

# **The Digital Champion Capacity Building Framework: why developing Digital Champions systematically and sustainably is a highly appropriate approach to stimulating take up of online services and promoting confident and continued use of digital across society**

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## **Foreword**

The Age Action Alliance Digital Inclusion Group (AAA\_DI) was convened in autumn 2011 to 'look at the issue of digital inclusion and its relevance to older people' under the wider aegis of the Age Action Alliance run by Age UK on behalf of DWP, which looks at a variety of issues that impact on the lives and futures of older people. A list of current members of the Group is available in Appendix 1.

This paper has been prepared by Emma Solomon OBE, Managing Director of Digital Unite, on behalf of the AAA\_DI group which she chairs. The paper has been reviewed by the Group and adopted as a proposed strategy for engaging and supporting older people to make the most of digital technology better use of digital services.

## **Executive Summary**

The digital inclusion of older people is critical not just for older people themselves, but for the government and wider society. Key government policy areas are heavily reliant on citizens having digital skills to access, or participate in, or influence services and activities. These are covered in more detail in section 1, but they range from health and wellbeing to civic society to widespread efficiency savings and the stimulation and support of rural and deprived communities.

Because many of the characteristics of getting older people online and using digital with confidence are to be found across other groups in society, this paper also has wider implications.

The Group considers that establishing a formal framework which can underpin, sustain and evaluate the efficacy of Digital Champions created in a wide range of settings and environments presents a promising – and logical – solution to stimulating and sustaining the take up and persistent use of online across society.

This paper highlights the growing importance of widespread digital literacy, the risks of not attending strategically to the issue, and offers a practical approach to establishing it through the Digital Champions Capacity Building (DCCB) Framework.

The DCCB Framework is not an onerous or complicated concept to implement. It builds on existing programmes and initiatives in the digital skills, digital outreach areas. It collates and extends existing resources, content and collateral. It does not require the creation of anything new - it simply requires the activation, organisation, structuring and support of delivery mechanisms sitting under our noses and inherent in the many and various and diverse organisations that make up our society. Its potential to embed widespread and meaningful digital literacy is enormous.

## What are the issues?

### Digital participation not just desirable, it is critical

Key government policy areas are heavily reliant on citizens having digital skills to access, or participate in, or influence services and activities. Of particular note:

1. Digital by default – the aspiration to deliver government services online, including the advent of universal credit and realise huge predicted efficiency savings (“The total potential economic benefit from getting everyone in the UK online is in excess of £22 billion”; *The Economic Case for Digital Inclusion*, PWC 2009<sup>1</sup>)
2. Assisted Digital – the government’s desire for a wide range of existing service providers, of all hues and shapes and sizes, to evolve their service delivery to online and to share the responsibility for converting offline service users to online ones. Assisted Digital is critical to actually delivering on the wider digital by default agenda. It is also a hugely sensible aspiration; as this paper suggests, we need to change the way we bring people online now, the ‘conversion’ needs to be owned by them and driven wholly by their needs and desires as customers, consumers and citizens.
3. Health and wellbeing agendas – this is a huge area covering a person’s ability to manage health related information online, research and procure health related services online right through to the reduction in loneliness and isolation of people who can use online to maintain relationships with friends and family who are far away, as well as make new relationships with others through shared hobbies and interests.

It has recently been suggested that loneliness and isolation can have similar if not greater impacts on our mortality than smoking and drinking<sup>2</sup>. Digital Unite commissioned an online survey by OnePoll in April 2011 of people aged over 55 years who had been using the internet for 5 years or less. 72% thought that being online can help reduce feelings of isolation. Nearly two-thirds (63%) said it can help to reduce feelings of loneliness.

Keeping mentally active, participating in learning even very informal forms of learning, has a positive effect not just on the mental wellbeing of adults but also on their relationships, family life, intergenerational relationships. There are also proven links between learning and people's ability and motivation to take part in civic and community life<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the failure to tackle mental health issues exacerbates coexisting conditions. £1 in every £8 spent on long-term conditions is linked to poor mental health, equating to between £8bn and £13bn a year of NHS spending.<sup>4</sup> 2.4 million people over 65 currently experience depression and this is expected to rise to more than 3.1 million over the next fifteen years.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://raceonline2012.org/sites/default/files/resources/pwc\\_report.pdf](http://raceonline2012.org/sites/default/files/resources/pwc_report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Campaign to End Loneliness July 2012

<sup>3</sup> The benefits of learning; The impact of education on health, family life and social capital, Centre for Research on the wider benefits of learning, 2004

<sup>4</sup> Kings Fund and Centre for Mental Health, 2012

<sup>5</sup> Age Concern and Mental Health Foundation, 2006

Three million older people in the UK experience symptoms of mental health problems that significantly impact on quality of life, and this number is set to grow by a third over the next 15 years. This represents an enormous cost to society and the economy, in direct costs to public services and indirect costs in lost contributions from older people who boost the UK economy by over £250 billion each year as workers, volunteers, unpaid carers and grandparents. At a time when the Government wants to make the most of older people's contributions to society, the neglect of older people's mental health needs represents a waste of human potential that we cannot afford.<sup>6</sup>

4. Carers' agenda – there are an estimated 6.4million carers in the UK, who save the state £119billion a year by caring for friends and relatives. The figure amounts to £2.3 billion per week and £326 million per day. <sup>7</sup>Their ability to use digital services themselves and on behalf of their dependents is of fundamental and increasing importance.
5. Civil society/ Big society – this government has, and many share, an aspiration for a more connected, compassionate society where local people operating at a local level support each other better, look after each other more, give their time their experience and their compassion to make their community a better, safer, healthier place. Competent and creative use of digital technologies and digital services will amplify the effects and the reach of these activities, creating support networks, information exchanges, and matching need with supply in way that, again, amplifies and exceeds what is possible solely offline.
6. Stimulating and supporting rural communities – rural communities can become isolated because of their geography and because of sparsely distributed population. Older people in rural areas can be disproportionately disadvantaged as cuts to services including transport, the rising cost of fuel, can make their isolation even more challenging to break out of. Access to online and the skills and confidence to use online can make a huge difference to achieving practical tasks as well as supporting social and emotional ones. Indeed in rural areas where there people are online, there is greater use of government services online, of health related sites, of banking sites and of social networking sites than in urban communities.<sup>8</sup> We need to maintain our efforts to deliver infrastructure to these communities and alongside laying cable we need to provide access to the skills and support to see usage flourish especially with groups, like older people, who may have adoption and confidence issues. The rollout of superfast broadband for example will be amplified if underpinned by a systemic and sustainable approach to developing digital skills.

