledge of the Internet combine to produce interested users, there remains a substantial proportion of residents in the WuCs who are yet to be convinced of the value of the Internet. It should be of concern that in spite of the provision of 'free technology in the home' a substantial minority of people remain 'uninterested' in the Internet. Whilst policy appears to be moving on towards a divide on the basis of bandwidth (Strategy Unit 2002), there is a concern that those most excluded will remain at the foot of the 'technological ladder' without taking the first step. The retention of a core of non-users of Internet based services has major implications for both overcoming social exclusion and the delivery of e-government services and needs to be retained as a focus for policy.

The role of learning as a process of development at the individual and community level is well recognised, although engaging learners in disadvantaged communities, just as engaging participants in WuC projects, remains a challenge. It is suggested that policies to support networks, communities and structures that positively support learning represent very solid approaches to bolster employability and social cohesion (OECD 1999), although funding of interventions and encouraging continuous learning remains a challenge. Whilst there is some evidence emerging through the evaluation research of local connections being made or maintained through the WuC project and use of the Internet, the main value for residents in these communities lies in its capability to transcend distance. This clearly has implications for those seeking to use it to regenerate a specific local area. The development of 'virtual' and 'real' communities around common interests and values lie at the heart of this approach, although engaging local people in the process, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas will undoubtedly prove to be a significant challenge. However the nature of the impact of the Internet on 'community' and 'communities' is unclear and lies on contested ground more generally (Hampton and Welman 2001, Gardner and Oswald 2001, Nie 2000, Putnam 2000).

The future appears uncertain for several of the local projects. The majority of the projects in the urban areas are embedded within existing regeneration partnerships and their continuation in one form or another as a local 'demonstration' or 'pathfinder' appears assured at least in the short term. The remaining projects are dependent upon securing revenue funding or developing revenue streams to secure their future in the medium term. The WuC programme has illustrated some of the difficulties associated with wiring up 'a whole community' within the policy framework and this experience has been captured to inform policy development and good practice. Whilst the evaluation has captured a range of positive outcomes (which are variable at the local level), full cost-effectiveness assessment and comparison with other policy interventions would need to be made prior to any national roll-out of the programme.

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Appendix 1

Case Studies

Alston Moor – November 2002

Context

Alston Moor is located on the eastern edge of Cumbria more than twenty miles from the nearest town centres. Approximately 2000 people are resident in Alston Moor, mainly in three small areas; Alston, Garrigill and Nenthead.

The remoteness of Alston Moor is a disadvantage when local people try to access services as public transport links are limited and diminishing and more than a quarter of households do not own a car. Unemployment is both structural and seasonal, resulting from a decline in traditional industries such as mining and agriculture and seasonal variations in demand related to tourism. There are few employers in the area, the largest private sector employer being a manufacturing company employing 50 people. Many residents are dependent upon two or three part time or temporary jobs to sustain their income throughout the year; however, a relatively high proportion of the population are retired. Alston Moor has a 'supersparse' population which marks it out as an area least likely to be developed by suppliers of broadband.

Voluntary Action Cumbria (VAC) developed the bid for Wired Up Community funding which was submitted in November 2000 in an effort to harness ICT to support local economic development, strengthen social cohesion and provide easier access to services. After negotiation over a considerable period of time, Cumbria County Council agreed to become the accountable body for the project.

Management and Organisation

A range of project partners were identified in the original bid. These included:

- Alston Moor Parish Council
- Eden District Council
- Cumbria County Council
- North West RDA (NWDA)
- Cumbria CREDITS
- Cumbria and Lancashire Education On-Line
- Eutelsat, PLATO

As the project developed representatives from some of these organisations played a key role in the management board overseeing the development and implementation of the project. Membership includes the County Council, whose main role has been to ensure the financial accountability of the initial Capital Grant through adherence to standing orders in the purchasing process. The management board has, however, had a strong local community representation. The core membership of the management board is shown below

- Community Representatives (Chair, Deputy Chair, Project manager)
- Cumbria County Council
- Voluntary Action Cumbria
- Department for Education and Skills

The emphasis of the Cybermoor project to date has been on the roll out of the technology into residents' homes and the development of a community website. This has limited the involvement of some partners (e.g. PLATO) associated with the development of on-line learning services to date. The CREDITS Centre has been involved as a local supplier of IT training but is not represented on the management board. The role of the NWDA and Eutelsat has been limited to date; however they have become engaged latterly as the development of the broadband infrastructure is being addressed.

The management board has met regularly to review progress, discuss developments and define priorities. The Chair was commended by stakeholders for his handling of the management board, which is recognised by all participants as a decision making forum enabling 'free and frank discussion'. Both local and national government members have adopted a light touch whilst actively participating in a range of discussions which have enabled the local project to develop its own agenda. A consultant funded by the DfES has contributed to the management board on an ad hoc basis. He has supported the development of the project at key points in its emergence, providing a useful 'sounding board' and an 'unjaundiced, objective' view of a variety of issues confronted by the project at various times. The local community hold key roles in the management board (Chair, Deputy and project manager) which provides a sound basis for the representation of local interests.

Core staff, financed through a variety of revenue sources, have been employed to work on the development and implementation of the Alston Cybermoor project. These include a project manager, project administrator, ICT support officer and more recently an equal opportunities co-ordinator and a web content manager. The project also engaged the services of local freelancers to carry out distinct pieces of work such as compiling the broadband information booklet and assessing the usability of the website.

Engaging the local community

Alston is recognised locally as a relatively small and coherent community with an effective informal network for sharing information. Informal networking coupled with widespread distribution of information leaflets into local shops and public houses ensured general awareness of the project. The project team also organised two rounds of information fairs in Garrigill, Nenthead and Alston to promote training, the portal, hardware available and broadband. There was much local interest in the project and the local paper ran several articles which raised awareness and promoted the project. The project team, assisted by volunteers, undertook research in the local community to assess demand for technology in the home and identified a high level of interest as well as a range of constraints/barriers (including current use of computer in the home, age, health problems and cost).

The project team have promoted widespread community involvement. Management board members have been active in the local community throughout the project, talking about Cybermoor and encouraging people to get involved. Team members have visited local schools and a competition was run with a prize for the best website design to be produced by the children. There are plans to include the design on the Cybermoor project website.

Several working groups, drawing largely on members of the local community (but also including interested experts from the region e.g. technical assistance from Lancaster University) have been established to undertake research, develop implementation plans and carry out implementation tasks. The working groups include:

- Technical support
- Equal opportunities

- Portal/website development
- broadband
- Alston Digital Arts / broadband content
- Community Enterprise

These groups are dynamic entities developing their own priorities and solutions, with members of the local community often contributing to more than one group. Engaging volunteers with the appropriate skills and retaining volunteer commitment over time have been key challenges faced by the project.

A major effort to support inclusion of people with disabilities was made through the 'Equal Opportunities Working Group'. Data collected through the WuC registration process suggests that about 8 per cent of residents have a limited physical or sensory ability. An equal opportunities policy was agreed and a systematic process developed to support it in the initial stages of the project. It was actively championed and special resources (including a budget of £12k) were allocated. Where an individual had a limiting ability (identified at registration), a member of the project team would visit and assess how adaptive technology could help. Every effort is being made to meet individual needs, for example larger monitors or voice recognition software to help the partially sighted, various input devices to help those with limited hand co-ordination. Further one to one assistance was provided in the home to support initial use of the technology (often two to three visits).

Technology, installation and security

The criteria for eligibility was residency in the eligible area and the resident being able to demonstrate that they did not currently possess a PC of similar specification to that being provided through the WuC project. The technologies provided to the residents were new multi-media PCs (1Ghz processor, 128RAM) with analogue dial-up to the Internet. Each computer was supplied with a new printer and software including Windows XP, MS Works, Tracking software, CyberSentinel and Norton Anti-Virus. Three months free Internet access was provided to all residents. 660 PCs have been provided to residents' homes.

Several issues emerged throughout the procurement and installation stages. For example, an initial aspiration of the project was to consult the community widely about

the nature of the technology wanted. However difficulties soon became apparent as many residents were unable to express an informed view as to the importance of technical attributes such as 'speed of access to the internet' or 'processing capacity'.

Efforts were made to future proof the technology by adopting Windows XP, however this proved problematic as some hardware drivers and some software (notably Anti-Virus) did not run effectively on the system and whilst updates could be downloaded from appropriate websites, this was beyond the capability of many novice users.

The Cybermoor project team were keen for members of the local community to install and support the technology and this led to tough negotiations with the equipment supplier who wanted to use their established network in the region. In the end a local company carried out installations on behalf of the supplier, who provided appropriate training locally.

The development of broadband has also been a relatively long and somewhat uncertain process as the Cybermoor team initially focussed in the sourcing and roll out of technology and the development of the local website. More recently suppliers were invited to tender for 'the broadband project' and Gaia Technologies were commissioned to develop a broadband radio-based communications infrastructure. broadband access has been developed in Nenthead and roll out for full coverage of Alston Moor is planned for December 2002.

Training and support

A combination of support structures has been adopted. However the relatively low level of IT literacy in the area continues to be recognised as a challenge to be addressed. The project developed a set of fact sheets for users on 'Health and Safety', 'CyberSense for Families' and 'Preparing for the Delivery of your Computer'. A user handbook 'Getting started at your community website' was developed by the project team and supplied to the residents in place of the PC manufacturer's handbook which did not address many issues. All the fact sheets were reviewed and evaluated by members of the community in advance of publication. Anecdotal evidence suggests that novice users would rather contact the local helpline than read the handbook.

The project team recognise that the level of support required by new or novice users in the home was underestimated. Often home visits are required and one-to-one support to complete what to an experienced user is a basic task (e.g. using a mouse, opening an attachment).

Technical support is provided both through the supplier helpline and by members of the local community. The supplier telephone helpline is perceived as industry standard but offering a relatively poor level of service and problem rectification. The project is working with the supplier to facilitate problem diagnosis and solution by local residents with the necessary skills but administrative requirements are currently onerous and discourage the development of the local service. Nevertheless the project team and the supplier continue to work together to develop this approach.

Problems with the 'computer or internet not working' reported by the local community often reflect the level of user ability rather than a problem with the technology. The local project employed a local 'IT troubleshooter' and 50 local people with various levels and experience of IT use volunteered to provide support. However, managing and co-ordinating the activities of 50 people with diverse capabilities proved to be a difficult task. When helpers were unable to solve problems they were referred back to the project team and a bottleneck developed. The number of volunteers has diminished to core group of five and this aspect of support remains valued though generally under-resourced.

Offering support in the home (through 'buddies') is seen as an effective but resource intensive means of dealing with user-problems. As the project developed, and partly through necessity, the project team stopped trying to respond immediately to user problems, adopting instead an approach which suggested that they would get back to users the following day and discuss the problem. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this approach has been successful to some degree as often when a member of the team returns the call the user has found someone else (often a friend or younger member of the family) to help them to overcome the problem. Recently the project has instigated a daily surgery (Monday - Friday 10.00-12.00) and encouraged residents to attend. However, whilst this has dampened demand for troubleshooting support further, the dangers of inexperienced users becoming disenchanted and subsequently underutilising (or not using) the technology are recognised by the Cybermoor team.

More formal training opportunities have been promoted through the project. For example, learndirect is signposted through the website. Personal links have been developed with the manager of the local training centre (CREDITS) situated in the local primary school. The CREDITS Centre provides a range of courses from Computers for the terrified to European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). The influx of WuC technology created significant short term demand for introductory courses accredited through Carlisle College. The most popular has been a three hour introduction which introduces the skills required to access programs, type emails and surf the net. This course costs £5. Up to 200 local residents have gone on a course related to the WuC technology at the CREDITS centre. The established Adult Education Service in the Secondary School has also provided courses. However whilst demand for the introductory courses has been stimulated through the introduction of computers into people's homes the demand for more structured learning such as NVQ level 2 'Integrated Applications' and ECDL is below the level of the previous year. This is partially explained by the withdrawal of funding available through Individual Learning Accounts. These courses require considerably more investment of time and money than the introductory course costing about £150 and requiring an input of two nights a week for several weeks (140 hours). The CREDITS Centre is currently expanding provision developing a service to encourage basic skills using on-line Internet based learning software (PLATO).

Local content development

The development of a local portal (website) was a key aspiration for the Cybermoor project and was secondary only to the roll out of the technology into residents' homes. The management boards wanted local people to be able to contribute content to the portal without having to go through a lot of training. This would keep the website up-to-date by spreading the work of content development across a group of volunteers. The system needed to be flexible enough to allow users to contribute content while maintaining easy navigation for users and a standard look and feel. Seventy local organisations which might have been interested in developing their web presence were identified and it was hoped that a representative from each would be trained so that they would be able to develop and edit their own content.

A working group was formed to develop the Cybermoor portal and a site has been developed (www.cybermoor.org). However the development process has been fraught with difficulty. At the core of the problems encountered lies the relationship between the private sector contractors employed to develop the website and the Cybermoor partnership. At the time of commissioning the work the suppliers came with a good reputation and a working model. However a combination of factors contributed to an unsatisfactory experience for the Cybermoor partnership which included:

- Uncertainty about the 'shape' of the Alston website at the outset of the development process resulting, with hindsight, in insufficient requirements specification
- Technical problems: for example, insufficient server space, inadequate databases and lack of 'basic' functionality and services
- Service levels, e.g. delays in sending out usernames and passwords, no helpline available

The agreement has subsequently been terminated by mutual consent and the local partnership has found a new supplier who appears to be much more responsive to the interests of the local community. A revised Cybermoor portal was launched in October 2002.

Over 30 web reporters have contributed to the portal, being a mixture of community representatives and public sector workers. The website now has a user-friendly content management system and volunteers complete training courses in writing for the web, image manipulation and design before receiving passwords to enable them to publish information.

The schools have been heavily involved as pupils have published stories about days out, flooding and favourite websites. The project team are now setting targets for content development – bringing on more web reporters and working with local groups to publish pages in the Local Information Directory.

All users could check their e-mail and join in discussions via the portal. Some topics generated a massive response (for example, over 100 postings on CCTV for Alston).

Meeting project objectives

A range of objectives associated with the WuC programme were articulated in the original proposal for Alston Cybermoor.

Objectives	Achievement
Improve access to ICT in public places and provide assistance to users to overcome any fears they have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 public access internet points developed • Massive increase in numbers attending courses run at the local CREDITS centre • Project team includes a local ICT support officer who supports users who cannot be helped via the hardware helpline • Specialist equipment has been provided to enable people with disabilities and other special needs to access the internet
Test accessibility of Government resources especially in relation to employment and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website has links to central and local government websites and local school websites • Local government workers and the police have used the website to disseminate and receive information on issues such as CCTV and funding for projects
Help people to find work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local job vacancies advertised via the website • Teleworking opportunities promoted via the project • Project has created 6 jobs directly • 3 volunteers have found jobs having helped out on the project • 35 jobs have been supported in the 25 local companies that have worked as contractors or sub contractors for the project
Encourage Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 297 people have received ICT training at the local CDC • Large numbers of people have taught themselves how to use a PC
Deliver government and community information services in innovative ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website is being used by a number of agencies to provide information to the community • Information on road conditions is provided by SMS
Support the work of Government and European programmes (SRB, Obj2, LEADER+ Programme, Rural Development Programme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the project team support the local Alston Moor Partnership which is managing European Objective 2 funding and the Vital Villages Programme. • The project also provides ICT advice and support to other local agencies and partnerships such as SRB funded Distinctly Cumbrian
Engage in bottom up community regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people have made key decisions on the project • Capacity within the community has been improved as volunteers have developed skills in team working, appraisal of tenders, technical issues and financial management
Improve community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website has improved communication within Alston through the discussions section. • People have been able to air views and recognise that not everyone shares their beliefs about local issues

Initial outcomes to date

The programme evaluation drew on research conducted in each local WuC. A two stage survey was conducted with 163 people who had originally registered for the project. A follow up survey was conducted 6 months later. 118 people contributed to the follow up survey and their experiences provide an indication of the initial outcomes associated with the objectives of the WuC programme:

- The vast majority of respondents (91.5%) receiving the technology have used it to access the Internet

- Almost one in three respondents (31.4%) had received some training to introduce them to using the Internet
- 44 per cent of internet users have used it to search for labour market information
- A significant minority (16.5%) of Internet users had used it to find out about or communicate with local community groups

Project summary

Alston Cybermoor is one of the smallest Wired-up Communities in terms of the population covered. It is also the most geographically isolated. A defining characteristic of the organisation of the project is the leadership provided by people drawn from the local community who hold key roles on the management board overseen by a simple partnership structure. The project initially focussed on the roll out of the technology to residents' homes and about 700 PCs have been delivered (circa 60% of households). Ongoing negotiations with the hardware supplier have resulted in local people being trained to install and provide support. The Cybermoor project has taken considerable steps to support equal opportunities with particular regard to meeting the needs of the physically disabled. Residents have been encouraged to undertake ICT skills development and the local training centres have seen a dramatic increase in demand for introductory sessions in the short term but no increase in demand for longer, more structured courses. The relatively 'low' ICT capability of many in the community and the resource intensiveness of delivering effective support in the home remain a challenge for the project. The development of the local website has been problematic. However the project team appear to have overcome these problems and developed a site which meets their expectations and those of the community. broadband access is now being developed and this is being undertaken using a wireless system.

