

HOW TO

HELP STAFF GET ONLINE

Over 9 million residents in the UK have never been online - do any of them work for you?

When e-learning is the fastest growing training medium for UK organisations and learning technologies are increasingly being used for company wide initiatives such as induction, compliance and collaborative performance improvement, this statistic must start to affect the uptake and success of our work. In the 2010 Towards Maturity Benchmark Review, 14% of organisations still report that poor staff ICT skills are a barrier to implementing learning technologies.

This **HOW TO** draws on the many programmes available across the UK that are designed to increase web confidence to provide a checklist of ideas and resources that can be used in business.

This **HOW TO** is aimed at L&D professionals who are implementing learning technologies in the business but whose staff are inexperienced with the web.

One of our challenges in getting staff online for the first time is that we need to be creative about new ways of engaging them. All the evidence indicates that once people have taken that initial step and appreciate the potential benefits of getting online, they will take the time and trouble to continue learning for themselves. There are a number of areas to be considered:

How do we raise staff interest?

1. Get involved in the national **Race Online 2010** campaign and leverage the many free resources to reach your staff. Download posters, flyers, newsletters, emails and other marketing assets from <http://raceonline2012.org/>. Sign up to become an official partner in Race Online 2012 at <http://raceonline2012.org/get-involved>;
2. Organise staff or community events such as Get Online Days that link into the national campaign – with photo opportunities, press releases – perhaps invite local MPs or celebrities.

Can we raise our expectations?

1. Change the expectation that new recruits have basic IT skills – why not encourage them to get online before they start? Include links to supporting resources with their job offer letters;
2. Offer internet and email skills as part of the induction programme for new staff – they will need these skills to fully participate in your L&D activities;
3. Are there organisation-wide incentives for staff to get online? For example: booking holiday dates, having their say, voting on new ideas, getting staff discounts, following non job-related courses, or simply accessing certain company information.

This checklist has been adapted from guidelines produced by UK Online Centres, Becta and the Department for Business and Industry as part of the Digital Britain campaign (<http://www.ukonlinecentres.com/>).

How do we build learner confidence?

- Make IT easy – provide step-by-step printed guides for staff using your learning systems for the first time;
- Make IT personal – help staff keep in touch with their family, share photos with friends, join social networks, manage their banking and finance or research their family tree;
- Make IT fun - focus on staff hobbies and interests, perhaps through existing social groups (sports club, football team...) or personal interests (travel, cookery, photography, gardening...) that can be immediately enhanced by the internet;
- Keep IT local – help staff find out what's on in the local area and get local information, weather and sports updates;
- Make IT pay – not just through shopping online, travel bargains and price comparisons, but by linking financial incentives or bonuses to online course completions!

What happens if your staff don't have regular PC access at work?

1. Can you provide PCs for non desk-based staff to use – creating a dedicated learning centre, or putting PCs into learning spaces in the stores, the workshop or the canteen;
2. Do you have easy-to-use printed guides on how to use your internal systems – especially next to PCs available for general access;
3. Can you provide laptops or mobile devices for staff to hire or borrow whilst they are on your courses;
4. Do you offer a re-cycling scheme – refurbishing your old IT equipment for staff to rent or buy;
5. Look for and signpost staff to public access sites – for example the public library, UK online centres or other learning centres.

How can staff help each other?

1. Help staff get online in face to face sessions – help them register to use Online Basics courses and get started online;
2. Challenge all staff to get involved. Can they share their own skills with other employees, with family members, or through volunteering in the community? How might this link into your organisation's approach to Corporate and Social Responsibility?
3. Encourage staff to become Digital Champions themselves (go to the official [Digital Champions page on Facebook](#));
4. Set up regular, face-to-face 'learning lunchtime' sessions, manned by volunteers for their peers and use information in the sessions to help inspire internet usage eg YouTube clips;
5. Run competitions to recognise and reward those staff volunteers who run the most sessions;
6. Capture and report on the success stories - when the 1st or 10th or 50th person gets online as a result of your support.