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<sup>6</sup> Age Concern and Mental Health Foundation, 2006

<sup>7</sup> Valuing Carers, Carers UK and University of Leeds, 2011

<sup>8</sup> Palgrave Macmillan [http://www.palgrave-journals.com/rt/journal/v43/n1/fig\\_tab/rt20112f27.html#figure-title](http://www.palgrave-journals.com/rt/journal/v43/n1/fig_tab/rt20112f27.html#figure-title)

### We are underestimating the scale of the problem because we are not analysing the right data

The frequently adopted measure of evaluating our level of digital literacy has been the number of people who have ever been online. This data is collected by ONS. There are currently 8.1m people which ONS count as not online as of 2012 Q1. However, this does not count those people who may once have used the internet but do not currently do so. Additionally, it is not measuring people's capacity to use online.

Data suggests that 4% of UK adults no longer go online. So while we know 8.1m people have never used the internet at all, we are not adding to that number at least 4% of all UK adults (approx. 2million people) who no longer use online.<sup>9</sup> The frequently-quoted and widely adopted measure of 'those who have ever/never used the internet' is not helpful for policy development. Progress should be measured by ongoing use, not initial access alone. A more appropriate measure of people's ability to function online would be whether they have gone online themselves in the past month, together with an assessment of the breadth of their internet use'. *Consumer Communications Panel 'Bridging the Gap' May 2012*

These studies suggest therefore that significantly more than 8.1m people require support to get and stay online. We know from ONS that the largest subset amongst those offline is older people. It is reasonable to assume that, whatever the number of people not currently online, in addition to those not able to use the internet with confidence, older people will continue to feature as a significant number of them.

Moving forward, we recommend adapting the set of measures and indicators that are used to evaluate digital literacy and capacity to take broader account of those who have tried and stopped using the internet.

### We are, still, failing to support people to change behaviour

Those who remain offline are hard to reach, influence, inspire – get and keep online. Despite the good work accomplished to date, there remain a significant number of people who, with support, could use the internet more often and more comfortably, and benefit much more than they do currently

This is becoming a more pressing issue as a target of 2014 has been set to deliver Universal Credit online and given the government's desire to drive service transactions digital by default. Older people are some of the heaviest users of government services. 'For government to be able to maximise growth and fulfil the Digital by Default initiative, there needs to be a clearer and more comprehensive policy on take-up and use of, as well as access to, broadband' (*Consumer Communications Panel 'Bridging the Gap' , Recommendations*)

Examining current metrics, the movement of offliners online is painstakingly slow and there is some evidence of a plateau; ONS Internet Quarterly Update (2012, Q1) reveal just a 7% fall over a year in the number of people who had never been online. In these

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<sup>9</sup> (Oxford Internet Institute (2011) Dutton, W.H. and Blank, G. (2011) Next Generation Users: The Internet in Britain 2011.; and <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/rdit2/internet-access-quarterly-update/2012-q1/stb-internet-access-quarterly-update-2012-q1.html>)

circumstances, we would suggest that we need to take the engagement and support to the people in need of it, at the point of contact with an existing provider or supplier and within the context of their everyday lives. If we can get service providers and a range of intermediaries in the community who, as part of the delivery services and interactions they already have, to promote the adoption of digital services and behaviours and support people, we will start to see greater impact when it comes to adoption and use.

Capacity building people and organisations to digitally capacity build others they already interact with is, we believe, a very logical, practical way to better support existing digital service users and make new ones. Using digital should not be so much regarded as default behaviour, but a natural tendency. The critical difference between these two approaches is the characteristic of choice and volition prevalent in a natural tendency. Getting people to adopt by educating and inspiring them to make positive, active choices is likely to be far more effective, and long lasting, than subtly threatening them if they don't, or nudging them into 'giving it a go'.

To realise that tangible outcome of behaviour change, we need to empower those delivering Assisted Digital – the practitioners – to be able to *do* more. They need to be more than advocates, they need to be enablers – they need to be Digital Champions. These competencies also need to be natural tendencies rather than add-ons, and this will happen once they first become part of the basic job specification for a social worker, housing officer, job adviser, librarian, health visitor, councillor, GP and so on.

This need for a slightly different tactic is echoed in the Communications Consumer Panel report. 'The tactics used to reach people who are not yet online need to be re-thought; and it is important that there is co-ordination between stakeholders, and agreed strategic aims. The potential role of local authorities, housing associations, employers and other related agencies and workers in the community (e.g care workers) should be fully exploited, to embed awareness and an understanding of the possibilities online.' (*Consumer Communications Panel 'Bridging the Gap'*, Recommendations)

If we want to actually get offliners online and if we want less confident internet users to gain skills and confidence, we will need to do more than just tell them it's good for them. We need to give them practical support or point them to people who can. The CCP research acknowledges that for some, personal tenacity and determination is a driver to get online – but for 'the minority.'

### Barriers to adoption of digital remain remarkably constant

People, including older people, say they are not already using the internet because of a range of barriers that have remained relatively unchanged over the last few years. (see CCP page 10)

While not impossible to overcome, the main barriers to people going online remain stubbornly persistent. Lack of interest and/or an understanding of the benefits of using online; fear of the unknown, perceived complexity of the endeavour and the absence of help and support through the process are all factors. Reaching the 'final 8.1m plus offliners' will therefore require creativity and tenacity, but there are well proven techniques: we know how to do this and know how to train people to do this. ('A significant challenge remains in reaching consumers who are not predisposed to

participating online, and who require a sustained level of support in order to develop their engagement and participation.' *Consumer Communications Panel 'Bridging the Gap' May 2012*

The issue of support, and sustained support, for people new to online and those developing their own online confidence and independence is also significant. 'Ready access to informal, ongoing, one-to-one support' is a key driver in not just promoting take up but also, critically, sustaining it. 'This driver often represented the tipping point between lapsing and developing online participation. Help at the start of the journey was critical; in getting started with using the computer and setting up a broadband connection. Ongoing help was equally important to sustain effort and interest to overcome some of the more significant barriers to use. People valued one to-one support, particularly from a friend or relative, and this was often very effective in pushing them forward to a point where they could start to develop their online engagement by themselves.' *Consumer Communications Panel 'Bridging the Gap' May 2012*

### **What is a Digital Champion?**

Despite the fact that this phrase is frequently utilised, we do not seem to have a common understanding of what a Digital Champion is. We believe:

A Digital Champion (DC) is a person with skills, enthusiasm and empathy who recognises a person needing help to use digital technologies, who can assess what sort of help would be most appropriate, and who can support that individual in such a way that does not make him or her feel inferior, lacking or awkward. A DC also has inherent curiosity about digital and the confidence to experiment, keep their skills up to date, seek advice from others and find trustworthy information on digital issues. A DC can evaluate progress and confidence using unobtrusive assessments - sometimes observation is enough. A DC can offer constructive feedback which helps a learner remedy bad habits and develop good ones. A DC can also prescribe next steps or activities for the learner. Finally and crucially, a DC will make learning more about digital interesting, pertinent, subjective – and fun.