Future Challenges: sustainability

Two of the key partners, Cumbria County Council and the DfES, are set to withdraw from the Cybermoor management board once the capital funding provided through WuC has been spent. The funding of a core project team to oversee implementation and drive further development is in place until the end of March 2004 (NW Development Agency broadband Fund). There are short to medium term costs including insurance,

repairs, maintenance and updating of the technology which will be met by revenue generated by the broadband service.

The Cybermoor partnership is currently exploring the efficacy of developing a Community Enterprise to sustain and develop the project further. Current pricing structures envisage monthly payment for broadband services at £15 (standard package), £25 (including £10 for re-investment in the local schools) and a £5 reduced rate for the unemployed, although its sustainability is largely dependent upon how many people sign up for the service once it is available.

Further avenues are being explored to use the technology to further economic development in the area (e.g. to develop and market the area as a place for teleworking). However the development of unique, tangible products or services remains a significant challenge for Cybermoor.

List of contributors

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Carmel Smith	Equal Opportunities
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Allan Frater	Community Representative
Johan Rossouw	CREDITS Centre Manager.

Blackburn East – November 2002

Context

The Blackburn WuC is located to the east of the centre of a post-industrial town in the north of England. The WuC area straddles three local authority district wards, which lie in the worst 10 per cent of wards in terms of deprivation nationally and suffer from multiple deprivation and there is a high proportion of residents from minority ethnic communities within the area, predominantly Indian or Pakistani. The area presents a mix of housing tenures. It is part of an SRB5 and Objective 2 area and lies within the Blackburn with Darwen Education Action Zone.

Blackburn East Area Community Help (BEACH) Partnership is a formally constituted community-based umbrella organisation (drawing together a number of local community based organisations) working to develop the social, recreational and economic status of East Blackburn. BEACH Partnership developed and submitted a bid for funding which included Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council acting as the Accountable Body. Considerable effort was made to engage relevant local organisations and an initial steering group was drawn together by BEACH Partnership in order to develop the bid document. The project received substantial technical support in the development stages from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and their Digital Envoy.

Management and Organisation

A range of project partners was identified in the original bid. These included:

- The BEACH Partnership (Chair)
- Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council (including the LEA and Life Long Learning)
- Blackburn Regeneration Partnership
- Blackburn College
- Blackburn Partnership (a consortium of local businesses)
- Bootstrap Enterprises (a local organisation committed to building and supporting community enterprise)
- learndirect

Once the project was approved, a Project Board was formally established and a written constitution developed. The Board chair and a majority of Board members are specified as being BEACH representatives so as to maintain a strong community focus to the work of the Board. The Board meets bi-monthly with a smaller Executive Committee meeting in between. The Board undertook all major decisions.

Identifying sources of revenue funding to support the capital investment provided by the DfES proved to be a considerable challenge. The Council was crucial to the identification of sources of funding, which included accessing SRB5 and ERDF funding streams. Revenue funding was used in part to employ a small project team to deliver the project locally. This comprised a project manager, project officer, web manager and administrative assistant.

Blackburn College has played a key role in the development of the project, particularly in relation to the development of the training elements.

Engaging the local community

BEACH Partnership themselves are firmly embedded in the community and have been engaged in community activity for more than five years. They have carried out a community survey to identify the needs of the area, which showed that local people wanted more and easier access to ICT and learning facilities.

Once the project was underway, a series of awareness raising initiatives were undertaken. These included leafleting all households in the eligible area with information and a freephone telephone number, as well as a public launch event at the local Community Centre, press releases and posters in prominent local centres (for example community centres, post offices etc).

Residents were invited to ring a call centre (freephone number) operated by learndirect to register their interest in getting a computer. Computers were then allocated on a first come first served basis. The criteria for eligibility were that people had to be over 18 years of age, live in the area for at least three months, be the householder and had to have a live telephone line that was capable of making outgoing calls.

By the time the project had been operational for eight months, one thousand PCs had been installed in homes. However requests to be included in the scheme diminished and it was felt that the area had been 'saturated'. To investigate reasons for non-participation, follow up research was undertaken amongst residents who had not taken up the offer in the WuC area. Whilst this only achieved a response rate of ten per cent, it highlighted a number of significant concerns, mainly around the cost of the technology or people feeling they were too old.

A decision was taken to widen the WuC eligible area (the original area covered 3000 households) to include the adjacent Shadsworth and Audley/Queens Park areas (covering 4800 households). The project was launched in the second area in May 2002, and 1400 enquiries were received within the first few days and by the third day the hotline had to be closed. By the end of October 2002 all of the WuC computers had been installed in the homes of local residents (circa. 2,500).

The BEonline Wired Up Community User Group was established to support the project and to provide a link between the community and the project team. The group acts as a sounding board and a mechanism to provide ongoing feedback from the community to the project board and WuC staff, as well as acting as volunteer web editors. The group of around ten volunteers meets on a monthly basis, and has been a useful 'sounding board' for the project team.

Technology, installation and security

The initial consultation with residents in the development of the project revealed a strong preference for Internet access via PCs rather than set top boxes. The project was therefore to be based upon delivering dial-up Internet access through PCs, free at the point of delivery, with appropriate software and printers and three months free 24/7 Internet access.

The original WuC bid was developed on the basis of refurbished machines. However, the experiences of the phase one WuC project highlighted the problems of using recycled machines, and consequently the specification was changed to new machines (600 Mhz processor, 128 RAM, 20 Gb Hard disc, 56K modem). Machines were installed with a range of software titles, including tracking software for security reasons. Tenders

were invited from suppliers, and one was selected on the basis of their experience of delivery, installation and setting up machines to be Internet ready in people's homes. The company was also contracted to provide initial awareness training in the home.

The initial procedure was designed so that recipients were registered and given initial training before getting a delivery date for their computer thus ensuring that people attended the awareness sessions before getting their computer. However, this led to a number of problems related to being able to properly handle awareness training at the same time as allocating and arranging computer delivery dates. Also it was found that because of the delay between delivery of the awareness training and arrival of the computer in people's homes the awareness training effectiveness was compromised. Consequently the process was changed so that the machines were delivered password protected and left turned off. Recipients had then to attend their awareness training, after delivery of their computer, at which they received their password.

The project has sought to meet the needs of local people with disabilities. For example, residents with impaired vision were provided with large screens and text reading software. This has not been undertaken on a systematic basis, as the project team felt they did not have the necessary skills to undertake this work, but relied on participants identifying their own needs.

A number of other issues emerged around the company contracted to supply and deliver the PCs. The company employed to deliver the PCs subcontracted the work to a local company. The delivery and installation work was not always carried out to the required standard. In addition, there were significant logistical problems around arranging for a large number of machines to be delivered at times that were convenient for recipients. There have been further issues around the reliability of the machines, as they were 'bottom of the market' PCs and there have been a number of technical problems with their capacity.

A local ISP (Internet Service Provider) was selected by the project. The project arranged to provide three months anytime free access to the Internet for WuC participants, paid for by WuC. This was designed to enable new computer users to enjoy getting used to the Internet with out worrying about the cost. When their three

months free period expired they would be better placed to make an informed decision about the sort of Internet connection that would suit them best.

The area contained a number of existing cable subscribers. However, the supplier was unwilling to operate through the chosen local ISP or to change their systems to allow the WuC project to pay them to provide the first three months internet connection free to their customers. They also insisted that they were only willing to connect WuC participants to the Internet via their digital TV set top box broadband system costing an extra £14.99/month over and above the set top box package cost. Furthermore, this could only be done if the customer signed up to a twelve months contract from the start and paid by direct debit. This caused considerable delay in being able to work with those that preferred a cable connection. Consequently the project had to renegotiate the personal loan agreements already signed up to and find an alternative mechanism of compensating cable customers for not being given the first three months free Internet connection that BT connected customers were able to enjoy. Towards the end of the project, and after considerable amounts of lobbying, the cable company agreed to provide "dial Up" connection to the internet as well as their broadband system via their TV set top boxes.

In terms of BT customers, the local ISP made arrangements to work through the BT telephone system, and three months free access was made available through PCs and dial up connection. An innovative solution has been developed to encourage Internet use on termination of the free period through 'Splash Plastic' (a plastic card, which can be topped up with cash at local outlets including shops, post offices and so on).

A further issue emerged around Internet access largely due to the demand created by the influx of a large amount of new Internet users in a small area. Additional ports had to be purchased from the local ISP in order to achieve improve the probability of first time dial up connection for local users.

There are no immediate plans for broadband, as not all of the WuC machines have the necessary capability. The project board has looked at the possibilities in terms of wireless connection, but these plans have not been developed as yet.

Training and support

Most of the training delivered through the project was organised and developed by Blackburn College. There have been a number of strands to the training and support available through the programme. Technical support has been provided through a local company however there have been issues associated with the level of service and support provided which is viewed as insufficient for inexperienced users.

All recipients of computers had to attend an initial awareness session before they were eligible to receive a WuC computer. Around 2500 people attended the initial awareness training sessions. The original intention was that these would be delivered in people's homes, once the WuC technology had been delivered. However, due to concerns around personal safety, logistics and the resource-intensive nature of delivering training in the home, the initial awareness sessions were delivered at the local community centre which had been fitted with a suite of laptops provided by the College. Home-based training was provided for a limited number of WuC participants who were partially sighted or who had mobility problems.

Regular 'drop in' sessions have also been provided by Blackburn College at which tutors were available to answer problems or to provide additional help and training. These were provided on a non-bookable basis at first. However, some of the drop in sessions were so well attended (at one session in excess of 40 people turned up) a booking system was introduced.

All WuC participants were encouraged to go on to take further training. Forty WuC participants went on to take ECDL and 20 have completed CLAIT. Evidence from the College does suggest the project has stimulated significant interest in training. Figures suggest that participation in training in the WuC area is now relatively high, with participation rates now on a par with more affluent areas. In terms of current participation in training, 181 people from the WuC area have expressed an interest in undertaking further training this year. Of these, 57 are currently on a waiting list due to lack of resources to deliver training. Classes are currently being run at four community-based locations. The College has a target of 400 to 500 participants from the area by the end of the year, which they are confident of meeting, as courses have not yet been publicised.

Despite the various training and support mechanisms established by the WuC project, it is clear that these have not always been sufficient to meet the needs of inexperienced users. It is recognised that the training and support requirements of new users should not be underestimated and there continues to be demand for IT training amongst residents.

An important and innovative feature of the project has been the involvement of local people in delivering training. Before the project commenced local people from the WuC area were recruited to support existing College lecturers. 26 local people expressed an interest in supporting the delivery of training. Participants undertook ECDL and City and Guilds Part 1. Some participants did subsequently drop out due to the effect on their benefits of being paid as part time staff. Five of the local trainers have gone on to take City and Guilds Part 2 and are now working as part time lecturers for the College.

Website development

The development of a project website (www.Beonline.org.uk), with appropriate local content, was seen from the start of the project as being important, particularly as a means of engaging local people in the project. A full time web editor was appointed to oversee the development of the site, assist in the development of content and links and moderate the site.

A community website has been developed incorporating a mixture of information, links to community information and links to statutory agencies. Information is included on local activities, crime, work related information, benefits, housing, health and help and advice with money. The Council has used the site to carry out consultation on key issues (for example consultation on housing). The website has also been used by the Council to broaden an existing online consultation project.

The project is also working in partnership with Hansard on the development of a consultation project around the regeneration of a local park. A live moderated discussion is due to be launched soon on the BEonline website about the future plans for the park. It is envisaged that the lessons from the exercise will be used in the development of further consultation mechanisms through the BEonline website and

more generally throughout the Borough. Four local schools have been linked to the website and eight others are in the process of becoming engaged with it.

There have, however, been a number of issues around the development of the site which have led to tensions between the project team and the private sector providers. In hindsight many of the problems are seen by the project team to stem from a lack of experience which resulted in a situation where the project was tied into a development agreement, which has not provided software which is fully functional. The contract with the supplier has recently been renegotiated and new software programmes developed which it is hoped will give an enhanced degree of operability, ease of use and appeal.

7.1 Meeting project objectives

The remit of the project as outlined in the original bid was to :

‘provide every home that wants it in a specific deprived community of Blackburn with a PC and affordable dial up connectivity to the Internet together with local focused resources that will be made available online during the course of the project’

A project review was held in September 2002, at which it was announced that the target of 2500 computers capable of accessing the Internet had been installed in houses albeit in an area larger than originally conceived. A local website had been further developed although further development work is necessary to provide the functionality and services aspired to by the local project team.

The original project proposal also identified five areas of application. Key achievements of the project are highlighted against these objectives in the following table:

Objectives	Achievement
Enhancing home school links and supporting online learning from home	Some work has been undertaken directly with schools, and this is an area of work that is developing. Schools have been concentrating on their work with the E-Learning Foundation and more links between community and schools are now being established
Building a culture of lifelong learning	A relatively large amount of training has been undertaken through the project. There appears to be significant demand for further training from the WuC area.
Working with local service providers to pilot and develop electronic service delivery	The project has worked closely with a number of service providers for example the council, police and benefits agency/employment service to provide online services.
Providing information and support to help people into employment	Employment related information is included in the website.
Strengthening local social capital by using new technology to strengthen and extend existing social networks	The website has a range of local content and support for local groups. The WuC website has also been used for a number of web-based consultations.

Initial outcomes to date

The programme evaluation drew on research conducted in each local WuC. A two stage survey was conducted with 200 people who had originally registered for the project. A follow up survey was conducted 6 months later. 157 people contributed to the follow up survey and their experiences provide an indication of the initial outcomes associated with the objectives of the WuC programme:

- The vast majority of respondents (90.4%) receiving the technology have used it to access the Internet
- The majority of people (62.2%) had received some training to introduce them to using the Internet
- Almost two in three (63.2%) Internet users have used it to search for labour market information
- A significant minority (17.4%) of Internet users have used it to find out about or communicate with local community groups

Project summary

The Blackburn WuC project has equipped 2500 households with Internet access. The majority of households access the Internet via a new PC with dial up access. A smaller number (370) of households have access via a set top box. The project widened its original area due to low take up of the technology. The project is based within an

ethnically diverse area with a range of housing types. The project provided three months free access to the Internet (via a local ISP) and developed an innovative solution to encourage Internet use through the development of an electronic card through which Internet time can be bought and topped up at local outlets. Significant amounts of training have been provided for participants, and the project has been successful in generating demand for learning opportunities.

Future challenges: sustainability

The future sustainability of the project is as yet unclear. The BEACH Partnership has now become a company limited by guarantee (BEACH Partnership Limited) and has responsibility for the future development of the WuC project. A key issue for the project is the need to secure ongoing revenue support for the project, which currently has SRB and ERDF funding to March 2004.

BEACH Partnership Ltd is currently developing a Business Plan for the future sustainability of the programme. A key factor is likely to involve the development of a community business, which will have a portfolio of (some) revenue-generating activities. It is envisaged that WuC is just one element of these activities. The development of the community business will be supported by Bootstrap Enterprises, which has a remit to grow new community businesses in the area.

List of contributors

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Brampton Case Study - November 2002

Context

The village of Brampton is a former pit village with 1500 homes, of which around 1200 were deemed to be in the original project catchment area. Unemployment is more than twice the national rate and there are high levels of long term unemployment. Residents suffer from high rates of ill-health with 17% having a long-term illness and 28% defining themselves as disabled. Mortality rates are high and a high proportion of residents of working age are permanently sick. There is a high level of dependence on benefits and levels of literacy and numeracy are low. Although there are few employers in the immediate area, (two pubs, a fish and chip shop, a general store, two garages), there has been considerable investment in recent years to bring businesses and jobs to the surrounding Dearne Valley, with a number of major employers established within a one to two mile radius.

A consortium including Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Granada Media, Employment Service and On Digital (later to become ITV Digital), developed the bid for Wired Up Community funding. It was submitted to the DfES in November 2000 and the local project developed under the name 'Pit2net'.

