

Report of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods

Race Online 2012

Summary

1. This report asks Members to agree:
 1. To sign up CYC to be an official partner in Race Online 2012.
 2. CYC to work with partners to inspire, encourage and support as many people as possible to get online

Background

2. The links between social disadvantage and internet take up are strong. Nearly 50% of adults living in households earning less than £11.5k do not use the internet anywhere. 48% of people with disabilities are not currently taking advantage of the benefits of being online. A key barrier to disabled people going online is access to the hardware.
3. Of the nine million adults in this country who are not online, four million are amongst the most disadvantaged people:
 - 39% are over 65. while only one in ten people aged 16 – 24 are offline that rises to 1 in 2 of those over 75
 - 38% are unemployed
 - 19% are families with children

Why Get Online?

4. Increasingly both the private and public sector are choosing to communicate with their customers online (offline households are missing out on average consumer savings of £560 a year). To not be online in the future will mean that you are disadvantaged and often out of pocket.
 - As national Government and Local Authorities attempt to deliver efficiency savings online transactions and communications offer much scope. It is estimated that each transaction with government switched online could generate savings of between £3.30 and £12.

- Accessing shopping and services such as water, gas and electricity is easier and often cheaper online. For instance, internet only banks and discounts on online rail bookings
- Being online is now a fundamental part of educational improvement
- Access to employment opportunities – many companies now only accept online job applications. People with good ICT skills earn between 3% and 10% more than people without such skills and good ICT skills are now seen as an essential skill for life
- Information is more easily accessible online for everyone
- Good for the environment – paperless bills and statements help to reduce paper waste

The Local Picture

5. There are some significant differences in internet take up in York as detailed in Annex one. The local picture shows that low internet access at home in York maps to:
 - Low income
 - Over 65s
 - Unemployed people

How are people supported to get online?

6. The council already supports digital inclusion in the following ways:

Library Service

- York Explore Centre is a UK Online Champion Centre and all libraries are UK Online Centres. A UK Online Centre offers two things. Free or low cost access to the internet and trained staff to guide people through their first steps online. Library staff run one to one starter sessions as well as longer beginners courses. They are also on hand at any time when the library is open to help out with queries
- There is an infrastructure of free access to the internet through the People's Network pcs across all libraries with WiFi in Acomb and York Explore Centres. This is a super fast broadband connection through the new city wide fibre optic network. It is used by 10,000 people a year. There are some accessibility options for people with disabilities
- There are four ICT suites in Explore Centres that are used for helping people online
- Partnerships including the BBC, IT Services and Aviva help the service to build capacity and expertise to offer more help to people
- York Explore holds the Community Media equipment which is available for hire to community groups to use. There is a radio station and TV studio as well as smaller video cameras. Workshops are held to enable groups to learn the digital skills necessary

Put simply, if anyone goes into any library they can be helped to get online, given an email account and provided with ongoing support all for free.

Adult and Community Education

- Provides a range of flexible and taught programmes helping people to develop the skills to get online. These range from short ICT taster courses through to programmes providing qualifications such as ECDL

Future Prospects

- Provides taster programmes and outreach ICT provision working with disadvantaged groups

7. These activities support just over 2,000 people a year to get online. We estimate the current number of people in York who are offline at about 57,000. So to make more progress we need to involve other partners

Race Online 2012 partnership

8. In March 2010 the Race Online 2012 partnership campaign was launched to join up existing community ICT infrastructures to help the 9 million adults in the UK who have never used the internet to get online. Led by the Government's digital champion, Martha Lane Fox, the initiative asks partners to pledge help to end digital exclusion.

Implications for signing up

9. Once signed up as a Partner to Race Online 2012, the Library Service and Adult Education will develop an action plan and take a lead role in encouraging other partners and organisations to sign up to the pledge, enabling a greater number of people to get online.
10. A significant start has already been made in building on an already nationally recognised private/public partnership with Aviva that transformed York Central Library into York Explore Centre. This partnership is going to focus on digital inclusion over the next year.
11. York will be submitting a UNESCO Creative City for Media Arts bid in 2011. The expansion of access to digital processes, the People's Network and the expertise within the media arts network will be supported by our digital inclusion offer. The ability of the wider community to be tied into the Creative City outcomes will be enhanced by the current proposals
12. In developing the plan a number of actions have already been identified:
 - Take the action plan to the WOW Partnership Board to link digital inclusion into the Sustainable Community Strategy
 - Promoting the benefits of being online by running a series of roadshows over the next two years, starting with the national Go Online event (17 Jan – 14 Feb)
 - Encouraging other organisations to sign up to the pledge

- Producing a map showing free and low cost WiFi access across the City
- Developing use of libraries as key access points to online national government and local council services
- Mapping provision of support and training from basic through to advanced digital skills

Corporate Priorities

13. A digitally inclusive York contributes to all of the Corporate Priorities. As mentioned above, the benefits of being online affects all areas of a person's life and well being ; from being better able to gain employment ; easier access to services and information ;helping the environment and improving communication for disadvantaged groups

More for York Programme

14. Improved digital skills for both residents and employees will support several strands of the More for York Programme – principally Channel Migration which involves more customer transactions taking place online such as paying council tax, taking part in surveys etc.

Implications

15. **Financial:** There are no financial implications. All training and support is provided within existing budgets.
16. **Human Resources (HR):** There are no HR implications
17. **Equalities:** Significant numbers of disadvantaged people lack internet access and the motivation and skills to go online. An enhanced Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken to ensure those most at need are included, using the guidance on this website <http://www.odi.gov.uk/odi-projects/digital-inclusion.php>
18. **Legal:** There are no legal implications
19. **Crime and Disorder:** There are no crime and disorder implications
20. **Information Technology (IT):** Increasing the number of people who are online will support CYC's channel migration plans. More people will have the skills and, through the library service, the infrastructure, to access services online.
21. **Property:** There are no property implications

Risk Management

There are no identified existing or potential risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

22. Members are asked to agree to:

- (a) Pledge to be an Official Partner in the Race Online 2012 Campaign
- (b) Libraries and Adult and Community Education to lead on developing partnerships to make York a digitally inclusive city

Reason: To inspire, encourage and support people to go online and enable all residents to secure the many benefits of being

Contact Details

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Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all				All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For further information please contact the author of the report				

Annex

1 Local take up of internet

Background Papers and Websites:

Manifesto for A Networked Nation – Race Online 2012 July 2010

www.raceonline2012.org

www.odi.gov.uk/odi-projects/digital-inclusion.php