We suggest there are three types of DC:

**Formal** – a person who is formally given the role or the title of DC (or something similar) in the organisation or environment in which they live or work. Many organisations have embedded DCs in their organisations, and those that do – while naturally having their share of challenges and obstacles – also realise phenomenal benefits to the individuals they work with, the organisations they work for, and their own personal development. Natalie is an example of a formal DC. She works for a housing association and studied the Digital Champion ITQ gaining a Level 2 qualification in Jan 2012. She had the support of her line manager to study the course, who recognised that developing Natalie's skills would not just help her work with residents but also improve her skills and confidence more widely:

*"I was a competent IT user, but now feel much more confident in my skills, my ability to tackle more advanced tasks and to manage work's intranet. It has really improved my effectiveness at work.*

*I am already using my new skills to help to try to reduce the social isolation of many of the older people in our sheltered housing schemes and to involve younger people in the area. I like the idea of being able to pass on my skills. Many of the older people in our sheltered housing schemes are socially isolated. They often don't have family living nearby and some are not very mobile. Many are a little bit afraid of computers and don't really know where to begin. Teaching them to use a computer and showing them how to email and use Skype can really help reduce that social isolation."*

**Informal** – informal DCs are more often than not self-appointed. They have a passion for digital technology (which they may just describe as an interest or a hobby that takes up a lot of their time) and they enjoy being with people and more importantly, they enjoy helping others. Informal DCs often become DCs because they recognise and empathise with the newcomer or outsider to technology. It might have been them once, or a friend or family member. Informal DCs often 'help out' at events or volunteer to support local activities, but they may be shy and/or reluctant to instigate or manage one off their own bat. Informal DCs may never recognise themselves by that moniker. And because they don't always self-identify as DCs, they are also often lone agents – by which we mean they don't belong to any network (on or offline) of likeminded others.

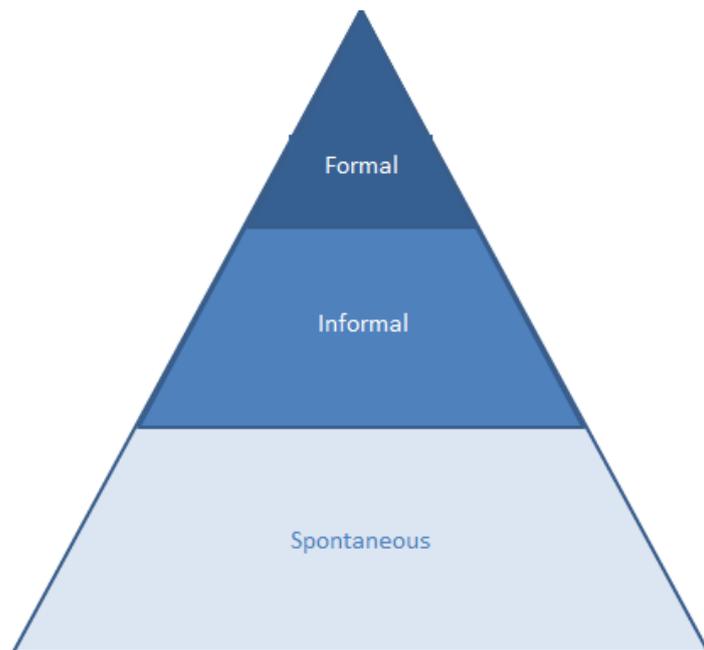
'Elinor', DU.com community member, is an example of an informal DC. These are her words from her profile: *I love listening to people and helping them, if I can and I love to make them smile. I am interested in quite a lot of things, I love being educated, I volunteer, attend conferences, courses and training. I am a committee member for two groups, one is concerned with ill-health, the other is education. I would like to know so much more about so many things.*

**Spontaneous** – spontaneous DCs are people who share their knowledge of digital in an informal, everyday way with friends, family and colleagues unthinkingly and unconsciously – much as they might also share recipes, pub recommendations, childcare anecdotes. Until unpicked, none of these activities feel like learning or teaching, and yet they do obviously include an element of skills transfer. Spontaneous DCs will also constantly glean information themselves to top up their digital skills and experience. With the unselfconsciousness of their instruction comes an equally unselfconscious ability to exchange instruction. Even highly ICT literate people in a work environment can have Spontaneous DC tendencies, as Jenny at Digital Unite relates: *'Yesterday, one of my colleagues showed me how to get my work email on my iphone; something I was or was not doing was defeating me, but she uses hers in the same way and got it sorted out straight away. And I was able to show her how to get a report she wanted out of the customer records system. Saved calling the IT support guys and it was nice to be able to teach her something in return!'*

We suspect that a large percentage of the Digital Champions signed up to the Go ON Facebook page will be Spontaneous, as opposed to Informal DCs. We suspect a small minority of them are Formal.

There is nothing wrong with this – bar the assumption that we think has been made since ‘digital champion terminology’ washed over us, which is that one DC is very much like another.

To embed digital by default behaviour throughout a range of intermediaries, we need to stimulate and support a mixture of all three DC types. The shape of the DC Model is triangular: there will be far fewer Formal DCs than there are Informal or Spontaneous, and therein lies the beauty of the structure. But a structure – not an accident or a coincidence – is what it has to be.