Management and Organisation

Representatives from the consortium played a key role in establishing the Steering Group overseeing the implementation of the project. Other key members of the initial Steering Group included the local MP, and DfES. A representative from the Local Education Authority became involved through its work developing IT in schools. The Steering Group met regularly to discuss developments and review progress and was chaired by a representative from RMBC who are the accountable body for the project.

A project manager was initially seconded from RMBC to manage the implementation of the project. He subsequently returned to another position within RMBC and a further project manager was seconded (September 2002) from a local social enterprise to provide operational management.

One of the first steps taken to engage the local community was to hold a public meeting. Volunteers were requested to register for a 'Community Forum' to represent the interests of the community. 8-10 people signed up for the Forum at the public meeting (including 2 parish councillors) and whilst 2-3 have dropped out a core of 6-8 remain. The Forum was initially facilitated by the local Community Development Worker (funded by RMBC) and met regularly to discuss the project. Three members of the Forum became regular Steering Group members.

The Steering Group met regularly and members were often enthusiastic about the project. As with most projects however, there were occasional difficulties in getting the partners to work to the same timescale, as they tried to fit the work into their own workloads and priorities. There was also a gradual change in the composition of the Steering Group over time as individuals' responsibilities changed, although key partners were usually represented.

Engaging the local community

The public meeting to introduce the project to the local community was well supported with over 250 people attending. The provision of ITV Digital (then On-Digital) was heavily promoted at the meeting through the availability of a free subscription to a 'premium channel'. However the public attitude towards the provision of ITV Digital equipment was mixed.

Pit2Net was promoted through mailshots and letters to local people. A database of residents registering an interest in the project was developed, and a newsletter was distributed encouraging people to come forward and register for the project. Promotion also included regular articles in the local newspapers, local radio and Yorkshire TV. These efforts led to an initial take up of set top boxes by half of the households in the catchment area.

A physical point of presence was developed in the community at the Miners Welfare Club but members of the community have not been attracted to attend in sufficient numbers. A number of things have been tried to get people to attend (opening at weekends, rearrangement of the office, additional facilities, promotions) with little impact. For sections of the community, the Club remains a symbol of the political and social

divisions caused by the Miners Strike and the project may have (unwittingly) become a victim of these cultural factors. Furthermore, the Pit2net office, located on the first floor and accessible via an intercom through a small doorway is not readily identifiable as a public space. The space is set up more as an administration office rather than an informal open learning facility.

The Community Forum was established to provide a basis for taking account of the interests of the community in the development and implementation of the project. For example, the Forum was instrumental in suggesting that a lift to enable disabled access was included in the refurbishment of the Miners Welfare. However, the Forum has found it difficult to be a fully effective consultation mechanism for reasons that appear complex and contested. There is a view that they have been 'caught in the middle', dealing with complaints from the community but with limited power or influence to address these complaints (although they were regularly represented at Steering Group meetings). The technology underlying Pit2Net (Digital TV) was not universally accepted in the community and was compared unfavourably with the PC as a means of accessing the Internet within the Community Forum. As the project attempted to move forward after the demise of ITV Digital, members of the Forum found it difficult to continue to promote the project until a clear way forward was agreed.

Other local institutions (Parish Council, Schools, Tenants and Residents' Forum) were contacted and asked to contribute to the development of the project and to provide local content for the website but few contributions have been forthcoming to date.

Technology, installation and security

The sole criteria for eligibility was residency in the eligible area and machines were distributed on a 'first come first served basis'. The technology used was ITV Digital's 'Net Gem Box' accompanied by a cordless keyboard and 56K modem. The use of a familiar, trusted and easy to use technology already in the home (i.e. television) was initially perceived to be strength of the project. However whilst the technology generally worked in the home, problems associated with use of the Internet (speed of response), limited functionality (unable to send attachments) and poor interface quality surfaced. The collapse of ITV Digital (March 2002) led to a fundamental change in direction for the project and a loss of momentum as the future direction of the project was considered. It

was decided that the set-top boxes would be replaced with PCs but it took time to establish new arrangements for rolling out this second phase of the project.

The project were keen to use local labour and an Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) scheme to install and support delivery and use in the home was established. However this was not without some problems as members of the local community were reluctant to come forward. Ultimately up to 20 people were employed on temporary contracts lasting from 1-6 months but very few came from the community of Brampton. To a great extent, it was the New Deal funding regime that prevented take-up by people within Brampton who were interested. Whilst the installation of the set top box did not require the development of many skills, experience of the ILM suggests that far more customer service training is required to smooth the installation process and to engage the community in other aspects (e.g. learning, content development) of the project. Although some customer service training was given by ITV Digital, with hindsight it could have been further enhanced. Furthermore much closer supervision is required to ensure adherence to quality and control procedures.

Nevertheless the use of the ILM is viewed as a success within the project, resulting in reduced labour costs (33% saving when compared with the costs of labour in the local labour market) and creation of employment opportunities. For example, one of the ILM participants has been taken on as the full time web manger on Pit2Net and a further two people are now employed on the further implementation of the project. The WuC project is also seen to be an important contributor to wider employment measures in the Dearne Valley.

Training and support

A newsletter has been distributed encouraging people to come forward if they are experiencing problems with the Internet but it has generated little response. However the installers report that people stop them in the street and ask them questions related to the use and performance of the equipment.

Generally however, training and support structures did not develop until towards the end of the project. At the outset of the project a representative of the local College of Further Education was enthusiastic about the opportunities presented by Pit2net for an

introductory Internet course to be delivered in the Miners Welfare. However funding for the development of a Community Learning Centre had to be sought and basic IT training courses have only just started (September 2002). The local schools have run open days, showcasing the technology provided through the e-Learning Foundation Grant and these have been well attended by local people. Granada Learning also expressed interest in the project and representatives visited the local schools with a view to developing some e-learning material but this wasn't followed through to a successful conclusion.

The Employment Service (ES) expressed interest in using the web-based technology to develop and deliver services specifically for the residents of Brampton. The local ES manager developed and updated (via the Pit2Net website) a 'top ten vacancies' list for Brampton residents.

The ES also intended to provide an Employment Advisor located in the Brampton Community. However this type of service (encouraging the development of employability and promotion of job opportunities) was subsequently provided through an 'Action in the Community for Employment Programme'. Assistance has been provided since May 2002 by an experienced coach/mentor/advisor from RMBC, located in the Miners Welfare. Whilst it has taken some time to get to know the community (usually 6 months) the coach/mentor reports some successes. However public transport links are a major barrier to connecting local people with employment opportunities outside the village.

Website development

A website (Pit2net.co.uk) was developed to reflect community interests. A private sector company developed it rapidly (in line with time pressures) and were perceived to have done an effective job within these constraints. However some stakeholders criticised the site for being 'dull', 'overcomplicated' and 'difficult to update'. There were many ideas for a second phase of development but problems emerged with the proposed cost of development. However a complete redesign of the Pit2Net website was initiated in December 2002 and a new website encompassing a content management system allowing a range of providers and local people to add content is to be launched in January 2003.

The project provided some technical training for a member of the Pit2Net team to enable the local development of a new website and content and this activity continues to date.

Meeting project objectives

The Brampton WuC project was set up as an ambitious project to test the effectiveness of ICT as a means of upgrading skills and improving employability levels, and engaging the local community in an economically depressed former mining village. It was unique in using digital TV technology (set/net top box). A range of 'innovation and benefits' were intended which are summarised below.

- Net access through the TV for entire community
- Ability to surf www, send and receive emails, interact as a community on-line and access public services
- Residents receiving basic internet skills and keyboard training
- Web-sites for local voluntary organisations to contribute to

Several of the innovations and benefits have been at least partially realised. Equipment enabling Internet access has been delivered to over 600 households and a community website has been developed and maintained. Some skills development opportunities have been provided locally. However use of the WuC technology to search the Internet appears low and limited online content has been provided through the project (although 'Digital Brain' has recently become available Borough wide).

Initial outcomes to date

The programme evaluation drew on research conducted in each local WuC. A two stage survey was conducted with 200 people who had originally registered for the project. A follow up survey was conducted six months later. 164 people contributed to the follow up survey and their experiences provide an indication of the initial outcomes associated with the objectives of the WuC programme:

- Just over half the respondents (51.3%) have used the technology to access the Internet
- One in five (20.3%) had received some training to introduce them to using the Internet

- Just over a quarter of Internet users (26.3%) have used it to search for labour market information
- However less than 10% of Internet users have used the Internet to find out about or communicate with local community groups

Project summary

The Brampton WuC has developed in a coalfield area exhibiting multiple deprivation characteristics. It differs from the other WuCs in that it was based on digital TV technology readily available in the marketplace. The project focussed on the roll out of the technology into the community and by March 2002 had delivered over 600 units into residents' homes. An ILM was used to deliver the technology into residents' homes, although this brought with it problems in relation to, for example, recruitment of local people and appropriate levels of customer service. The private sector company supplying the digital TV technology was very supportive of the project but came under extreme commercial pressure and went into receivership in March 2002, bringing to an end the roll out of the set top box technology into the community. This event caused a fundamental shift of direction for the project and it took time to agree an alternative way forward using the remaining project budget. Arrangements are now in place to replace the digital TV technology with PCs by the end of March 2003.

There are concerns that residents have not been fully and effectively engaged by the project nor have they used the equipment to access the Internet and gain the benefits to the extent that was hoped for. However, further development of the local website is planned and the local FE College has recently opened a learning centre and has begun to deliver training courses to the community.

Challenges ahead

A sustainability plan for the project is under development and is expected to be agreed by January 2003.

The current Pit2Net project manager, with consultancy support from the DfES, has started to explore potential funding sources (SRB, ESF, National Lottery) and the aim is to establish a Social Enterprise that will roll the PC based WuC model into six deprived communities in the Rotherham Borough. The Education Department and local schools

have supported the provision of training for parents in the community at local schools (largely independently of Pit2 Net to date). However opportunities for synergies are currently being explored. Space in the Miners Welfare is being developed and utilised by a variety of actors (FE College, Healthy Living Centre, Pit2 Net, Action in the Community for Employment) and there is considerable potential for representatives of these agencies to work together. However the project now needs to draw these interests together in order to achieve an effective and sustainable future.

Contributors

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Carpenters Estate, Newham – November 2002

Context

The Carpenters WuC is the smallest of the seven projects. It includes three high rise blocks (432 dwellings) and about 150 other 'low rise' dwellings. Most of the housing is social housing although there have been some sales of mainly low rise dwellings. The Carpenters Estate is located in one of the most deprived areas in the country as ranked by the Index of Deprivation (lowest 3%).

A distinctive feature of the estate is the range of minority ethnic groups which are represented on it. This situation differs from that which occurs in most areas with a high minority ethnic group population where, usually, there is one dominant group. The area is characterised by a high level of community involvement and cohesion whilst at the same time experiencing high levels of migration into, and out of, the community. The estate is managed by a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO). The local community centre in which the TMO is located also houses a number of other community facilities including a learndirect Learning Centre. The estate also has its own primary school which acts as a further focus for learning for the community.

A variety of organisations played a part in the bid for WuC funds. The TMO on the Carpenters estate played an important role in mobilising and representing community support. The local authority also has a strong commitment to the development of IT and has a long established Communications Strategy Group which has been involved with innovative projects relating to the e-government agenda. For example, in the local elections in 2002 electronic voting was available on a borough-wide basis in Newham. It is planned that there will be an opportunity to vote online in the next general election.

The local authority has been heavily involved with 'Newham Online' which was set up as a network of local organisations and individuals working together to ensure that Newham as an area benefited from the opportunities provided by information and communications technologies. Links with key organisations (e.g. MASE, University for East London) in the local area have developed over a number of years. Newham.net, a not-for-profit organisation which grew out of Newham Online, played a key leadership role in assembling the bid for WuC funding. This role included bringing together a coalition of

interests and organisations as well as helping to design the technical proposals for the WuC in the area.

Management and organisation

Key partners identified in the original bid for WuC funding were:

- Newham Council (Newham ICT, Library Services, Education Department)
- Carpenters Road Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)
- Newham College of Further Education
- MASE Integration and Communications Ltd
- University of East London (now NEOS Networks)

The various interests involved are represented on the Steering Group for the Carpenters WuC which meets monthly. The Local Authority provides several members of the Steering Group, all drawn from senior positions in the organisation. The chair of the Steering Group is a senior local authority officer with a responsibility in the council for IT. The Education Department of the council is also represented. It became involved in particular through its work on IT in local schools, and later, this was reinforced by involvement with the e-Learning Foundation project at the Primary School on the Carpenters estate.

Other local educational institutions also contribute to the Steering Group. Newham College of Further Education is represented and has an existing relationship with the TMO through, for example, the provision of learndirect facilities at the local community centre. In addition, the technical project manager at the college is a co-director of Newham.net.

Carpenters TMO represents the interests of tenants on the estate. The Media Trust (a charitable organisation which has been heavily involved in the development of community participation in ICT) has also been involved in the development and implementation of the project.

MASE (now NeosNetworks), a private sector organisation is one of the partners in the WuC project. It has played a key role in designing the networking arrangements, in procurement, configuration, and project management relating to the technical

installations required by the plans. Other private sector partners include Microsoft, which was brought in as a provider of software. Another private sector partner is PACE which developed customised set-top boxes for the project. Motivations for private sector involvement are many and varied. They are bound by interests which extend beyond short-term commercial reasons. A combination of the excitement of working with leading edge technology and the chance to contribute to the development of a disadvantaged area appears to be a powerful attraction for those involved in the project. The Department for Education and Skills is also represented on the Steering Group.

Clear roles and responsibilities are apparent in the project with each partner able to articulate the kind of contribution which they have been able to make and the benefits which they receive. For example, community support has been provided by the TMO, Newham.Net provided technical knowledge and MASE the installation expertise.

The priorities of the programme (development of the interactive technology and the telecommunications infrastructure) were established early on, and according to the interviewees, they have remained the major focus of activity to date. However, some new issues did arise in the course of the project. An important one was the issue of cyber safety and this was addressed through the production of a video entitled Websmart.

The view of participants in the partnership has been that it generally operated effectively. However there were occasions in the early stages of the development of the WuC when technical issues were of a particular concern and there was some difficulty for community representatives, and others who were not necessarily technically informed, to contribute fully at this stage. The partners recognised that they might well be operating with different agendas but that these differing agendas did not dominate the ways in which different organisations participated in the project. All the partners felt that they were able both to contribute and to benefit.

An innovative element of the project, not apparent in other WuC areas is the use of intranet based technology (WebBoard) to exchange information within the partnership. The system allows users to participate in online discussion both by web and online mailing lists. The software allows different levels of access to information and is sufficiently secure to be used for the financial management of the whole programme.

This in turn has resulted in a situation where, in most cases, the whole process from specifying works to payment has been conducted electronically. By October 2002 the system was being used to manage the following activities: financial control, partner decision making and information sharing, organisation of the launch, archiving technical data and PR management.

In October 2002 the system had 65 representatives of partner bodies actively involved and according to the Project Co-ordinator was indispensable to the management of the project. The system extends beyond information sharing to embrace open dialogue and decision making.

Engaging the local community

The local community centre in which the TMO is housed contains a number of community facilities including an IT room, a clinic, counselling services, and the housing office. It is also used by a number of local groups. Some of these groups are based on particular interests while others have an ethnic focus.

The TMO produces a monthly newsletter and this is used to communicate information about the development of WuC. Other information is channelled to local parents through the school and this has increased with the development of the e-Learning Foundation project at the local primary school. A major role in engaging the community has been played by the Media Trust which started to work in Newham as a result of the development of the WuC. A variety of media projects have been established in which local people have participated. A community broadcasting Channel has been set up entitled "Home to Home" with around 250 people attending the launch event for the channel. A number of television programmes have been made involving the active participation of local people as both the subject of the programme and in the production process. These include a programme entitled Carpenters Cooks which involves a series of cooking demonstrations. There is also been a programme entitled "Meet the neighbours" in which 90 participants used 30 second slots to talk about themselves and their community.

Technology, installation and security

A distinctive feature of the Carpenters WuC is the way in which access to the Internet IT is being provided for the households in the area. The system is based upon a set-top box (with a wireless infra-red keyboard) through which television services as well as Internet access, video-on-demand, video games and computing software will be available using the television screen. The software to which the households with the set top boxes have access is not installed in their own households but is available from local servers. The system being installed is extremely powerful and has a high bandwidth. There is the potential for substantial future expansion of this capacity as the technology and the resources made available for the use of households, expands. The loading of software, and access to sites on the Internet, is reported to be extremely fast.