Still not convinced?

The more society can operate online, the more benefits we have for individuals, families and the economy as a whole, for example did you know that research shows that:

- People with good ICT skills earn between 3% and 10% more than people without them;
- If every non internet user in employment got online, each of them would increase their earnings by an average of over £8,300 in their lifetime and deliver between £560 million and £1,680 million of overall economic benefit;
- The cost to business (or government) for engaging with customers shows that it can cost £18 for a face to face interaction , £12.10 by letter, £3.30 by phone but only 8p online.

“By becoming a Race Online 2012 partner, not only will you be doing wonders for your CSR, internal communications, advertising budgets and potential market share – you will also be responsible for helping transform society to create a 100% networked nation – benefiting the economy by an estimated £22bn and giving UK plc a competitive advantage in the global knowledge economy. It’s quick and easy to get involved, just visit www.raceonline2012.org.”

Martha Lane Fox, UK Digital Champion

Useful IT training guides

- Getting started with computing - <http://www.helppassiton.co.uk/site-media/downloads/Getting%20started%20with%20computers.pdf>
- Step by step guide for using internet for the first time - <http://www.helppassiton.co.uk/site-media/downloads/Your%20guide%20to%20getting%20online.pdf>

Free Online Learning

There are many free resources on the internet already so you won't need to start from scratch. All of the following have tutor resources as well:

- **Online Basics** – managed and run by UK Online Centres and freely available to any user <http://www.onlinebasics.co.uk/>. Just one of the introductory courses on the **My Guide** website <http://www.myguide.gov.uk/myguide/MyguideHome.do>
- **BBC Webwise** - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/>
- **Microsoft Digital Literacy Curriculum** <http://www.microsoft.com/uk/education/schools/curriculum-resources/digital-literacy-curriculum.aspx>

For learners wanting to progress that bit further, all of these courses can be accredited and count towards a first ITQ qualification in IT User skills (eg www.cityandguilds.com/itq).



Links to free resources

Race Online 2012

Race Online 2012 is the national challenge to bring people and organisations together to make the UK the first nation in the world where everyone can use the web. Championed by Martha Lane Fox, the UK Digital Champion, Race Online 2012 are looking for partners who will pledge to get active in getting individuals online and they have plenty of research and resources to help.

- <http://raceonline2012.org/>
- Toolkits - <http://raceonline2012.org/toolkit/commercial-partner>

Pass IT On

This site offers a range of free resources to help volunteers get someone started online. The whole idea is to get someone interested, introduce them to a computer and then help them build their online basic skills. *Pass IT On* resources can be used by staff to help each other, their family members, customers and wider community to get online.

- Free marketing collateral and toolkits available from www.helppassiton.co.uk/.
- Encourage managers to get involved – see the *Pass IT On* Managers guide - <http://www.partners.helppassiton.co.uk/site-media/downloads/Manager's%20guide.pdf>
- Handbook for employees to help *Pass IT On* - <http://www.helppassiton.co.uk/site-media/downloads/Pass%20IT%20on%20handbook.pdf>
- *Pass IT On* toolkits to introduce the campaign in the workplace - <http://www.partners.helppassiton.co.uk/site-media/downloads/What%20is%20Pass%20IT%20on.pdf> encouraging existing web users in your organisation to pass IT on and get more staff and customers online as a result.

UK Online

UK online have over 3,500 centres in the UK where individuals can go to get support in getting online – they also have developed a range of free Online Basics courses which can be used by advocates as part of an internal campaign to get staff online (www.ukonlinecentres.com).

Microsoft's Britain Works

Microsoft is aiming to get 500,000 individuals into digital jobs requiring computer skills (<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/britainworks/ngo/default.aspx>).

Age UK/Digital Unite

Age UK and Digital Unite offer taster sessions/tea and biscuits events to engage older staff. Focussing on the over 50's, they produce Getting Started guides on Games and Hobbies; Shopping and Banking; Social Networks and Blogs; Music and TV online as well as email and internet search (<http://learning.digitalunite.com/>).