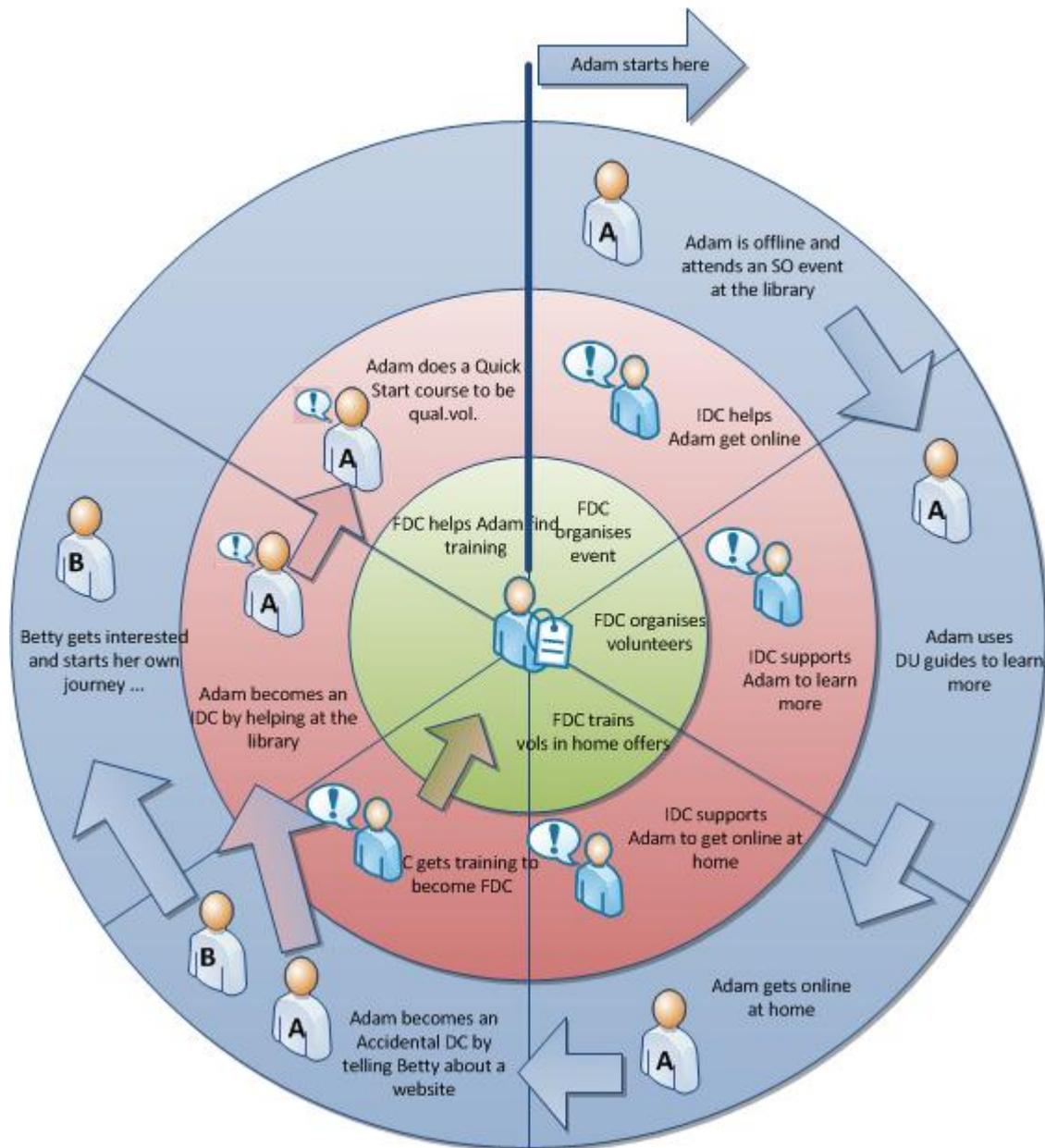


### **The self-perpetuating 3-layer DC model**

One of the most exciting aspects of establishing a structured DC model is that it becomes self-perpetuating and entirely sustainable over time.

This means that the investment period will be very short in respect of the overall cycle of reward. And the cycle will extend and renew itself, so long as there is strategic back up and support – which can be delivered at scale and online. An example of this already in action can be seen on the Digital Unite website with its hundreds of free learning guides and its free peer to peer support community of users, both of which expand and augment daily.

This is shown below also in the journey of an older person accessing a digital taster session at a local library and going on to become part of the digital solution himself. A similar model can be used to illustrate the impact of an employee who becomes a Digital Champion at work and can then support colleagues or members of the community through volunteering. We could also apply the fundamentals of this model to staff in retail or banking, to a Post Master or Mistress, to a housing support officer, a librarian, the staff at the GP surgery; people can support other people if they have the right skills and support, and Digital Champions can be developed in a range of environments.

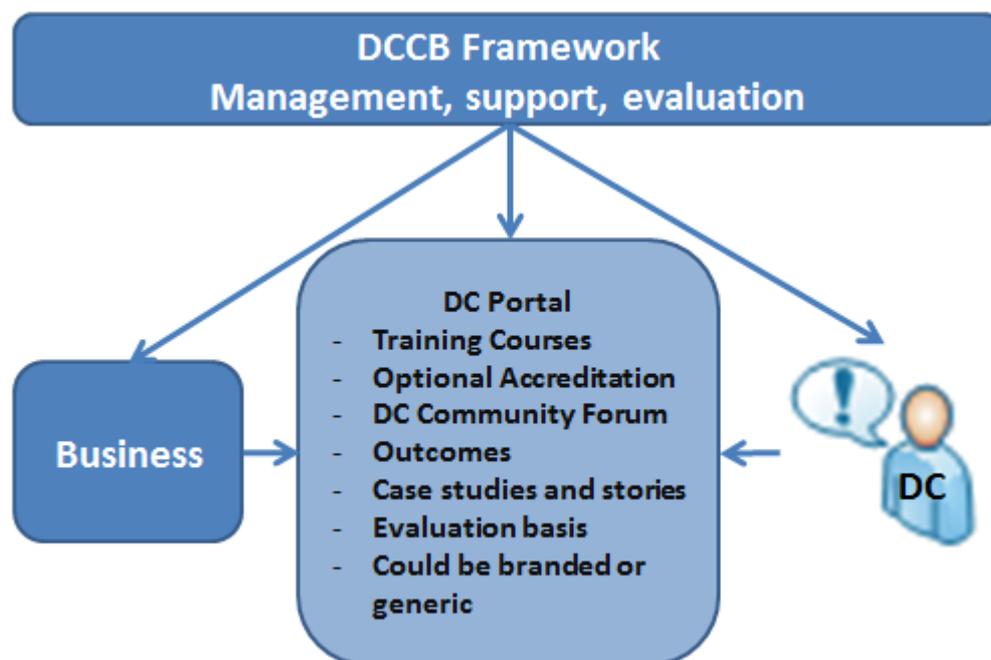


In the diagram above, Adam is an offline person who attends an event at a local library which a formal DC has organised. Adam gets help from an informal DC, who helps him get online and supports him to learn more.