The innovative character of the proposed technology, the PC on the TV service being a "UK first", meant that considerable time and effort had to be expended defining the technological requirements and devising ways of implementing these and this resulted in major slippage in the implementation plan. Developments were undertaken with the co-operation of Internet Vision, MASE and PACE, who were responsible respectively for systems integration, creating the network, and producing the set-top boxes. The WuC project has provided the forum for these leading suppliers to work together and form a relationship which continues to date. Another notable technological development has been provided by the use of Microsoft software on the TV, a development which involved a number of companies, including Microsoft which provided the licences for their software to be used

Whilst the system has been available for demonstration purposes in the local community centre for some time, the installation of the technology in the local households has been held up for a considerable period by problems associated with the cabling to the households. One of the sub-contracting firms failed to fulfil its obligations to meet the original schedule and as a consequence the set-top boxes are only now being installed (September 2002).

The technology is perceived to be, to a degree, 'future proof'. There is substantial additional capacity within the network which could be utilised without further equipment being installed. Because of the way the technology operates, there is little chance of the set-top boxes being either sold or otherwise disposed of by their owners since they would not operate at other addresses.

Training and support

Whilst some specific events have been run, WuC related training and support systems are generally developing at the current time due to the late installation of the set-top boxes in local households. One training programme, introducing Internet safety has been developed and delivered. This was a reflection of local parental concerns about the possible impact of the availability of the Internet on local children. The programme has been reported to be very successful.

As the technology is installed in the homes, open days are being held at the local community centre. Residents are able to attend and see the technology in operation and try it out. Once they have got the hang of turning the equipment on there is online support available through their set-top boxes. This comes through the local intranet which puts them onto the local authority network and gives them access to relevant sources of information provided through the local Further Education College. A system of telephone support is also planned.

A number of local people have taken relevant courses through learndirect to enhance their ICT skills. The Media Trust also organised the making of a local history programme. This involved bringing people from the local community together and looking at the history of the area and recording their participation in it. As well as involving people in the making of these programmes, the Media Trust has helped to train around 60 local people in various technical aspects of television production. Some local people have also been trained as technicians and have become involved in installing the WuC technology in local households

A body of local people trained in specific media skills, many of whom are also very competent computer users, has emerged in the community. It is anticipated that these will provide the basis for neighbourly support and advice for those who are less confident in their use of information technology. Courses are planned for households in the area are also to be provided by Newham College to be delivered at the local community centre.

Content development

Carpenters WuC has an interactive video based interface designed specifically for TV and it provides access to a range of services that, whilst very similar to those on the Internet, have been specifically designed to work on the TV platform. One of these services is the Home to Home portal and this is somewhat similar to an Internet portal in that it provides for online discussion, user publishing, quizzes, links and polls. However, a large part of the service cannot be seen on the Internet as the technologies used are too high bandwidth to be viewed externally.

The local network is also designed to give access to a range of online government services which are already in existence. One example is NHS Interactive which is a video based service that can currently only be accessed in Hull, through Kingston Interactive TV, and on the Carpenters Estate.

A further initiative currently being developed has the potential to improve social provision in the area relates to a carers' network. Carers are to be linked together so that respite assistance can be called for and provided rapidly. Those caring for people within a particular category of need are also to have their own websites providing information relating to the care which is given. Access to local government services for residents of Newham is being made available through an interface entitled 'Start Here'. This gives access to a range of local services such as housing and education. For example, those living in social housing who have faults to report can report them through this system. This system was designed to work on a kiosk and though there is nothing to distinguish it technically from a web site it has been designed to be completely self-contained and is a very easy to access source of information even for those who have never used a web site before.

The Carpenters estate currently has a website on Newham.net but this has not been further developed by the WuC project. It is planned that the Home to Home portal will be able to be made externally accessible through the Internet though as it has been developed for TV it is likely to look somewhat "wrong" on a PC. The Home to Home portal has only just been developed and is still under test. However, it is likely that it will have a considerable role to play in the local community.

Meeting project objectives

The project objective was outlined in the original bid for WuC funding, namely:

'The project will seek to demonstrate how individual access to the Internet can transform opportunities for people living on the Carpenters Estate by supporting new ways of accessing education, work, leisure and other services'

There is some frustration that the initial momentum of the project slowed down due to the problems in installing the equipment in local households. Those involved with the management of the project hope that this momentum will be restored as the set top boxes are installed over the next few months. There is plenty of evidence of a high level of interest from the community, in particular from the large numbers of people who have attended various events organised by the Media Trust. The project is also fulfilling its aim to demonstrate the technology through access in the community Learning Centre which has developed much interest from researchers, local and national politicians.

Initial outcomes to date

Because the household IT equipment is not yet up and running except in a handful of households, it is not possible to give an initial summary of the impact on local participants of this element of the project.

Amongst those most closely involved with the project, it is believed that there has been considerable success in raising both individual and community confidence through the use of ICT and through the publicity and activities associated with the WuC. It has been suggested that the TMO has been strengthened through its work with WuC. It has also been suggested that the increased level of community involvement has led to the development of a range of ideas about how the area could be further improved.

Project summary

Carpenters is the smallest of the WuC projects. It covers a single housing estate containing three tower blocks, a number of low-rise blocks and some standard housing. It has a very ethnically diverse population. There is a high level of local involvement in the project through the Tenant Management Organisation which manages the estate.

This WuC is distinguished by the innovative technology adopted, set-top boxes, through which access to computing, the Internet, the Newham local government network, and video on demand is available. The development of the innovative technology and the development of the telecommunications infrastructure have both contributed to major slippage in the implementation of the project. By September 2002 few set-top boxes had been delivered into local households. However stakeholders remain upbeat about the potential of the technology to provide a cost-effective means of access to the Internet and its potential to improve peoples lives in a variety of ways.

The future: sustainability

The issue of sustainability in the longer term is currently being considered. Newham Council has submitted a European Development Fund bid to finance the development of the project over the next three years and the London Development Agency has promised matched finance should the bid be successful. The result is expected in December and current signs of success are good

Should this bid fail there is concern that key personnel or organisations may move on as WuC funding is no longer available as a source of income for them or their organisation. The future role of the local authority is unclear although it is strongly committed to the development of e-government and it has gone a considerable way down this road already. The local authority is currently establishing a series of web-based services. Carpenters residents will be well placed to use the technology to pay bills, and receive and send information to a range of local authority service-providing organisations. The local authority views the developments in Carpenters Primary School as providing a basis for developing best practice which can be shared across the borough. Home-school links are viewed as a priority both by parents and by the local primary school. The potential for developing these further will come with the availability of Internet and intranet access in local homes. The local education authority is strongly committed to the use of IT in local schools and views it as a major means of helping to raise standards. The local authority also a propose to fund an estate community worker and worker for the Carpenters Connect service through the use of money from the Housing Department.

Newham.net, a company limited by guarantee, runs the local network and there is an opportunity to provide some paid for services such as video on demand, higher speed internet access and online video games. A community enterprise, Home to Home limited, will be established to manage the local aspects of the service and revenue opportunities include advertising, video production, provision of high quality media training, renting of one of the estates two video edit suites and the lease of media equipment. Further funding avenues are being explored but there are concerns that the innovative approach adopted on the Carpenters estate may not fit in with the regimented criteria often adopted to assess the disbursement of funds.

A list of contributors

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East Manchester

Context

East Manchester is a large working class inner-city area quite close to the city centre. It consists of three local areas; Beswick, Clayton and Openshaw. The area has a population of 11,231 and contains 4,500 households. 80% of residents live in houses and the majority of the remainder low-rise flats. Almost 40% of the housing stock is council owned. The area suffers from a complex and inter-related range of issues including high crime levels, low educational attainment, poor health and a lack of local facilities and is ranked in the lower quartile in the National Index of Deprivation.

The area is benefiting from major regeneration activity, being one of the 38 New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas and is at the centre of the building development of sports

facilities and accommodation undertaken for the Commonwealth Games which took place in July 2002. The area is replete with area-based initiatives. As well as the New Deal for Communities project, there are seven area based initiatives, including an Education Action Zone and a Sports Action Zone. These different initiatives have different boundaries and different life-spans which leads to some uncertainty in terms of spatial remit and sustainability.

The NDC partnership developed the bid for WuC funding in November 2000. The WuC project was established with the support of the pre-existing Education Action Zone. There was already considerable investment in community facilities for information technology in the area through for example the development of 10 UK online centres and the BeaconsforaBrighterFuture.com project (development of community content). A pilot project (Eastserve1) was being implemented as the WuC bid was developed as part of the City Council's e-government development. Eastserve1 aimed to provide 10 community based access points and 450 homes with Internet access in the East Manchester area.

WuC is co-located within the East Manchester NDC office and became known locally as 'EastServe2'.

Management and organisation

The original bid for WuC funding identified many partners including:

- East Manchester Residents' Forum
- New Deal for Communities
- New East Manchester Ltd
- East Manchester Education Action Zone (EAZ)
- Manchester City Council
- Network East Manchester
- Key Private Sector Partners (Atlantic Telecom, BT, NTL, Bush Internet, Netgem, OnDigital, NIC Company, Nutshell, Cisco Corporation, Hewlet Packard, Clicks and Links Ltd)

A steering group for EastServe 2 was established including partners with particular interests in ICT, education and local area regeneration. The steering group for the WuC meets approximately every six weeks. It operates as both the project board for EastServe and as the organisation which runs Network East Manchester and is

concerned with connectivity in the area. It receives updates on progress and guides the development of the project.

New East Manchester played a key role in bringing partners together. All the major organisations operating in the area, including the area-based bodies, are represented on the Steering Group. A range of organisations not identified as partners in the bid have also been involved in the development and implementation of the project. These include the Department for Education and Skills, the Regional Development Agency (GONW), MANCAT (the local technology college), Manchester Community and Information Network (MCIN) and English Partnerships.

Several private sector firms are represented on the Steering Group including Clicks and Links, Fujitsu and British Telecom. An intermediate labour market organisation called ITEM (Information Technology East Manchester) is also represented.

The partnership operated at both a strategic level and at the level where it was able to identify important operational issues. Stakeholders suggested that this was an appropriate approach given the novel character of the scheme and the continual appearance of small issues which needed to be dealt with quickly. The consensus view was that the partnership had worked effectively.

The emphasis of the project changed over time. The initial impetus was the planning and implementation of the installation of the technology. Once this was underway and many of the detailed implementation problems confronted, management of this aspect of the process became more routine. Attention then shifted more towards the use of the technology and searching for ways to develop this, particularly in partnership with other agencies working in the area.

Engaging the local community

It was planned that the technology would be delivered into homes on a phased basis. The first phase delivered technology into Clayton, the second phase into Openshaw and the third into Beswick.

A variety of means have been used to engage the local community with the WuC project. Meetings have been held at local community centres which parents have been encouraged to attend and the local website (Eastserve.com) was another means of communication.

Initial attempts were made to market East Serve in order to raise awareness of it. However, this proved difficult because of the number of different initiatives taking place in the area. There was also some suspicion of the idea that someone would 'give you a computer' for little cost and expect little in return. Some residents were very wary of having anything to do with the government or the authorities believing that some form of snooping or investigation might take place.

The involvement of the EAZ and the Zone's contacts with local schools made the schools a useful route for publicity and information dissemination for WuC. The 16 schools in the WuC area had a network of ICT co-ordinators and they attempted to encourage parental involvement through school events and through publicity provided to parents through their children.

The WuC project offered a range of technologies (i.e. Set top boxes, PCs, Network Computers) to local people. However the choice available through the project was perceived to create further uncertainty amongst local residents. Another problem was that some of the publicity for WuC raised people's expectations above what could be achieved particularly in relation to the speed of installation of the household IT equipment. Revision of the offer and improvements to the promotional information provided to the residents improved this situation.

An organisation was set up in order to encourage community involvement. For example a Residents' Panel of 15 people was established to make recommendations on relevant issues such as the content of the website. WuC also appointed "community champions" from amongst people who were computer literate. Their job was to encourage and foster the use of information technology. These champions also met together once a month and were able to make recommendations to the Steering Group.

A further community organisation, the Voluntary Sector Forum, represented the interests of voluntary organisations in the area. Local people also became involved with WuC

through ITEM which gave some of them employment as part of the process of installing the IT equipment in households in the area.

There is already some anecdotal evidence of the benefits of home ICT access for the management of, and participation in community groups. Several stakeholders suggested that local community groups are now developing a consciousness of the potential of the use of ICT for expanding and improving their operations by keeping continually in touch with their members and enabling them to contribute on a more ongoing basis to the work of the organisation.

Technology, Installation and security

The sole criterion for eligibility was residency in the eligible area and machines were distributed on a 'first come first served basis'. A mix of technologies was originally offered to residents. It included networked computers (with no hard disk), recycled PCs, new PCs and set top boxes. The option of the set-top boxes, which could only provide e-mail, and of the network computers was subsequently withdrawn largely due to lack of community interest in the technology and to simplify the offer to the community. This left residents with the possibility of obtaining a new computer for £200 or a second-hand computer for substantially less. Most of those who chose to have a computer went for the option of a new machine (266 processor, 64MB RAM) and some people financed this with a loan from the local credit union. There were some problems with the implementation at the delivery stage and some people experienced a frustrating wait for their equipment. This was partly due to persistent problems with the hardware (now addressed) along with organising and training local labour to conduct the installation and the problems experienced allocating Internet Accounts to individual users. The initial ISP went out of business and was replaced by BT. Almost 2200 residents had received the technology to enable access to the Internet by September 2002⁶.

When the computers were first delivered they had dial-up Internet access but later on (summer 2002), a wireless broadband system was introduced. The alternative of using a cable connection was not available due to lack of coverage in the area. The wireless system should cover the whole WuC area by March 2003. A two-tier pricing system has

⁶ *Source: Eastserve monitoring data*

been developed to encourage inclusion. The cost of broadband Internet for those in the WuC area is £15 per month which is substantially below the market price of £25 a month or more offered by cable companies and other Internet service providers. However for those on low incomes the cost is £16 per month for 24/7 access or £6 per month for limited access (12.00-18.00 Monday-Friday). Almost 500 residents have taken up the option of broadband connection by September 2002⁷.

Equipment has been marked in accordance with recommendations from the local police. Free home security checks have been available in the NDC area.

Training and support

Training is designed to be an integral element of the WuC provision. On registering an interest in the project, residents are invited to attend a three-hour training course. About 2500 residents have attended the course. This has been delivered in a variety of locations including the community centres, UK On-line Centres and at the local College. Following the course, residents have the PC delivered to the home. Residents can set up the equipment in the home themselves. However the vast majority have been set up by a representative of a local community enterprise (ITEM).

MANCAT has trained twenty⁸ local residents as community champions to provide further support for skills and community development. The suppliers normally deal with technical problems. There is a helpline which is staffed by workers from ITEM and local champions, plus some online support available on the website.

Some further computer training events had been held at local schools as part of the e-Learning Foundation programme, and some further support and advice has been made available at local community centres.

Website development

⁷ *Source: Eastserve monitoring data*

⁸ this is expected to rise to forty in the future

An initial website had been developed as part of the EastServe1 project and there were initially some concerns associated with a relatively primitive design and slow speed of operation. The original site was developed with a view to access predominantly through recycled PCs. A second version of the site (February 2002) was developed making more use of multi-media. This is viewed as an improvement and is currently being developed further. The website contains links to relevant sites on the Internet such as the EAZ site and Worktrain. Information services have been developed specifically for the East Serve website including employment information. Employers can submit local jobs, residents can submit CVs or be signposted to useful contacts. There is also police information and news of community events. A Content Manager is funded (through SRB/ERDF) and is working with the local community to achieve NDC priorities associated with regeneration such as housing, employment and the environment. A 'Residents Panel' provides ideas and feedback on content. An improvement in the ability of the Panel to contribute to this process has been recognised as the residents have become more familiar with the capabilities and uses of the technology.

WuC has provided the means to test out various schemes relating to the e-government agenda. For example, it has introduced a system by which housing faults can be reported to the housing department and arrangements made for these to be fixed. The council has also introduced a system through which faults in street lighting can be reported.

The usage of the site is monitored and information on the number of hits is kept. The site is also being evaluated externally.