Adam gets online at home with support and resources such as the free Digital Unite learning guides. Over tea with his friend Betty, Adam mentions a website he now uses, thus becoming a spontaneous DC. Betty gets interested and starts her own learning journey; Adam finds himself helping out at the local library, thus becoming an informal Digital Champion, who gets trained as such using materials like Digital Unite's Quick Start course.

His original helper is inspired to get further training to become a formal Digital Champion, learning the skills to set up and promote events and to keep people inspired and engaged at all stages of their journey.

The framework of learning could also be applied to prospective Digital Champions, supported by the DCCB and (part-) funded by their employers.



### What is the Digital Champion Capacity Building Framework?

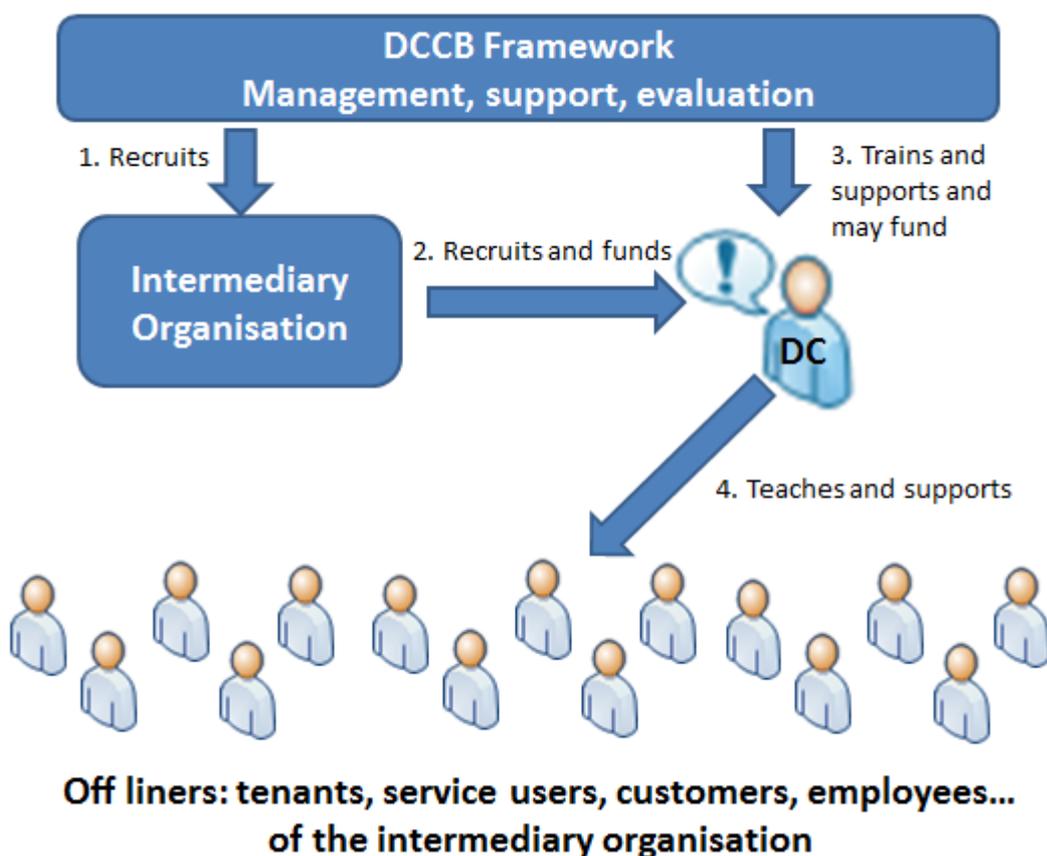
The DCCB Framework is very simple. It focuses directly on the service providers and individuals who interact with the millions who need either to get online or use online better. It establishes the triangular structure mentioned above, through which layers of skill and capacity are created throughout society, embedded in our communities, businesses, service providers. The creation of Spontaneous DCs will be a natural consequence of concerted efforts to recruit, train and support Informal and Formal DCs. As such, the Framework must focus its efforts on the first two groups of DCs.

The DCCB Framework has 'Big Society' characteristics; with effective guardians and subtle but strong foundations, it will generate its own momentum. People who enjoy using digital, and who have an emotional and social propensity to be a DC, enjoy passing their skills on. It naturally stimulates advocacy – converts make the most effective preachers – and alongside that come powerful feelings of ownership, achievement, pride and reward; knowing you've made a positive difference to someone's day, however small that difference, is a very rewarding, affirming experience.

The DC model involves degrees of formality and informality – both the strategic development of a cavalry of formal DCs with clear organisational remits (supporting customers to use digital when interacting with the organisation – be that a bank, supermarket, government department or housing association) and the recruitment and

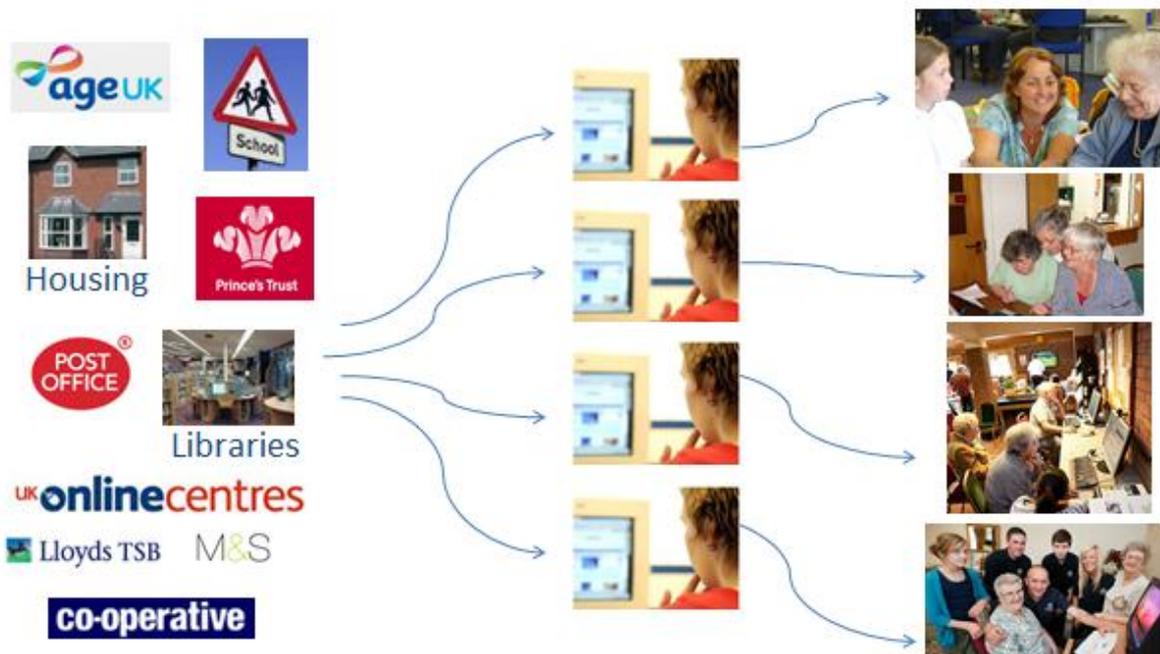
supplying of an army of informal DCs, who can carry the message far and wide, address local terrain that they know well, but with a common purpose, a common toolkit and on demand support when called for.

The Framework must make being a DC aspirational and rewarding – it must hold and communicate benefit to both Formal and Informal recruits. The DCCB will need to support sectors in communicating those benefits and in inspiring and recruiting those nascent Champions. Critical to this is the articulation of gain - that is the gain to both the individual and the organisation they work or volunteer for. Linked to this is also a need to communicate the commitment required on each side: in order to develop staff or volunteers to do and deliver more, employers or lead organisations must accept the allocation of the time required for that person to learn and implement and refine their new skills.



The cascade model works in the same way for businesses or service providers such as housing, banks, supermarkets, telecoms providers, energy firms: always underpinned by the management, support and evaluation of the DCCB Framework.

It will be far more efficient to recruit and develop formal and informal DCs by engaging with a range of specific intermediary organisations – as opposed to a blanket call out to anyone who might be or become one. It’s an awful lot easier to message a defined audience and articulate a clear call to action based on their identity and objectives.



A plethora of organisations across the whole UK recruit Digital Champions.

The Digital Champions cascade the learning face to face with their learners.

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### How do we establish the DCCB Framework?

The DCCB would need to start by identifying a broad range of intermediaries through which it wants to develop formal and informal DCs. The AAA\_DI group has focussed on intermediaries who serve older people.

Our intermediaries include local authorities, libraries, banks, retailers, a range of service providers (energy providers, telecoms, insurance and financial), housing associations, health related organisations, UK online centres. Organisations like the Post Office and Age UK are also significant for our audience. The DCCB would also need to include schools, community groups, and youth organisations such as the Prince's Trust, V and others who supported intergenerational activities. We suggest that Go ON UK founder partners also take part. It is also important to include professional bodies, such as association of librarians, sub post masters, unions etc.

The DCCB would welcome DCs who get in contact without the mediation of an intermediary, but it would focus its preparation, recruitment and support on intermediary organisations rather than the general public.

These are the phases of operational roll out the DCCB would oversee:

**Planning and preparation** – DCCB starts by describing the specific benefits for each intermediary group – what are the benefits to a bank of getting its older customers online? What are the benefits to the local carers' group to getting its carers online? What are the internal benefits – staff performance, skills, efficiencies, self-esteem. There will be a common set of benefits but success lies in the ability to customise these very effectively to make them instantly recognisable and relevant to each intermediary type.

**Targeted recruitment of intermediaries** – recruitment needs to be very focussed. It needs to involve not just extolling the benefits highlighted above per intermediary, it also includes giving these people a framework in which to operate once they've signed up. This framework should include describing building a DC model in that organisation, which would include training for formal and informal DCs, as required.

**Training** – standardising training and developing a support community for people who go through that training are critical. DCCB should establish a common skills framework for Digital Champions which all intermediaries can apply, aspire to, implement and evaluate. Alongside specific Digital Champion syllabus, such as the two Digital Unite courses already developed, one for Formal and one for Informal DCs, intelligent signposting to further and more specific and related training – such as on accessibility, community development, pedagogy – would be appropriate. Further customisation of resource would allow DCCB to promote sector specific versions of these courses.

**Marketing and messaging** – DCCB would recommend that all intermediaries devise their own marketing and messaging, appropriate to their audience/customer base and their offer. Guidance and exemplars can be made available. Use of, for example, a common logo to link participating intermediaries may be recommended, such as that of Go ON UK if it becomes a partner.

**The means to evaluate at scale** – all intermediaries working within the DCCB Framework would adopt a common, yet customisable, way to evaluate progress and performance. DCCB would want to be able to analyse data by area, intermediary type, audience engaged, and so on. This could be delivered and gathered online and simply requires very thorough planning to underpin it and take much of the burden off intermediaries.

**Framework support, resources and knowledge exchange** – wrapped around this delivery activity, DCCB will supply access to learning and engagement resources, up to date DC and digital tech information, and a peer to peer community of support and expert support; DCs need to share, support and inspire each other.

### **How will DCCB measure success?**

The purpose of the DCCB Framework is that it brings offliners online, meaningfully, and that it supports those already online but with low skills and confidence to get more from digital technologies by developing layers of DCs within intermediary organisations. Another significant outcome of DCCB is that organisations are empowered from within to drive the digital literacy skills of customers and service users in a way that positively impacts on the delivery organisation. Impact will be measured then on several main levels:

- The impact of that mediated support on digital skills and uptake on the beneficiary (service user, customer) audience. As discussed, we (and notable others including the CCP) don't believe that ONS measure of 'ever online' is the right measure of inherent digital capacity. The DCCB would construct simple but updated measures that allowed us to gather data about the impact of being online on individual, social and economic well-being.

- The impact that creating Formal and Informal DCs within organisations should also be analysed from the organisational point of view: has this development led to greater efficiency, improved performance, increased job satisfaction, improved self-esteem, cost savings? Is there a reputational/PR/CSR type benefit to developing this capacity internally? Has it had an impact of recruitment and retention? What problems have been created and how have they been solved locally – perhaps an initial downturn in organisational productivity as DCs go through training, followed by building their new capacity into service delivery.
- Online behavioural change - has there been an increase in use of government services online and/or an increase in the intermediary organisations' online transactions or activities? Are there more people using online digital skills learning resources and sites, such as BBC, Digital Unite, Online Basics.