Meeting project objectives

The original bid does not identify specific objectives associated with the project although it does provide detailed targets in terms of for example delivery of technology into the home, people using the Internet and ICT skills development. However, the bid does provide an indication of expectations for the project suggesting:

'it is about providing individuals from one of the most disadvantaged communities in the UK with high speed links to the Internet in their own home, thus enabling access to relevant local content relating to employment, education, leisure and

the community through BeaconforaBrighterFuture.com, as well as the rich content available on the wider internet'

Anecdotal comment from local stakeholders suggests that the project has contributed to the extent to which local people now believe that change and improvement is possible. The WuC has contributed to this although other major changes in the area, particularly the development of new buildings and facilities relating to the Commonwealth Games and the success of the event, have been important.

Initial outcomes to date

The programme evaluation drew on research conducted in each local WuC. A two stage survey was conducted with 200 people who had originally registered for the project. A follow up survey was conducted 6 months later. 111 people contributed to the follow up survey and their experiences provide an indication of the initial outcomes associated with the objectives of the WuC programme:

- The majority of respondents (77.5%) receiving the technology have used it to access the Internet
- More than three quarters of respondents (78.4%) had received some training to introduce them to using the Internet
- More than half of the internet users (50.6%) have used it to search for labour market information
- Almost one in five (19.3%) Internet users have used it to find out about or communicate with local community groups

Project summary

East Manchester is the largest of the Wired-up Communities in terms of the population covered. It is also the most complex in terms of the existing forms of intervention taking place in the area which include an Education Action Zone, a New Deal for Communities project, local regeneration projects, and substantial investment relating to the Commonwealth Games of 2002. The project has worked with and through these existing agencies. In technological terms, the project eventually settled on the installation of subsidised personal computers, usually new, and financed for residents through the local credit union when necessary. broadband access is now being installed and this is being undertaken using a wireless broadcast system. About 2200 households have had

equipment installed to date (September 2002) although this is below the original target figures. Over 1500 residents have received training through a 3 hour introductory course delivered in a variety of venues in the local community. Local content has been developed with contributions from local agencies such as the police and the Local Authority and a residents' panel. Local community groups are now developing a consciousness of the potential of ICT to contribute to local development and anecdotally at least, local people are now coming to believe that change and improvement is possible.

The future: sustainability

An ICT strategy was developed by Network East Manchester. Its principle aim is to provide free, high speed access to local services and the WuC has been a key component of this strategy. The technological base for further expansion exists in terms of the capability of the existing wireless network facilities to support around 10,000 users, far more than are currently connected. It appears that some local momentum has been developed through the WuC project and that to some degree this has been institutionalised. For example, the work done in schools by the e-Learning Foundation would sustain a strong interest in, and develop the use of, information technology within the community. Other organisations involved such as official agencies, private businesses, and community and voluntary organisations have also developed capabilities and procedures which rest on the use of information technology and the ability to communicate with households in the area.

Private sector organisations involved in the WuC project perceived that they were likely to continue where they were operating as contractors. They generally found the partnership aspect of their involvement, which went beyond purely business considerations, to be important an important element of their work with public sector organisations.

The experience of working in partnership for both public and private sector organisations had proved extremely illuminating for many of the partners and the importance of vision, trust, urgency, and understanding as the basis for effective partnership was strongly supported. The City Council will remain a major partner organisation of any successor

body to WuC. A Director is to be appointed to oversee further development of the project and funds are in place to sustain the project until 2004.

A list of contributors

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Framlingham – November 2002

Context

The Framlingham Wired Up Community (Suffolkonline.net) is based in and around Framlingham in Suffolk. The project covers a mainly rural area, which is sparsely populated, with a total of 27 villages dominated by the market town of Framlingham. It is an area traditionally dominated by agriculture, and it is a Rural Priority Area (as defined by the Rural Development Commission) exhibiting social and economic disadvantage across a range of indicators.

Consultants funded through the DfES were involved in the development of the bid, and carried out consultation with other key partners organisations, including the District and County Councils and East of England Development Agency (EEDA). Suffolk ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), a rural community development organisation are the accountable body.

Management and Organisation

A range of project partners was identified in the original bid. These included:

- Suffolk ACRE
- Community Development Trust Steering Group
- Small Business Service
- Suffolk County Council
- Suffolk TEC
- East of England Development Agency
- Suffolk Coastal District Council
- Mid Suffolk District Council
- Framlingham Town Council
- Rural Representatives
- Thomas Mills High School
- Parish Councils
- Community Organisations

The Steering Group was convened by Suffolk ACRE after an initial consultation exercise with key organisations operating with in the area. Several organisations proposed in the original bid played little or no role in the subsequent project. For example, changes in the education infrastructure limited the involvement of the local TEC and the emergent Learning and Skills Council has not become directly involved in the project.

Revenue funding for the project has been drawn from a number of sources. East of England Development Agency (EEDA) has provided the majority of revenue funding, with smaller amounts from the District Councils and the County Council. However the level of revenue funding was not as high as anticipated, and this has resulted in lower staffing levels than those outlined in the original project proposal. A project manager and small team (project co-ordinator and two part-time community network officers) have delivered the project and report on progress to the Steering Group.

The Steering Group met every other month and was chaired by Suffolk ACRE. In the early stages of the project the Steering Group worked effectively. As the project has progressed, the Steering Group has been difficult to sustain, with attendance waning amongst partners due to a combination of reasons (including individuals leaving their posts), and it has struggled to provide the effective strategic leadership required.

Engaging the local community

The project has been promoted actively in the community by the project team, often supported by 'community champions' recruited by the project. Emphasis has been placed on developing 'face to face' relationships with the community. Further activities have included newsletters (at first sent by post, then by email), local media (including radio, newspaper and TV coverage), community events such as agricultural shows, fetes and presentations at public meetings (29 in total) and via local schools/PTAs. Outreach was undertaken by the project team by targeting the more deprived areas and by 'door knocking' to encourage residents to apply for a PC.

The project has recruited a number of volunteer Community Champions. These were initially identified during the early stages of the promotion of the projects, and were chosen to reflect the geographical spread of the project, and to represent a range of skills and ages. A total of 60 Champions were recruited during the first year of the project, and there are currently 40 active signed up Champions supporting the project. Additional training was made available to Community Champions and they received a higher specification PC through WuC. The Community Champions have undertaken a variety of roles in supporting the project, from promotion of the project at events, providing basic technical help and handholding support to other users and supplying

content to the SuffolkOnline portal. They have been supported and encouraged by specific members of the project team and they have made a positive and valued contribution to the project.

Technology installation

The original project proposal was based on the supply of a combination of entry level PCs and refurbished PCs (through the Computers within Reach Programme). However the experiences of the Phase 1 project highlighted the problems of using recycled machines and consequently the project specification was changed to rely solely on new machines (1 GHz MS Windows XP desktop computer, with basic word processing and DTP package) with analogue dial up to the Internet.

Recipients were provided with three months free Internet access via the SuffolkOnline ISP, free helpdesk support, free training upon installation and a free initial training course. 17 'Community Network Points' have been established using equipment supplied through WuC to provide 'open access to the community'. These are based in a range of locations, such as local public houses, post offices and village halls. In addition 20 PCs have been installed in small businesses.

Suffolk County Council undertook the tendering process to identify a suitable supplier on behalf of Suffolk ACRE. A key issue was the need for large numbers of PCs to be delivered within relatively tight timescales. This effectively ruled out a number of small local suppliers who had been encouraged to take part in the tendering process. A supplier was contracted (TINY plc) following a competitive tender process to supply 1550 Internet ready PCs.

A number of problems emerged during implementation of the technology relating to the delivery phase associated with the targeting of the intervention and quality of supply.

A broad set of criteria were developed to assess eligibility in an effort to target the intervention. These were:

- Families with children at local schools
- Members of community and voluntary organisations

- Self-employed people, and people running small businesses
- Those who have difficulty getting out
- People who are interested in learning and training

However managing the eligibility process was not easy in practice. This was partly because some applications were received before the project team was in post, and because all of the relevant information was not available on the application form. The project priority to get the PCs installed in homes in a short timescale (circa three months) compromised the efforts of the project team in focusing on meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged. When the deadline was relaxed the project team were able to refocus delivery effort on households containing those most at risk of exclusion in the community.

A number of issues emerged during the delivery process which resulted in delays and slippage. These included:

- The time taken to load software onto new machines
- Difficulties in co-ordinating the installation process between the supplier and the delivery company and the delivery company and the local resident
- Poor delivery records held by the supplier
- Lack of existing telecommunications links in some residents homes

Concerns around the delivery and installation process resulted in a temporary halt being placed on further deliveries by the project team until the existing backlog was cleared. However the project was dealt a major blow when, at the end of January 2002, the supplier went into receivership. This has cause significant problems and delays for the project team. Warranties, software licences and support are not being honoured and there have been lengthy negotiations with the receivers, which remain unresolved (as at Oct 2002).

The resulting confusion around the status of orders, the delivery of machines and other administrative problems meant that relations with the community became strained and the project team felt 'under siege'. The project has had to work hard to rebuild relations with the community. The supply of the remaining PCs (about 300) was re-tendered, and was awarded to a Framlingham-based local company. Technical support is now provided by Websites UK and an engineer has been employed by the project team to provide on-site assistance.

The project has established its own ISP and each WuC recipient is entitled to three months free Internet access via 'SuffolkOnline'. A number of tariffs are available for recipients who choose to stay with SuffolkOnline as their ISP provider after the initial three month free period. These are designed to cater for a range of needs, and include: unlimited anytime access (£12.75 per month), local call rate charges, Business anytime use (£24.99 per month) and a light user option. A pay as you go option is also being developed. There are currently in excess of 1100 paying customers and a further 300 are still in the free access period.

There is currently no broadband coverage in the Framingham area. In response to this a wireless project is being developed in Badingham, one of the villages in the SuffolkOnline area. The scheme is providing access via wireless transceivers to PC users in the area. There are also future plans for the provision of wireless broadband to the villages of Dennington and Brundish.

Training and support

The provision of appropriate support was identified as a key element in the successful implementation of the project. A free one-hour training session was provided on delivery and installation of the WuC PC in the home. This was very basic and covered switching the PC on and off, sending and receiving email, accessing the Internet and getting onto the SuffolkOnline website. The installation engineer also undertook an assessment of the skills level of the recipient. A further training needs questionnaire was subsequently sent to each household, which identified key areas of potential interest for each member of the household. Each participant received a comprehensive welcome pack with the new computer.

The training need assessment identified a number of issues around the scope and nature of training required by members of the community. A series of courses were developed which were designed to meet the needs of groups within the community. The introductory courses were directly commissioned as there was no existing provision of Windows XP related training.

Four courses were developed which included:

- Basic introductory courses (aimed at novice users and designed around the software that was supplied with the WuC computer. The course covered switching the PC on and off, use of a mouse, use of email and the Internet)
- General Skills Courses (including an introduction to Word, emailing and Internet skills)
- Further general skills (a range of courses established to meet varying needs, delivered over four to six weeks)
- Specific topic more advanced courses (including website design, digital camera and scanner, more advanced use of the Internet and email)

Each WuC recipient was entitled to attend one free SuffolkOnline course or the entitlement could also be used to the value of £25 towards any other computer-based course delivered through a local Learning and Resource Centre or the learndirect centre. SuffolkOnline offers further subsidised courses to both WuC participants and others at a cost of £15 per person. The local centre at Brundish provides informal 'drop in' sessions where residents can ask questions and buy consumables. The Centre now employs a manager to co-ordinate local training carried out through SuffolkOnline. One to one training is available for those with special needs.

Initial uptake of the free training was, however, slow at first. A telemarketing exercise was, therefore, undertaken to renew contact with project participants and to encourage residents to take up the offer of free training. More than 500 courses have now been booked through SuffolkOnline. In addition project monitoring information found that 78 per cent of households received basic training at installation, and 42 per cent of households have gone onto to receive further training

Other training has also been made available for 'Community Champions'. This has included ICT training (aimed at those with low ICT skills) as well as courses identifying and progressing ICT community projects and portal administration and design.

Content development

In the formative stages of the project, four theme groups were established to help support the further development of the project. It was envisaged at the outset that these groups would direct the project and would 'develop a life of their own'. However in practice there have been problems in sustaining the groups and it has been difficult to

engage people in them on an ongoing basis. The development of a local website and associated content fell under the auspices of one of these groups.

The SuffolkOnline portal was launched mid November 2001 and there have been 2000 registrations to date. The portal includes an email facility, hosting of local websites and is administered by a private sector company. The project team offers support on website development and provides access to a digital camera. A range of e-government services can be accessed through the website, such as information on jobs, benefit advice, advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau, and the ability to register library books.

The success of the portal is considered to be central to the success of the project, as it is the 'shop window' for Suffolkonline.net. A marketing strategy has been developed to promote the SuffolkOnline portal and ISP. However managing the portal and keeping it up to date with relevant and interesting content is a time consuming task for the project team.

The Project Team and Champions have encouraged WuC participants to contribute to the Suffolkonline.net web portal with local news and information on forthcoming events and to develop their own locally orientated web sites. Local people generally have, however, been slow at coming forward with relevant local content

In August 2002 the SuffolkOnline portal, in conjunction with Hansard, piloted an e-government trial. This included on-line surgeries and email communication with Councillors and MPs. Over 100 residents participated in the process and it was widely felt to represent a successful trial.

Meeting project objectives

The project sought to 'wire up' 1550 households by supplying them with Internet ready PCs and providing three months free access and appropriate training and support. This target is on course to be met with only 100 PCs still to be installed (as at October 2002).

The original proposal does not outline specific aims or objectives for the project. However a review of progress points to a number of relevant outcomes associated with the WuC programme more generally including:

- 78 per cent of participants have received basic ICT training on installation, 42 per cent have gone on to take further training
- Public access points have been developed to provide convenient internet access for the general public
- Four schools in the area are working closely with the project providing community access and strengthening electronic home school links
- There is an ongoing relationship with the high school e-learning foundation, meeting regularly to co-ordinate work and sharing knowledge on wireless networking and support of applications software.
- The portal has been used to publish parish magazines, village newsletters and the creation of village news sites and conduct community consultations

Initial outcomes to date

The programme evaluation drew on research conducted in each local WuC. A two stage survey was conducted with 200 people who had originally registered for the project. A follow up survey was conducted 6 months later. 139 people contributed to the follow up survey and their experiences provide an indication of the initial outcomes associated with the objectives of the WuC programme:

- The vast majority of respondents (94.3%) receiving the technology have used it to access the Internet
- Four in ten respondents had received some training to introduce them to using the Internet
- Almost two in three internet users (62.5%) have used it to search for labour market information
- However less than 10% have used the Internet to find out about or communicate with local community groups

Project summary

The Framlingham WuC (SuffolkOnline) has equipped almost 1550 households with Internet access, provided 17 machines for use in community access points and provided 20 machines for local small businesses. The implementation timeframe imposed by the programme has created major tensions at the local level and the project has faced considerable challenges not least when their supplier of PCs went into receivership. A new supplier has been sourced but the uncertainty and delay caused by the quality of supply jeopardised the credibility of the project within the community. Free Internet connection is available via the projects own ISP, as well as a number of training and support packages, two of which have been specifically commissioned to meet the needs

of residents. Community Champions have been recruited to support the work of the project team, and help generate suitable locally relevant content for the site.

Future challenges: sustainability

The future sustainability of the project is as yet unclear. Revenue funding for two of the project staff expires in March 2003, and the remaining two staff in October 2003. Therefore securing the future of SuffolkOnline is a significant challenge for the project team. A number of developments are being actively pursued which include working with local business organisations and realising the opportunities the wireless project may bring. A SuffolkOnline Marketing Strategy and promotional materials have been developed with a view to expanding the service as a revenue stream. The training element of the project is also generating some revenue funding, although this is at the moment heavily subsidised. It is expected that as more advanced courses are delivered, more will be charged for these. A Community Development Trust is being considered as a way forward for the project and a funding consultant (provided through DfES) is working with the project team to develop bids for further funding.

List of contributors

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Victoria Moore	Project Co-ordinator, Suffolk Online
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Kensington, Liverpool – July 2002

Context

Kensington lies close to the centre of Liverpool, immediately east of the city centre. It is a mainly residential area dominated by pre-1919 terraced housing, much of which is in a poor state of repair. The physical environment is generally poor, particularly surrounding the main arterial routes out of the centre, and there is a need for better quality shopping facilities in the area. Structural unemployment, resulting from the decline of the manufacturing base in the 1980s, is a key problem. The area suffers from generally low-income levels, and there is a high level of dependency on benefits.

In 1998 Kensington was selected as a round one pathfinder under the national New Deal for Communities programme. A total of £61.5m was available over ten years to develop community-led approaches to tackling deprivation by focusing on five key areas: job prospects; high levels of crime; educational under-achievement; poor health; and problems with housing and the physical environment. Kensington Regeneration is the charitable company that has been set up to run the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme in Kensington.

The original Kensington Wired Up Communities (KWuC) proposal was developed and promoted by Kensington Regeneration. The proposal was submitted to the DfEE (now DfES) in September 2000, for a capital grant of £500k with revenue funding provided by Kensington Regeneration. The proposal received further development support, funded by DfES, from Halcyon Training and Management Consultancy. The proposal was resubmitted and DfES funding subsequently approved. The Kensington project was officially launched in February 2001.

Management and Organisation

A range of project partners was identified in the original bid. These included:

- Kensington Regeneration
- John Moores University
- Liverpool Lifelong Learning Service
- the Parks Partnership
- Liverpool City Council

- ITMP Recycling as well as ICL and Gardener Systems, two private sector organisations.

Kensington Regeneration was identified as the lead organisation.

A Steering Group was established in order to provide overall strategic direction for the project. Membership of the KWuC Steering Group has fluctuated with the life stage of the project. The core membership of the Steering Group is shown below.

Membership of the KWuC Steering Group

- Kensington Regeneration (Chair)
- Community representatives
- Private sector contractors
- John Moores University - Centre for Digital Content
- Excite Education Action Zone
- GONW
- Department for Education and Skills

The Steering Group drew together a range of partners across the public and private sectors and from the local community. More strategic public sector representatives were brought on the Steering Group at the later stages of the project including the North West Development Agency and Objective One. The Steering Group met on a regular basis during the project. However due to the need to establish a more strategic context for the project and integrate it into the wider aims of NDC the Kensington Regeneration Board are now leading on the longer-term policy and action plan for the project.

A dedicated project manager, revenue funded by KNDC, was appointed in March 2001. The project manager was appointed by KNDC to lead on the operations of the project to complete the DfES contract. Other project staff were employed in the early stages of the project on a temporary basis through two new start up companies. Fifteen staff were recruited between November 2000 and early January 2001.

The community network team focussed on the community development aspects of the project, working with local residents and community groups to develop interest in the project. The team was employed on temporary contracts, coming to an end in July 2001, and comprised mainly local people who had previously been unemployed.

The technical team co-ordinated the technical aspects of KWuC implementation. Eight members of staff were employed on temporary contracts to install machines, undertake the technical configuration and to provide technical help. The technical team was largely recruited from a mainstream employment agency, although a number of the team were local people.

The original proposal outlined the use of an intermediate labour market initiative (ILM). The intention was that this would provide a range of support services for the project, including a telephone helpline and an email response scheme, ongoing training and end user administration of the ISP, connected network and the maintenance of the intelligent portal. Because of the large number of regeneration programmes operating locally (including for example NDC, Objective 1 and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund), it was decided that a more strategic approach to the development of an ILM should be taken. This meant that ILM development would be developed as an integral part of the NDC employment and enterprise programme in partnership with other local partnerships. It is envisaged that ILMs in a number of occupational areas will be developed locally by the NDC partnership in conjunction with New Deal.

Engaging the local community

A number of approaches were used to engage the local community in the project.

The core role of the community network team was to work proactively with the community, to stimulate interest amongst residents and community groups, and to develop capacity within the community. The team was responsible for achieving the target for the number of people 'signed up' to the project. The team easily achieved this target, and it was felt that they operated effectively, particularly in the early stages of the project. The team also visited 26 local community groups (including residential homes, sheltered accommodation, and a Hindu centre), to promote the project and engage local people in the process. Other mechanisms used to promote the project locally include road shows, blanket door to door leafleting, and the production of promotional material.

The other key mechanism for community engagement was through the Community Champions. It was envisaged that these would act as ambassadors for the project, would be key people within the community, and would deliver community involvement in

the project. A total of 51 local people were recruited as Community Champions for the project. The Champions were drawn from local community groups, local schools, were already community activists or community leaders. All of the Champions were supplied with a new Internet ready PC, and were offered a limited amount of basic IT training. However many of the champions did not have sufficient ICT skills to promote the use of the technology within their groups. Funding was attracted through the Community Champions Fund which provides basic training on creating content on the website and ECDL module training but take up was low.

A further mechanism for community engagement was a series of working groups that were established in the early stages of the project. The original intention was that these would be developed by local people, and would take forward key areas of work within the project. Each group would take responsibility for the development of local approaches to: community web content development; education, training and lifelong learning; business development (including SMEs and micro-businesses); and e-government.

One member of staff from five local schools was approached to act as a Community Champion and ambassador for the project within each school. In the development stages of the project, all children within five local schools were given publicity material and an application form to take home for their parents (although subsequently this did cause problems around eligibility). This has continued with the development of a Wired-up Schools Bid to the DfES.

Technology, installation and security

The main criterion for eligibility to receive a computer was residency in the eligible area, and machines were therefore distributed on a 'first come first served' basis. The marketing of the scheme was, however, targeted at certain groups for example families with school age children and unemployed residents, although nobody was excluded from receiving a computer as long as they fulfilled the residency criteria.

The technology that was supplied to residents was 'Internet ready' recycled PCs with analogue dialup Internet access. Each computer was also supplied with a new printer, and with software including Windows 95 and Microsoft Works. A deal was brokered with

local virtual ISP Merseynet, but all online costs had to be borne by the user. Each computer was supplied with software to connect to Merseynet. A number of issues did emerge, however, around the reliability and the relatively low specification of the machines.

The refurbished machines were originally to be supplied via the national DfES/CMF funded Computers within Reach scheme, through the regional consortium Bytes Twice. However due to problems associated with the supply of PCs. Computers were eventually supplied directly from Recommit, and Kensington ICT was responsible for delivery and installation. There were some delays in getting machines installed into residents' homes, and this created problems around storing large quantities of equipment. Delays also created problems around the warranty on the machines, which were supplied with a 28 day return to base warranty.

Training and support

A 'Cyber Centre' was developed as a physical base for KWuC and also as a focus for learning and training activities. The centre was installed with 15 new fully networked PCs. The start-up costs of the centre were funded by Kensington Regeneration. A number of training courses have been carried out at the Cyber Centre, although this has been relatively limited. These include:

- European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) training delivered to approximately 30 residents, between August and November 2001, by Everton Development Trust.
- Computers Don't Bite training, delivered to approximately 20 residents, by the Liverpool City Council Adult Learning Service.
- Basic IT Training for Community Champions, over three evenings.

A limited amount of basic training (including how to switch on and send an email) was provided to some residents when the technology was installed. This was provided at the later stages of the project via a 'Getting Started Guide' on disc developed by the technical support provider and funded by KNDC. Additional support was available via the free phone technical support helpline. There were some concerns however, that not all residents had received this.

In terms of helpdesk support, this element of the project was revenue funded by Kensington Regeneration. It was eventually put out to tender, and a local company (About IT) was chosen. An 0800 number was provided for residents, which was open until 7:00 p.m. Over 900 calls have been taken since the service was launched in July 2001. The approach that was adopted was to try to solve problems over the phone and to offer a call-out within 24 hours.

Web site development

The KWuC proposal outlined plans for the development of a community information web site/portal. This would contain local information of interest to Kensington residents. There was an aspiration to develop an 'intelligent portal', which could be individually customised to provide tailored information and support to residents on a range of issues including health, employment, learning and community information.

One of the working groups was specifically dedicated to the development of local content. However, after initial enthusiasm the working groups eventually ceased functioning. A local company was commissioned to build the local website. The DfES then added their own section at the front of the website. However, whilst some of the champions have been involved (e.g. in the development of an editorial policy for content) lack of finance has meant that further development on the site has been restricted.

Meeting project objectives

Objective	Achievement
To run a pilot scheme offering 2,000 local people access to the Internet using recycled PCs.	2000 recycled PCs have been distributed at no cost to the local community, including residents and community groups. Internet access was provided at a cost to the user.
To address the 'digital divide' in offering recycled PCs at no cost to people from disadvantaged communities.	
To establish an online network of 50 ICT champions	51 Community Champions have been recruited. Role and level of involvement of the Champions requires additional development to become sustainable.
To develop a community web site/portal for the Kensington area to establish an 'online identity.	Community web site has been produced. Development of content and support for the site requires funding.
To offer a range of services and information to local people through the portal – e-government, e-learning, jobs online, leisure and hobby interests.	See above. The e-government agenda is being driven locally by Liverpool City Council
To offer a programme of ICT community capacity building through training in public access points such as the new KWuC Cyber Centre and its local satellites.	Initial training has been carried out in the Cyber Centre. ESF application to develop the Learning Centre has been developed and co-funded by LSC & KNDC.
To encourage ICT-related community business development and social enterprise initiatives.	Work in this area is supported by local Community Enterprise support agency – ELECT.

Initial outcomes to date

The survey of 200 local participants and the focus groups with adults and children suggested the following short term outcomes associated with the immediate objective for WuC (access to the Internet and e-government services) and the longer term objectives of learning, employment and social cohesion.

- A half of the WuC participants had used the technology to access the internet
- Almost one in five were not satisfied with the technology
- Only one third had had undertaken any training
- The proportion of internet users (adults) supporting children undertaking homework had increased from just under a quarter to just over one half
- Very few respondents (four) had changed their employment situation with only one of them suggesting that access to the WuC technology had contributed to the change
- The majority of internet users have not used the internet to contact a local community group

The research suggests that whilst the WuC technology has been delivered into the community there are clearly issues associated with its reliability and the cost of use which have limited the use of the internet. There are also issues associated with the lack of training for participants which have adversely affected people's willingness to try the internet. Whilst there is some evidence of individuals' use of the internet to search for information to improve their labour market situation there is little evidence of positive impact on their labour market circumstances at this time. Furthermore, whilst users may use the WuC technology to communicate with family and friends beyond the local area, there is little evidence that they use it to contact community groups within the area.

Project summary

The project is the only WuC to be developed through the first phase of the programme and as such has been a pathfinder for the remaining WuC areas funded through phase 2 of the programme. Many of the problems associated with implementing the project have been emergent in nature and, as such, Kensington has had to tackle them without prior experience. Issues associated with the reliability of the recycled PC technology, funding of internet use and storage and distribution problems were all identified in Kensington and subsequently influenced the approach adopted by projects in the second phase of the programme. The development and delivery of suitable training interventions (i.e. informal and 'drop in' opportunities along with 'free' web-design courses) would appear

to be a priority if the longer term learning, employment and social cohesion objectives are to be met.

The future: sustainability

A consultation event was held in December 2001 around the future development of KWuC. A Business Plan was developed and included a new vision for the project:

'Link the community, through ICT, in an inclusive and accessible way; providing resources for access to information, communication, education, training and employment opportunities'.

It also identified a series of project requirements in order to achieve this vision. These included:

- A base from which to operate, offer training, guidance and support
- An Intermediate Labour Market project to support the local community
- Identified activity to meet gaps in training
- Identified external funding sources

The plan was agreed by the KNDC Board in December 2001. Subsequently an ESF bid has been developed and approved which will support the development of a variety of training interventions including 'first steps' IT skills, CLAIT and ECDL along with bespoke events and courses identified through community consultation. The funding will support 'drop in' and informal development at the WuC learning centre. A further ERDF application will be submitted later this year to support the development of a local website through the recruitment of a dedicated Web Manager to develop the site and to support the generation of meaningful local content via the Champions.

List of contributors

This case study is based on semi-structured interviews conducted at the beginning and towards the end of the project with the following people:

Rob Campbell	Halycon Training and Development Consultants
Steve Cantley	Kensington ICT
Anne Devin	Edge Hill Youth Club

Steve Edgar	Steve Edgar Associates
Mark Jaffrey	KWuC Project Manager
Bernie Jordan	Everton Development Trust
Andrew Lockwood	City Church Community Program
Sue Robinson	Kensington Fields Community Centre
Ann Marie Turner	Kensington Regeneration

Appendix 2

MCA Selection

Stage 1: Identification of matched comparison areas

The geographical extent of the WuC pilot projects varies widely – some are based in relatively small geographical areas such as a housing estate in London, whilst others are spread across a broad geographical area for example across a number of small towns and villages in a rural location. Equally, the nature of disadvantage takes many forms including unemployment and insecure employment, homelessness, inadequate housing, high levels of debt and arrears, low educational attainment, lack of mobility limited access to essential services, poor health and lack of citizen rights - evident in each area to varying degrees.

The DETR 2000 Index of Deprivation (DLTR⁹, 2000) is arguably the most up to date and comprehensive index for comparing levels of deprivation across a range of aspects at the local level. The 2000 index covers seven aspects of deprivation – income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education skills and training, housing, geographical access to services and child poverty. The index is available at the ward level, with scores and ranks available as an overall figure and for individual domains.

However the areas of the index and the WuC areas were not coterminous. Not one of the WuC local project areas fitted precisely with existing administrative boundaries in terms of local authority districts or wards. This is a well-recognised problem associated with area based approaches. Communities do not conform to standard statistical areas and ward boundaries can frequently cut across natural communities, particularly in urban areas.

Close liaison with representatives in the local areas was required to determine which households were located in which wards within each of the WuC areas. Some projects were more straightforward than others being wholly located within one ward. However, the majority spanned two or more wards, presenting alternative choices to be explored. Working closely with the local area, an assessment was made to identify the ward in which the majority of households to be targeted by the WuC project were resident. This became the area against which a comparator area was to be found. In some cases the

⁹ Now Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

adjacent wards exhibited similar characteristics in others material differences were apparent.

A structured approach to matched comparator area selection was adopted using the Index of Deprivation as the basis for the decision. Cluster analysis was undertaken using SPSS statistical package to identify those wards which exhibited 'similar' levels of deprivation. Individual domain scores were standardised in order to reduce the weighting of the index caused by the different scoring associated with each domain. K Means Cluster analysis was then used to identify clusters of wards which exhibited similar characteristics.

The analysis involved establishing initial cluster centres based on the first 100 cases. The second step of the process assigned each case (i.e. area) to the nearest cluster centre. When a case was assigned the centre of the cluster was updated, so as cases were processed the centre of clusters migrated to concentrations of observations. The final step reassigned each case to the nearest of the updated cluster centres. However, clustering is a dynamic process dependent upon the order of cases. If the order of cases changes, the cluster solution changes. Therefore, in order to minimise any discrepancy, the analysis was rerun until the cluster membership stabilised. In the case of this analysis, six reruns were required before cluster membership completely stabilised, using the final cluster centres from the previous run as the initial cluster centres for the next run. Thus the WuC pilot projects were clustered into groups of wards which displayed relatively similar levels of deprivation across the index.

In order to identify the closest matched wards within the cluster, the average rank was taken across all the seven domains, and those wards with the closest overall average range to the target ward were identified.

Stage 2 Matching on other criteria

Devising an appropriate matched group is not a mechanical task; it is based on prior knowledge and theoretical understanding of the social processes in question. Research has identified what has become known as the 'digital divide'. For example research in the UK (DTI 2000) suggests that:

- social class AB far more likely to use the Internet than DE
- women were less likely than men to use the internet
- younger people were far more likely than older people to use the Internet
- people from ethnic communities were less likely to use the internet than others
- those resident in rural areas were less likely to use the Internet than those in urban areas

Some of these factors are accounted for, to varying degrees, by domains within the Index of Deprivation. For example the income and education domains may be taken as proxy indicators of economic resources and level of qualification which have been shown to be two key influences on the digital divide (Gardner and Oswald 2001). However other socio-demographic and geographic factors and matching characteristics, potentially important within the context of WuC and the digital divide lie outside the scope of the Index of Deprivation. A decision was taken to account for these using other sources of data on the areas.

This process took as its foundation the seven wards with 'similar' deprivation characteristics constructed using the cluster analysis on the Index of deprivation. Potential matches for the relevant WuC area were then compared on the basis of key demographic data drawn from the Census (1991) namely age, gender, ethnicity and housing tenure. The ward with the closest match was selected and taken forward to the next stage in the selection process which tested for the spatial characteristics of the matched area and the WuC. Wards were initially considered on the basis of whether they were largely rural or urban in character. A definition of rural wards developed by the Countryside Agency was used for this analysis. This definition is based on a set of socio-economic variables, which was used to 'predict which wards could be classified as 'rural or non-rural'. The list of variables used were primarily chosen from an ONS classification of health authorities using 1991 Census variables. The most significant variables were population density, age structure, public transport usage for commuting, percentage employed in agriculture, fishing, forestry, percentage employed in primary production and ethnic characteristics.