### **Who participates in DCCB?**

As suggested, we see the DCCB Framework being a collaborative process which involves all those involved in providing products or services to older people. We are also suggesting that this Framework need not be limited to older people as beneficiaries; one variable would be to set it up and pilot it around older people and to then extend it to other offliners and the digitally unconfident.

If we focus on older people, then participants would include a diverse range of intermediary organisations from private, third and government sectors (see below). We would expect members of AAA\_DI group to take part, and we would want the support of DWP specifically. It would be logical to include those organisations preparing for Assisted Digital being managed by Government Digital Service (Cabinet Office). It may also be that we can trial the DCCB Framework within the context of the Universal Credit pilots. The Digital Efficiency and Reform Group (Cabinet Office) + Civil Society team (Cabinet Office), and Go ON UK should also be involved. We would also like to see potential funding partners, such as Big Lottery, involved. More below.

### **Who pays?**

We have suggested DCCB Framework is a cross sector collaboration but which has leadership, shape, structure, measureable outcomes and is resourced.

Funding will be needed to support Framework infrastructure and to incentivise participation in DCCB from the range of intermediaries required to make this a truly widespread initiative.

The CCP notes that the delivery organisations and service providers who have access to audience don't always have access to the means to engage further or deeper with them: *'front-line delivery practitioners are held back by a lack of resources and funding. Despite widespread awareness among stakeholders and practitioners of the challenge to increase online engagement, limits on funding and resources inevitably place much of the focus on introducing consumers to the internet rather than providing ongoing support over the course of their journey.'*

The impact of even small amounts of funding to voluntary and community providers, for example, can be hugely significant. See Case Study in Appendix 2.

The benefits of this Framework are shared, and the costs and risks should also be. Ideally DCCB would bring together funding from, for example, DWP, Cabinet Office, Big Lottery and Go ON UK. Cabinet Office, Digital By Default and Assisted Digital all have a vested interest in the objectives and deliverables of DCCB. A minimal level of funding should be apportioned to project set up, management, administration and with some marketing/ comms capacity. The bulk of funding should be redistributed to intermediaries to stimulate demand for development of DCs.

When considering how to fund DCCB we might also look at SIBs (social impact bonds) social investment from Big Society Capital and other forms of payment by results model. Such models do carry the risk of complexity and the data collection required to justify payment by results may prove disproportionately expensive.

The DCCB Fund might be distributed this way:

- A VolComm Capacity Building Fund – to stimulate and support intermediaries from voluntary and community sector, critical to success – small grants of up to £500 *possibly* per application. Beneficiaries have to prove contribution in kind – for example to hold x events a year or y outreach sessions.
- A specific Schools, Academies and Community Colleges Fund – where there is funding to support very obvious intergenerational Championing models and to develop young people into Digital Champions and involve them in the capacity building of their communities whilst getting them qualifications and volunteering experience for their CVs.
- A matched / useful contribution from DCCB for Large Employer Intermediaries which is effectively a 'strategic projects pot' – for applications in 1000s – very large employers/ orgs, where again there is some incentive for them to take part and contribute their own funding proportion, possibly handled on a case by case basis.

### **We're not starting from scratch – assets that AAA\_DI currently has**

AAA\_DI has a clear asset in its membership, which is committed to taking part in something that drives older people's adoption of online.

Group Members also have large networks and they represent marketing, communications and recruitment channels. They can also all be Early Adopters of the DCCB.

Digital Unite, which has coordinated Group activity to date, has delivered large scale community learning programmes, coordinates hundreds of digital skills event holders and thousands of digital taster sessions every year through an eclectic and dispersed group of individuals and organisations. Digital Unite has also invested a huge amount of time and resource in creating hundreds of free learning resources online and a growing community of learners – and champions – use it daily. These assets can be placed into the DCCB resource bank for free. It also has a charity, the Digital Unite Trust, which can manage and redistribute funding.

There is already a range of highly appropriate Digital Champion orientated training and learning materials and courses in the market, again including (but not exclusively) existing DU courses, and bringing them together to produce a skills framework and benchmarking options for DCCB beneficiaries would be straightforward. There are already established partnerships and clear communications routes to a vast range of intermediaries from across all sectors – many of them Go ON UK partners – and so getting to market and stimulating demand would be straightforward.

The critical lack, which the DCCB provides, is a clear call to action and series of practical steps that can lead to measureable action and outcomes.

### **What are the risks of doing nothing?**

If the current reduction in people who have never been online continues at 7% per year, and if we add into that critical illness, substantial impairment and mortality rates which will further reduce the numbers of non-liners year on year, then it is inevitable that at some point the problem of people not being able to use digital services solves itself.

However, there is a perfect storm of circumstances which threaten to blow apart yet further our capacity to sustain and deliver services to our communities if we don't get them online sooner rather than later. In a time of austerity, with huge budget deficits to address and with an ageing population putting further strain on every aspect of the state, enabling more people to be digitally competent so that more services can be delivered for less online is not just desirable, it is critical. All organisations, be they public ones, private ones or community based ones, have to do more with less, and if this is to be achieved they will need to exploit digital as best they can. This becomes futile if a significant proportion of their service users and customers cannot engage with them this way.

From 2007-2012, £6.6m was spent funding an outreach campaign to support digital switchover. This was managed by Digital Outreach, a consortium of public and private sector organisations. The money was used to support 'people who might not be reached by the switchover public information campaigns [...] people who might need 'an extra little bit of help', from organisations they know and trust.' These people tended to be older and more vulnerable members of society.

One could surely argue that the advent of universal credit online was just as important as digital switchover, and that the risks of not supporting 'people who might not be reached by the [...] public information campaigns [...] people who might need 'an extra little bit of help', from organisations they know and trust' is just as great and probably actually more pressing.

## What happens now?

Because of the assets we already have as listed above, and because of the partners we could envisage involving fairly quickly, the DCCB Framework could be set up by October 2012 and launched in mid-November 2012. We would recommend DCCB was operational for three years or as a minimum running to end March 2014, if this had to fit within a government term.

The scale of the DCCB Framework will be dictated entirely by the funding available from ideally a range of partners. Obviously there are economies of scale: the back office/admin/ management costs of a £1m project are not vastly different to that of a £3m project as the bulk of funding is redistributed.