The final stage in the process considered the existence of other ICT initiatives aimed at overcoming the digital divide in the area which may influence home ownership of technology to access the internet. In the initial stages of the implementation of the WuC programme a range of ICT based policy interventions were in varying stages of

development (for a comprehensive list of current interventions see LSC 2002). These interventions impacted on large tracts of the country which limited areas which remained unaffected. A decision was taken to focus on excluding areas which contained initiatives encouraging home use of ICT. These included:

- Computers Within Reach Programme (CWR) providing recycled computers
- Education Action Zones -many of which are making laptops available for home use

A list of relevant area based initiatives was supplied by the DfES and some areas were identified to be in receipt of the CWR initiative and as a result were discounted. Other funding streams (e.g. ERDF) have been used at the local level to fund IT in the home, consequently enquiries at the local level were made to ascertain the existence or otherwise of such interventions in the proposed area. If an initiative providing IT in the home existed, the area was discounted for the purposes of match comparison.

Stage 3 Matching the survey samples

A further consideration in matching the samples in the WuC and MCA is the issue of self-selection which occurs across the WuC programme which compromises the experimental approach to evaluation. It was not possible to identify 'would be' participants in each local area prior to implementation of the survey. To complicate matters the extent to which local WuCs aspired to provide access to a *whole* community was highly variable. For example, the phase 1 project aspired to reach less than 50% of the residents whereas several of the phase 2 projects aspired to achieve 90% penetration of the local community¹⁰. Differences in the extent to which local WuCs sought to target specific socio-economic groups was also apparent. Several of the local WuCs aspired to target the intervention on those most at risk of digital exclusion in the local community¹¹, consequently the participants in the local project would not necessarily be representative of the community as a whole. Equally in some projects there was a view that people who already owned a computer of similar capacity to that being offered through the local WuC project would not be eligible for the programme. Given the relatively large size of some of the communities and the risk of non-

¹⁰ The population base (e.g. all homes or homes without current Internet connection) for calculations of 'penetration' was not defined at the local or national level

¹¹ Although a working definition of 'those most at risk of social exclusion' was never articulated

participation, a judgement was taken to focus the evaluation on the participants in the programme and not on the community as a whole. In essence this approach maximised the chances of obtaining feedback from a high number of respondents engaged in the project who were seen to be the key actors in the evaluation process. It did however present a further challenge in the compilation of the respondents in the MCA due to bias introduced through the varying motivations to participate in the local project (or not).

This resulted in the need to account for the characteristics of the sample in the WuC area if the characteristics of the sample differed from that of the general area population. The methodology took account of this through control of the survey process in the MCAs. To enable the survey of participants in each WuC area to take place, local projects provided the contact details for participants. A random survey was undertaken with those who had registered to participate in the local project. The data was analysed to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of participants in the local project. On the basis of this analysis, survey quotas were set and applied to the survey process in the MCA.

Appendix 3

Research Instruments

WIRED UP COMMUNITIES – MATCHED COMPARISON AREAS

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

8 INTERVIEWER _____ ID No. _____
DATE _____

9 INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon my name is and I'm calling from BMG Research. We are carrying out a survey of people about how they use computers and the Internet.

We would like to ask you a few questions about computers and your use of the Internet. It will take around half an hour and any information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. We would also like to come back to talk to you again in a few months time. Would that be possible? (Secure participation for follow up before proceeding with interview).

- 1 YES **CONTINUE**
2 NO **THANK AND CLOSE**

ID REFERENCE NUMBER	
FIRST NAME	
SURNAME	
ADDRESS	
TOWN	

COUNTY	
POSTCODE	
TELEPHONE NUMBER (INC STD)	

10 **RECORD GENDER:** 1 MALE 2 FEMALE

RECORD MATCHED COMPARISON AREA:

1	REGENT, GREAT YARMOUTH	5
2		6
3		7
4		

11 SECTION 1 – PREVIOUS/CURRENT USE OF TECHNOLOGY

1. Have you ever used a computer?

- | | |
|-------|------------------------|
| 1 YES | IF YES CONTINUE |
| 2 NO | IF NO GO TO Q5 |

WHERE YES:

2. Where was this? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 HOME
 - 2 WORK
 - 3 AT SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME
 - 4 SCHOOL/COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
 - 5 CYBERCAFE
 - 6 LIBRARY OR LEARNING CENTRE
 - 7 SOMEWHERE ELSE **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

3. About how often do you use a computer? Please include your usage of a computer at home, work or elsewhere. **READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 DAILY
- 2 AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK
- 3 AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH
- 4 LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH
- 5 DON'T KNOW

4. Which of these do you use a computer for? **SHOW CARD 1 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 E-MAIL
 - 2 INTERNET
 - 3 WORD PROCESSING
 - 4 SPREADSHEETS
 - 5 DATABASES
 - 6 GAMES
 - 7 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT/HOUSEHOLD FINANCES
 - 8 TO WORK AT HOME
 - 9 LEARNING/EDUCATION/TRAINING
 - 10 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-
- 11 NONE OF THESE

ASK ALL:

5. Have you ever used the Internet?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

IF YES CONTINUE
IF NO GO TO Q10

WHERE YES:

6. Where was this? **SHOW CARD 2 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 HOME
 - 2 WORK
 - 3 AT SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME
 - 4 SCHOOL/COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
 - 5 CYBERCAFE
 - 6 LIBRARY OR LEARNING CENTRE
 - 7 SOMEWHERE ELSE **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

7. In what ways do you usually access the Internet? **SHOW CARD 3 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 COMPUTER/PC
 - 2 DIGITAL TV/SET TOP BOX
 - 3 WAP PHONE
 - 4 GAMES CONSOLE
 - 5 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

8. About how often do you use the Internet? Please include your usage of the Internet at home, work or elsewhere. **CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 DAILY
- 2 AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK
- 3 AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH
- 4 LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH
- 5 DON'T KNOW

9. Which of these have you ever used the Internet for? **SHOW CARD 4 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 TO SEND OR RECEIVE E-MAILS
- 2 ONLINE SHOPPING
- 3 ONLINE BANKING
- 4 ONLINE BOOKING SERVICES
- 5 GENERAL INFORMATION (e.g. weather)
- 6 COMMUNITY/LOCAL INFORMATION
- 7 LEARNING/EDUCATION/TRAINING
- 8 ENTERTAINMENT
- 9 TO CREATE YOUR OWN WEB PAGE
- 10 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**

-
- 11 DON'T KNOW
 - 12 NONE OF THESE

NOW GO TO Q11

WHERE NO TO Q5:

10. What are the main reasons you do not use the Internet? **DO NOT READ OUT.
CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 DO NOT HAVE A COMPUTER OR ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AT HOME
 - 2 LACK OF CONFIDENCE/SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE
 - 3 NOT INTERESTED IN USING THE INTERNET
 - 4 NO TIME TO USE THE INTERNET
 - 5 COSTS ARE TOO HIGH / CANNOT AFFORD IT
 - 6 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

ASK ALL:

11. Can I just check, do you have access to the Internet at home?

- 1 YES **IF YES GO TO Q12**
- 2 NO **IF NO CONTINUE**

SECTION 2 – SKILLS, LEARNING AND WORK

ASK ALL:

12. What is your highest qualification? **SHOW CARD 5 AND CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 NO QUALIFICATIONS **IF NO QUALIFICATIONS GO TO Q14**
 - 2 CSES (BELOW GRADE 1)
 - 3 1-4 O LEVEL/GCSE (A-C)/CSE GRADE 1
 - 4 5+ O LEVEL/GCSE (A-C)/CSE GRADE 1 OR 1 A LEVEL OR 2 AS LEVELS OR BTEC FIRST DIP./CERTIFICATE
 - 5 2 A LEVELS OR 1 A LEVEL + 2 AS LEVELS OR 4 AS LEVELS OR BTEC NATIONAL DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE
 - 6 HND/HNC OR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
 - 7 DEGREE LEVEL
 - 8 POSTGRADUATE LEVEL E.G. MA/PHD
 - 9 NVQ/GNVQ **PLEASE STATE HIGHEST LEVEL:** _____.
 - 10 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

13. Do you feel your qualifications are out of date? **CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

14. Do you feel you need to improve your...**READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 READING ABILITY
- 2 WRITING ABILITY
- 3 BASIC MATHS
- 4 NONE OF THE ABOVE
- 5 DON'T KNOW

15. Have you undertaken any education or training in the last 12 months? **CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 YES **CONTINUE**
- 2 NO **GO TO Q17**

16. In which of the following locations have you undertaken training or learning in the last 12 months? **SHOW CARD 6 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY BELOW**

- 1 AT HOME
- 2 AT WORK
- 3 AT A LOCAL LEARNING CENTRE
- 4 AT COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
- 5 OTHER **PLEASE**

SPECIFY _____

- 6 DON'T KNOW

ASK ALL:

17. Which of the following (if any) are preventing you from taking part in (further) training or learning? **SHOW CARD 7 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 LACK OF INFORMATION
- 2 LACK OF CONFIDENCE/NECESSARY SKILLS
- 3 LACK OF INTEREST
- 4 LOCATION/RUNNING TIMES NOT SUITABLE
- 5 NO SUPPORT FROM EMPLOYER
- 6 CANNOT AFFORD IT
- 7 LACK OF TIME
- 8 LACK OF CHILDCARE
- 9 OTHER **PLEASE**

SPECIFY _____

18. Which of the following best sums up your own computer skills? **SHOW CARD 8 WITH SCALE AND CODE ONE BELOW UNDER "COMPUTER"**

	Q18 COMPUTER	Q19 INTERNET
NON EXISTENT / NEVER USED	1	1
BEGINNER LEVEL	2	2
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	3	3
ADVANCED LEVEL	4	4
EXPERT	5	5
DON'T KNOW	6	6

1. And which of the following best sums up your own Internet skills (for example sending and receiving messages, searching for information)? **SHOW CARD 8 AND CODE ONE ABOVE UNDER "INTERNET"**

2. How important do you think it is to be able to use computers for life in general?
READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY
 - 1 VERY IMPORTANT
 - 2 FAIRLY IMPORTANT
 - 3 NOT VERY IMPORTANT
 - 4 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
 - 5 DON'T KNOW

3. Have you ever undertaken any computer or IT training?
 - 1 YES **IF YES CONTINUE**
 - 2 NO **IF NO GO TO Q24**

WHERE YES:

4. Did/will this result in a qualification?
 - 1 YES **IF YES CONTINUE**
 - 2 NO **IF NO GO TO Q24**

WHERE YES:

5. What is the highest IT qualification that you have / studying for? **SHOW CARD 9 AND CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 RSA CLAIT **SPECIFY LEVEL** _____
- 2 EUROPEAN COMPUTER DRIVING LICENCE (ECDL)
- 3 CSE/O LEVEL/GSCE
- 4 A LEVEL
- 5 BTEC **SPECIFY LEVEL** _____
- 6 NVQ/GNVQ **SPECIFY LEVEL** _____
- 7 HND/HNC OR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
- 8 DEGREE LEVEL
- 9 POSTGRADUATE LEVEL (e.g. MA, PGCE)
- 10 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY** _____
- 11 DON'T KNOW

NOW GO TO Q26

6. Are you interested in studying for an IT qualification?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

ASK ALL:

7. Have you ever used the Internet for any of the following? **SHOW CARD 10 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 INFORMATION ON JOB OPPORTUNITIES
- 2 INFORMATION ON TRAINING/LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
- 3 DISTANCE LEARNING/LEARNING FROM HOME
- 4 INFORMATION ON HOW TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS
- 5 COUNCIL INFORMATION
- 6 BENEFITS INFORMATION
- 7 HEALTH INFORMATION
- 8 CHILDCARE INFORMATION
- 9 INFORMATION ON EVENTS/WHAT'S ON LOCALLY
- 10 NONE OF THE ABOVE
- 11 DON'T KNOW

SECTION 3 - DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

ASK ALL:

8. Do you play an active part in any of the following groups? **SHOW CARD 11 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 RESIDENTS'/TENANTS' ASSOCIATION
- 2 TRADE UNION
- 3 POLITICAL PARTY
- 4 SELF-HELP/SUPPORT GROUP
- 5 SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY/PTA
- 6 YOUTH ACTIVITIES/CLUB
- 7 RELIGIOUS GROUP
- 8 SPORTS OR SOCIAL CLUB
- 9 WOMEN'S GROUP OR ORGANISATION
- 10 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**

11 NO ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL GROUPS

9. Would you like to be more involved in community activities?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

10. Do any of the following prevent you being more involved in community activities?
SHOW CARD 12 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 LACK OF TIME
- 2 LACK OF CHILD CARE
- 3 CARING FOR AN ELDERLY/SICK PERSON
- 4 DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON
- 5 NOT INTERESTED IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
- 6 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**

7 NONE OF THE ABOVE

11. Which of the following have you done in the past three years? **SHOW CARD 13**
AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 CONTACTED A LOCAL COUNCILLOR
- 2 CONTACTED A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
- 3 SIGNED A PETITION
- 4 STOOD FOR ELECTION IN ANY ORGANISATION
- 5 ATTENDED A PUBLIC MEETING
- 6 DONE SOME VOLUNTARY WORK
- 7 HELPED IN FUND-RAISING
- 8 VOTED IN AN ELECTION (local, national or European)
- 9 NONE OF THESE

12. Thinking about the area in which you live (i.e. your neighbourhood), how would you rate the area on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good, for the following? **SHOW CARD 14 WITH SCALE AND CODE ONE FOR EACH**

	VERY POOR				VERY GOOD	DON'T KNOW
AS A PLACE TO LIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
FOR ENTERTAINMENT	1	2	3	4	5	6
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	1	2	3	4	5	6
AS A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION 5 - LINKS WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

ASK ALL:

1. Do you personally have any children of school age (age 4-16) living with you, of which you are the parent or guardian?

- 1 YES **IF YES CONTINUE.**
 2 NO **IF NO GO TO Q36**

2. Please tell me how you rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 in agree strongly and 5 is disagree strongly.... **SHOW CARD 15 WITH SCALE AND CODE ONE FOR EACH**

	AGREE STRONGLY				DISAGREE STRONGLY	DON'T KNOW
COMPUTER SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL TO MY CHILDREN'S WORK NOW	1	2	3	4	5	6
COMPUTER SKILLS WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO MY CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE FUTURE	1	2	3	4	5	6

1. In general, if you needed to contact your child's school about something, would you know who to go to? **CODE ONE**

- 1 YES, DEFINITELY
- 2 YES, PROBABLY
- 3 NO
- 4 DON'T KNOW

2. Do you feel you have enough information about what is happening at school? **CODE ONE**

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

3. And have you ever used the Internet for any of the following? **SHOW CARD 16 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 HELPING CHILDREN WITH HOMEWORK
- 2 HELPING CHILDREN'S GENERAL KNOWLEDGE/LEARNING
- 3 HELPING CHILDREN DEVELOP COMPUTER SKILLS
- 4 FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS
- 5 CONTACTING THE SCHOOL
- 6 NONE OF THE ABOVE
- 7 DON'T KNOW

SECTION 6 – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

ASK ALL:

4. What was your age last birthday? **SHOW CARD 17 AND CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 16-17
- 2 18-24
- 3 25-34
- 4 35-44
- 5 45-54
- 6 55-64
- 7 65 AND OVER
- 8 REFUSED

5. Which of the following best describes your ethnic origin? **SHOW CARD 18 AND CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 WHITE
 - 2 BLACK – CARIBBEAN
 - 3 BLACK – AFRICAN
 - 4 BLACK – OTHER
 - 5 INDIAN
 - 6 PAKISTANI
 - 7 BANGLADESHI
 - 8 CHINESE
 - 9 IRISH
 - 10 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-
- 11 REFUSED

6. How many people in your household including yourself are in the following age groups? **READ OUT EACH AGE GROUP AND WRITE IN NUMBER OF PERSONS AS APPROPRIATE**

Under 16	
16-19	
20-24	
25-34	
35-54	
55-64	
65+	

1. Which of the following best describes your family status? **SHOW CARD 19. CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 MARRIED/LIVING WITH PARTNER – WITH CHILDREN
- 2 MARRIED/LIVING WITH PARTNER – WITHOUT CHILDREN
- 3 SEPARATED/DIVORCED/SINGLE/WIDOWED – WITH CHILDREN
- 4 SEPARATED/DIVORCED/SINGLE/WIDOWED – WITHOUT CHILDREN

2. Which of the following best describes your current circumstances? **SHOW CARD 20 AND CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 IN PAID FULL-TIME WORK (30 HOURS OR MORE)
- 2 IN PAID PART-TIME WORK (LESS THAN 30 HOURS)
- 3 SELF-EMPLOYED
- 4 RETIRED
- 5 ON A GOVERNMENT TRAINING SCHEME
- 6 LOOKING AFTER HOME AND/OR FAMILY
- 7 IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION
- 8 NOT WORKING DUE TO ILL HEALTH
- 9 REGISTERED AS UNEMPLOYED

WHERE REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED (CODE 9 IN Q40, OTHERS GO TO Q42):

3. For how long have you been registered unemployed? **CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 0-6 MONTHS
- 2 7-11 MONTHS
- 3 1-3 YEARS
- 4 OVER 3 YEARS

ASK ALL:

4. Do you have any long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

1 YES

2 NO

THANK AND CLOSE

NOTE: LEAVE LETTER THANKING FOR PARTICIPATION AND REMINDING THEM WE WILL WANT TO INTERVIEW THEM AGAIN

WIRED UP COMMUNITIES – PILOT AREAS – FOLLOW-UP
WIRED UP COMMUNITY PROJECT: «PROJECT»
HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

Good morning/afternoon my name is and I'm calling from BMG Research. We are carrying out a survey of people who are participating in the Wired Up Communities project/INSERT LOCAL PROJECT NAME. We talked with you earlier this year and we would just like to ask you a few questions about your experiences of the project now.

ASK TO SPEAK TO NAMED CONTACT

ID REFERENCE NUMBER			
* «REFNUM» *			
«NAME1» «NAME2»	Date		Outcome
«ADD1»	<i>Time</i>		
«ADD2»			
«ADD3»			
«ADD4»			
«POST»			
«TELNUM»			

INTERVIEWER _____ ID No. _____ DATE _____

IF NOT NAMED CONTACT- THANK AND END INTERVIEW. (NB NEED TO INTERVIEW NAMED CONTACT)

If named contact: We would like to ask you a few questions about the project and about your use of the Internet. It will take around fifteen minutes and any information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. Would you be willing to take part?

- | | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | YES | CONTINUE | 1 | No time |
| 2 | NO | CODE REASON. THANK | 2 | Not interested |
| | AND | | 3 | Other Specify _____ |
| | | | 4 | Refused |

CLOSE

SECTION 1: EXPERIENCES OF WuC TECHNOLOGY

1. What type of equipment are you being provided with through **INSERT LOCAL PROJECT NAME? SHOW CARD 1**
- 1 PC
 - 2 LAPTOP
 - 3 SET TOP BOX
 - 4 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

2. When did you receive the WuC equipment? **PLEASE WRITE IN MONTH AND YEAR**

Month _____ **Year** _____

9999 NOT RECEIVED AS YET

IF NOT RECEIVED, OTHERS GO TO Q5:

3. When do you expect to receive the equipment? **PLEASE WRITE IN MONTH AND YEAR**

Month _____ Year _____

9997 DON'T KNOW

4. Do you know why you have not received it yet? **PLEASE WRITE IN**

97 DON'T KNOW

GO TO Q41

1. How satisfied were you with the way the equipment was installed?

- 1 COMPLETELY SATISFIED – **GO TO Q7**
- 2 MOSTLY SATISFIED
- 3 NOT SATISFIED

WHERE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED:

2. Why do you say that? **PLEASE WRITE IN**

ASK ALL:

1. How satisfied are you with the way the equipment has worked?

- 1 COMPLETELY SATISFIED – **GO TO Q9**
- 2 MOSTLY SATISFIED
- 3 NOT SATISFIED

WHERE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED:

2. Why do you say that? **PLEASE WRITE IN**

1. Have you received any basic training in the use of the **equipment**, e.g. turning it on, printing out if appropriate?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO – **GO TO Q12**

2. How satisfied are you with the training you have received in using the **equipment**?

- 1 COMPLETELY SATISFIED – **GO TO Q12**
- 2 MOSTLY SATISFIED
- 3 NOT SATISFIED

WHERE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED:

3. Why do you say that? **PLEASE WRITE IN**

ASK ALL:

1. Have you received any training to introduce you to using the **Internet** as part of **INSERT PROJECT NAME** ?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO – **GO TO Q17**

WHERE YES:

2. Did this training cover the following? **SHOW CARD 2 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 ACCESSING THE INTERNET
 - 2 SEARCHING THE INTERNET
 - 3 BOOKMARKING FAVOURITE OR INTERESTING SITES
 - 4 SENDING AN EMAIL
 - 5 PRINTING A WEB PAGE
 - 6 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

3. How satisfied are you that the training was adequate to enable you to use the Internet confidently?

- 1 COMPLETELY SATISFIED – **GO TO Q16**
- 2 MOSTLY SATISFIED
- 3 NOT SATISFIED

WHERE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED:

4. Why do you say that? **PLEASE WRITE IN**

1. Is the training you have received leading to a recognised qualification or standard?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

ASK ALL:

2. Have you started any **other** training (apart from the introduction to WuC equipment or Internet) since being involved with the WuC programme?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO – **GO TO Q21**

WHERE YES:

3. Did this arise through...? **SHOW CARD 3 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 TALKING TO SOMEONE RELATED TO THE WuC PROJECT
 - 2 SEARCHING THE INTERNET
 - 3 OTHER SOURCE e.g. Mailshot from College, Employment Service Advisor, Friend, Colleague etc
- PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

4. Is the training linked to a recognised qualification or standard?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO – **GO TO Q21**
- 3 DON'T KNOW – **GO TO Q21**

WHERE YES:

5. What is the name of training course/standard? Please give the name of the qualification and the subject. Please be as specific as possible in terms of name and level.

NAME OF
QUALIFICATION
AND SUBJECT:
2 DIGIT
SUPERCLASS

LEVEL:

ASK ALL:

1. Do you feel that your involvement with the Wired-up Communities project will encourage you to take part in (further) training in the future?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

SECTION 2: IMPACT OF WuC TECHNOLOGY

ASK ALL:

2. Have you changed suppliers of TV services as a result of obtaining the WuC equipment? **CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 YES HAVE CHANGED
- 3 NO

3. And have you changed suppliers of telephone services as a result of obtaining the WuC equipment? **CODE ONE ONLY**

1 YES HAVE CHANGED

3 NO

4. Have you used the WuC equipment to access the Internet or other local services?

1 YES – **GO TO Q27**

2 NO

5. Why do you say that? **PLEASE WRITE IN**

1. Have you accessed the Internet at all in the last 6 months?

1 YES

2 NO – **GO TO Q37**

2. Where do you access the Internet most frequently now? **SHOW CARD 4 AND CODE ONE ONLY**

1 HOME

2 WORK

3 AT SOMEONE ELSE'S HOUSE e.g. Friend/Family member

4 SCHOOL/COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

5 CYBERCAFE

6 LIBRARY OR LEARNING CENTRE

7 SOMEWHERE ELSE **PLEASE SPECIFY**

3. Has your use of the Internet increased since you got the WuC equipment in the home?

1 YES

2 NO

3 DON'T KNOW

4. About how often do you access the Internet now? **SHOW CARD 5 AND CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 DAILY (MORE THAN 1 HOUR PER DAY)
- 2 DAILY (LESS THAN 1 HOUR PER DAY)
- 3 AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK
- 4 AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK
- 5 AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH
- 6 LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH
- 7 DON'T KNOW

5. Have you used the WuC equipment for any of the following? **SHOW CARD 6 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 SHOP ONLINE
- 2 BANK ONLINE
- 4 ANY OTHER TRANSACTION **PLEASE SPECIFY**

-
- 5 NONE OF THE ABOVE
 - 6 DON'T KNOW

6. Have you requested any information or a service from a local Council or any other government organisation/department **AND RECEIVED A RESPONSE via the Internet?**

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

7. Have you used the WuC equipment to find out about any of the following...? **SHOW CARD 7 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 JOB OPPORTUNITIES
- 2 TRAINING/LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
- 3 DISTANCE LEARNING/LEARNING FROM HOME
- 4 HOW TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS
- 5 LOCAL COUNCIL INFORMATION
- 6 BENEFITS INFORMATION
- 7 HEALTH INFORMATION
- 8 CHILDCARE INFORMATION
- 9 EVENTS/WHAT'S ON LOCALLY
- 10 NONE OF THE ABOVE
- 11 DON'T KNOW

8. Have you used the WuC equipment to access any of the following websites? **SHOW CARD 8 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
www.worktrain.gov.uk	1	2	3
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk	1	2	3
www.childcarelink.gov.uk	1	2	3
www.l7kensington.net	1	2	3
www.dss.gov.uk	1	2	3
www.learndirect.co.uk	1	2	3
www.ukonline.co.uk	1	2	3

1. Have you used the WuC equipment to ..? **READ OUT A B AND C, SHOW CARD 9 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY)**

- A Find out information from any of these organisations**
- B Send messages or request information from these organisations**
- C Receive a reply or message from these organisations**

	A	B	C
	Find	Send	Receive
1 RESIDENTS/TENANTS ASSOCIATION	1	1	1
2 TRADE UNION	2	2	2
3 POLITICAL PARTY	3	3	3
4 SELF HELP/SUPPORT GROUP	4	4	4
5 SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY/PTA	5	5	5
6 YOUTH ACTIVITIES/CLUB	6	6	6
7 RELIGIOUS GROUP	7	7	7
8 SPORTS OR SOCIAL CLUB	8	8	8
9 WOMENS GROUP OR ORGANISATION	9	9	9
10 OTHER LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP PLEASE SPECIFY	10	10	10

11 _____
NONE OF THE ABOVE

11

11

11

1. Have you used the Internet or WuC equipment to...? **SHOW CARD 10 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 HELP CHILDREN WITH HOMEWORK
- 2 HELP CHILDREN'S GENERAL KNOWLEDGE/LEARNING
- 3 RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM THE LOCAL SCHOOL
- 4 SEND INFORMATION TO THE LOCAL SCHOOL
- 5 VISIT SCHOOLS WEBSITES
- 6 DO NOT USE THE TECHNOLOGY FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE
- 7 DON'T KNOW

2. If you now use more than one technology to access the Internet, which is your preferred way of accessing it? **SHOW CARD 11 AND CIRCLE ONE ONLY**

- 1 ONLY USE ONE TECHNOLOGY
 - 2 COMPUTER/PC/LAPTOP
 - 3 DIGITAL TV/SET TOP BOX
 - 4 WAP PHONE
 - 5 GAMES CONSOLE
 - 6 OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

ASK ALL:

3. Have you recently become involved in the development of a local or community website (e.g. discussion relating to what goes onto the website, programming)?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

4. Do other people in the household use WuC equipment to access the Internet? **SHOW CARD 12 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 NO – **GO TO Q41**
 - 2 YES – PARTNER
 - 3 YES – CHILD (UNDER 18)
 - 4 YES – CHILD (18 OR OVER)
 - 5 DON'T KNOW
 - 6 YES – OTHER **PLEASE SPECIFY**
-

5. About how often do they access the Internet now? **SHOW CARD 13 AND CODE ONE ONLY**

- 1 DAILY (MORE THAN 1 HOUR PER DAY)
- 2 DAILY (LESS THAN 1 HOUR PER DAY)
- 3 AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK
- 4 AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK
- 5 AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH
- 6 LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH
- 7 DON'T KNOW

6. Has their use increased since the introduction of the WuC equipment?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

SECTION 3: FUTURE

7. Did you get free use of the Internet for a limited period of time as part of the WuC package?

- 1 YES - **CONTINUE**
- 2 NO – **GO TO Q45**
- 3 DON'T KNOW – **GO TO Q45**

8. Has this period of free use finished?

- 1 YES – **CONTINUE**
- 2 NO – **GO TO Q44**
- 3 DON'T KNOW – **GO TO Q44**

9. Do you now pay for internet access?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

12 NOW GO TO Q45

WHERE FREE USE HASN'T FINISHED/DON'T KNOW:

1. When this period finishes, will you pay to access the internet ?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. don't know

ASK ALL:

2. In the future do you think you will use the WuC equipment to access the Internet?

- 1 YES – **GO TO Q47**
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

WHERE NO/DON'T KNOW:

3. Why do you say that? **PLEASE WRITE IN**

ASK ALL:

1. Will you use other equipment to access the Internet?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

WHERE YES TO Q45 AND/OR Q47 CONTINUE, OTHERS GO TO Q51

WHERE MAY ACCESS THE INTERNET IN FUTURE:

2. In the future, do you think you will use the internet to ...? **SHOW CARD 14 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 SHOP ONLINE
- 2 BANK ONLINE
- 4 ANY OTHER TRANSACTION **PLEASE SPECIFY**

-
- 5 NONE OF THE ABOVE
 - 6 DON'T KNOW

3. In the future do you think you will use the internet to request any information or a service from a local Council or any other government organisation/department **AND RECEIVED A RESPONSE?**

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

4. In the future, do you think you will use the Internet to find out information on any of the following...? **SHOW CARD 15 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 JOB OPPORTUNITIES
- 2 TRAINING/LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
- 3 DISTANCE LEARNING / LEARNING FROM HOME
- 4 HOW TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS
- 5 LOCAL COUNCIL INFORMATION
- 6 BENEFITS INFORMATION
- 7 HEALTH INFORMATION
- 8 CHILDCARE INFORMATION
- 9 EVENTS/WHAT'S ON LOCALLY
- 10 NONE OF THE ABOVE
- 11 DON'T KNOW

5. Do you think you will use the Internet to...? **SHOW CARD 16 AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 HELP CHILDREN WITH HOMEWORK
- 2 HELP CHILDREN'S GENERAL KNOWLEDGE/LEARNING
- 3 RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM THE LOCAL SCHOOL
- 4 SEND INFORMATION TO THE LOCAL SCHOOL
- 5 VISIT SCHOOLS WEBSITES
- 6 DON'T KNOW

6. Would you be prepared to participate in a group discussion about the Wired Up Communities Project/**INSERT LOCAL PROJECT NAME**? This will enable you to put forward your views about the project.

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

SECTION 4: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

7. Last time we spoke to you, we recorded your age as «AGE». Is this still correct?

- 1 YES 2 NO

IF NO ASK: Can I ask which age band you now fall into?

PROBE AND CODE BELOW

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---------|
| 1 | | 4 | 45-54 |
| 2 | 16-17 | 5 | 55-64 |
| 3 | 18-24 | 6 | OVER 65 |
| 4 | 25-34 | 7 | REFUSED |
| | 35-44 | | |

1. Last time we spoke to you, we recorded your family status as «FAMILY». Is this still correct?

- 1 YES 2 NO

IF NO ASK: Can I ask which of the following best describes your family status?

SHOW CARD 17 AND CODE ONE

- 1 MARRIED/LIVING WITH PARTNER and CHILDREN (up to 18 yrs old)
- 2 MARRIED/LIVING WITH PARTNER – WITHOUT CHILDREN
- 3 SEPARATED/DIVORCED/SINGLE/ WIDOWED – WITHOUT CHILDREN
- 4 SEPARATED/DIVORCED/SINGLE/ WIDOWED – WITH CHILDREN (up to 18 yrs old)

1. Last time we spoke to you, we recorded that you «DISABLE». Is this still correct?

- 1 YES 2 NO

2. Last time we spoke to you, we recorded your status as «ECONOMIC». Was this correct?

1 YES STATUS UNDER 2 NO RECORD CORRECT PREVIOUS STATUS

Previous status (IF INCORRECT)		Current status
1	IN PAID FULL TIME WORK (30 HOURS OR MORE)	1
2	IN PAID PART TIME WORK (LESS THAN 30 HOURS)	2
3	SELF EMPLOYED	3
4	RETIRED	4
5	ON A TRAINING SCHEME	5
6	LOOKING AFTER HOME AND/OR FAMILY	6
7	IN FULL TIME EDUCATION	7
8	NOT WORKING DUE TO ILL-HEALTH/DISABILITY	8
9	REGISTERED AS UNEMPLOYED AND CLAIMING JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE (1-6 MONTHS)	9
10	REGISTERED AS UNEMPLOYED AND CLAIMING JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE (MORE THAN 6 MONTHS)	10
11	OTHER PLEASE SPECIFY	11

1. Has your status changed in the past 6 months?

1 YES 2 NO

WHERE STATUS HAS CHANGED:

2. Which of the following best describes your current circumstances? **SHOW CARD 18 AND CODE ONE ABOVE UNDER CURRENT STATUS WHERE STATUS HAS CHANGED ASK (OTHERS GO TO Q59)**

3. Why have your circumstances changed in the past 6 months?

1. Do you think that the WuC technology has contributed to your change in circumstances in any way?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO – **GO TO END**

2. Why do you say that? **PLEASE WRITE IN**

Thank respondent for taking part