There have also been similar Cabinet Office constructed and funded projects, and one also lined up for later in the year. In particular:

*Community Organisers Programme* – in 2011 Cabinet Office awarded a £15m contract to Locality, the network of community-led organisations, to run the programme and the charity Re:generate to train 500 full-time community organisers and 4,500 part-time organisers before March 2015. Full-time community organisers will receive a £20,000 bursary in their foundation year, but will have to seek further funding when their training finishes.

*Assist*, which will be launched later this year, will distribute funding to organisations to capacity build themselves, in much the same way DCCB proposes intermediaries to develop digital championing capacity. *"Assist is the first stage of Big Lottery Fund's Building Capabilities for Impact and Legacy approach. It is a radical departure from previous capacity-building investments, as the majority of funding will go directly to local support and development organisations. These organisations will then be able to choose what support they need in order to adapt their services to changing needs, funding and expectations of frontline organisations."*

What the Group would like is a Sponsor or a group of Sponsors, who agree DCCB Framework presents a solution to a range of problems created by poor digital literacy, and with whom we can build up a DCCB financial and impact model. This can be done simply and quickly with momentum behind it.

## Summary of Key Points

1. We have a bigger, more complex issue than that 'just' 8.1m remain offline (Internet Access Quarterly Update, 2012 Q1). In reality, many more people lack confident digital skills, and fail to access online as regularly or as usefully as they might. A large proportion of them are older.
2. We are failing to progress enough people from messaging about the benefits of digital literacy into action, and this includes older people. We need to rethink the engagement to action route and we suggest that the focus moving forward should be to capacity build others, including the targeting of specific groups, to deliver digital inclusion and digital skills rather than mass message the intended beneficiaries directly.
3. With Universal Credit being delivered online by 2014, and a continued aspiration to be Digital by Default, the government needs to build upon its Assisted Digital initiative and catalyse the take up of digital across all of society, and especially with hard to reach groups or those with more 'entrenched' adoption issues - particularly common amongst older people.
4. Research and analysis has shown us what support people want to get and stay online - and how that might be best delivered. Solutions are rooted in people, not technology or marketing campaigns alone.
5. Developing the capacity of people, and organisations, to engage and support others would enable the development of meaningful digital inclusion. We suggest this is achieved by creating formal and informal Digital Champions in intermediary organisations through a Digital Champion Capacity Building (DCCB) Framework.
6. The Framework would build on the legacy of past and current digital inclusion initiatives by offering a series of logical and practical 'next steps'. The Framework could also support and enhance the work of 'Go ON UK founding partners' and that of the partners they are able to engage around this issue, as well as contributing to the objectives of both the Assisted Digital and Digital by Default agendas.
7. The keystones of the DCCB Framework are already laid. A huge amount of the underpinning resources have already been created; marketing channels and routes to market are clear. More than this, there is already a demand rising naturally from a range of intermediaries. The time is absolutely right to gather this momentum up, impose structure and define outcomes.
8. The DCCB can be a shared responsibility with investment coming from intermediaries and employers themselves, incentives made through external funding partners and government funding. In kind donations of other resources such as up to date digital skills learning content and support, marketing and PR support can all be gathered into this Framework too. The risks and rewards - costs and successes - we suggest can be pooled and shared.
9. DCCB Framework needs a Sponsor or Sponsors, from government, who give the idea their support and who, with the Group, can transform it from an argument to a reality.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Members of the Age Action Alliance Digital Inclusion Group (18.07.12)**

Digital Unite (chair)

AbilityNet

Affinity Sutton

Age UK

Age UK London

*(BBC – attend meetings but not fully adopted members)*

Consumer Communications Panel

Hyde Housing

Independent Age

International Longevity Centre UK

Loughborough University

Microsoft

Simplicity Computers

South West Forum on Age

Sus-IT Project

The Shaw Trust

Which?

Wiltshire Council

## Appendix 2

### How seed funding can make a huge difference at a community level to digital inclusion activities and digital skills learning

In October 2010 Digital Unite worked with [UK online centres](#) to run a small grants scheme as part of Get Online Week. Those individuals and organisations that ran events during that week were eligible for grants of up to £1,000 to help with their digital inclusion activities.

One recipient, Christina Burnett, of Wide Eye Pictures, successfully received a £200 grant to support her work with helping visually impaired people in Lambeth use computers and the internet. Christina is founder of [Digital Tuesdays](#), a self-funded initiative which runs various digital activities in local libraries. She became interested in accessibility to computers for visually impaired people after her father developed a degenerative eye disease. A latecomer to modern technology, he was in his 90s when he discovered the joy of the internet and she had to learn fast to help him get the most out of this new found passion.

Christina discovered the specialist screen reader software that enables visually impaired people to use computers can be complicated and expensive. Whilst libraries provide the perfect local environment for people to be introduced to digital technology, many library staff need support to understand the benefits of screen readers and how they work so they can help others.

The Get Online Week grant proved timely, helping Christina put an idea into practice. Working alongside her blind comrade, Roger Lewis, a Specialist Disability Worker, they persuaded the Tate South Lambeth Library to trial a screen reader session using Thunder, an award-winning and free talking software product. The £200 was used to buy headsets and to enable someone from Thunder to come along and give a first-hand demonstration.

A wide range of people attended the launch session fuelling much interest from the other libraries in Lambeth. As a result the free screen reader is now installed in nine other libraries. Christina has now set up a community interest company to seek further funding to support library staff with learning about computer accessibility and to develop a computer outreach programme for blind people in the community. More widely she is also exploring a fundraising initiative with a local primary school to purchase large print keyboard stickers for every computer keyboard in her local libraries.

Talking about the initiative Christina said: "A large number of visually impaired people are unemployed and many older people find their lives significantly inhibited as their eyesight deteriorates over time. Those who lose their sight suddenly at any age often end up on a long and convoluted road of assessment and evaluation before they're given the help they need.

"Most of us will experience sight impairment as we get older, so it's essential that knowledge in this area is mainstreamed. The new technologies are amazing but most

people outside the visual impairment community know little about them. The children we worked with on the keyboards were fascinated and loved the 'talking computers' and we have people in their 70s and 80s who never thought they could learn to use a computer because of their eyesight who are now surfing the internet. The initial funding enabled us to demonstrate how a real and positive difference can be made, not just to people who are visually impaired but also to those who are inspired by them."