

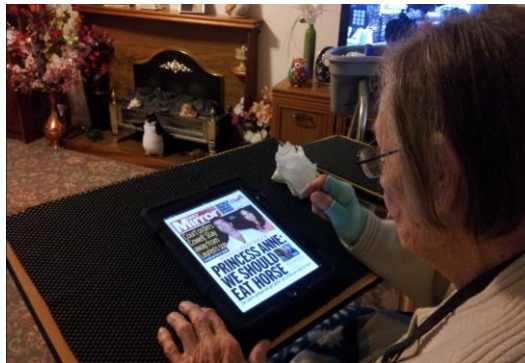
Touch a New World Pilot: Evaluation

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**I entered the pilot with fear and trepidation but now I am very pleased with the result. Before I was useless and now quite happy. The sessions were really good and I enjoyed them. I am more confident than I was before. My sons can't believe it!
(Our first "completer")**

July 2014

Executive summary

Kent Libraries, Registration & Archives (KLRA) provides free access to computers, office software and the Internet to library customers able to visit a library in person. Each library also offers software and hardware to assist people with a range of disabilities. Time2Give IT Buddies are available to assist library customers needing help to get online.

However there are currently 1415 Home Library Service (HLS) customers who are unable to physically visit a library and so are unable to access these services and facilities.

In today's world it is vital that people have access to the information they need. IT skills are now as necessary as traditional literacy and numeracy skills and since so much content is available digitally anyone who does not have online access and the skills to navigate the virtual world is seriously disadvantaged and at risk of being excluded.

For those who are housebound having the skills to go online can provide a lifeline that will help offset social and digital isolation, improve quality of life and enable housebound customers to live more independently – all elements which define successful ageing¹.

Touch a New World (TaNW) aims to offer our HLS customers the opportunity to get online by

- offering training to customers who have never been online and do not have their own computer equipment using a web-enabled tablet device lent to them for the period of the training
- training to those HLS customers who already have their own computer equipment but lack the skills and/or confidence to use it effectively
- matching each customer with a dedicated and trained volunteer to deliver 6 x 1 hour weekly sessions covering key aspects of going online.

The Touch a New World training was launched in two waves –

- Wave 1, in September 2013, to customers who had their own computer equipment and internet access
- Wave 2, in November 2013, to customers who did not have their own computer equipment and therefore were issued with a KCC iPad for the period of the training. From this point training to both client groups ran simultaneously.

By the end of the pilot on 30 April 2014 -

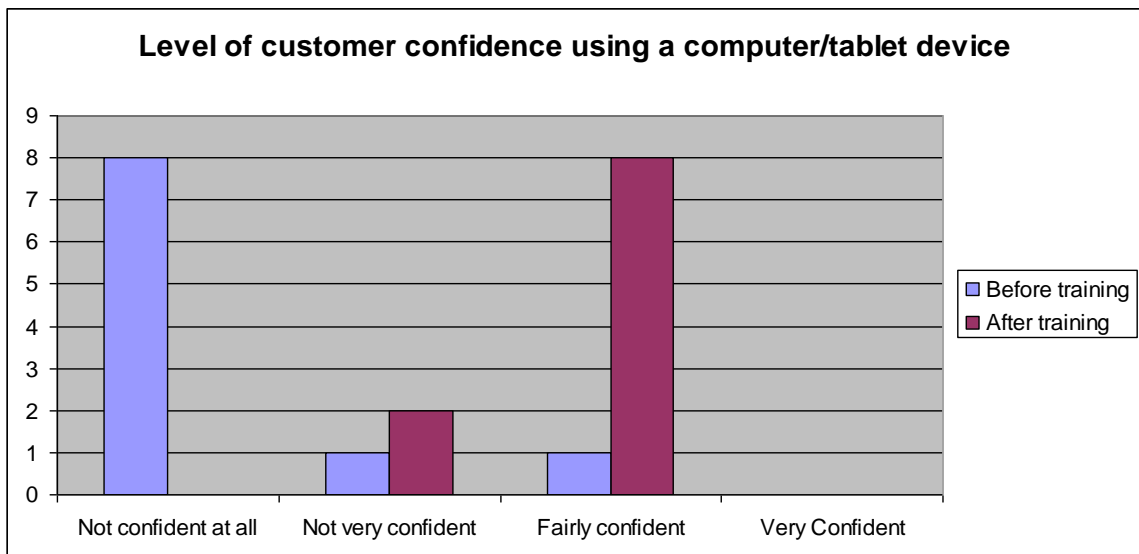
	Own PC/laptop	iPad	Total
Customers completed	9	7	16
Customers in progress	0	3	3
Customers terminated early	2	4	6

There are 12 HLS customers waiting to start the training with 21 volunteers having been involved in delivering training as part of the pilot so far.

¹ Aging Well (Dept of Health Factsheet)

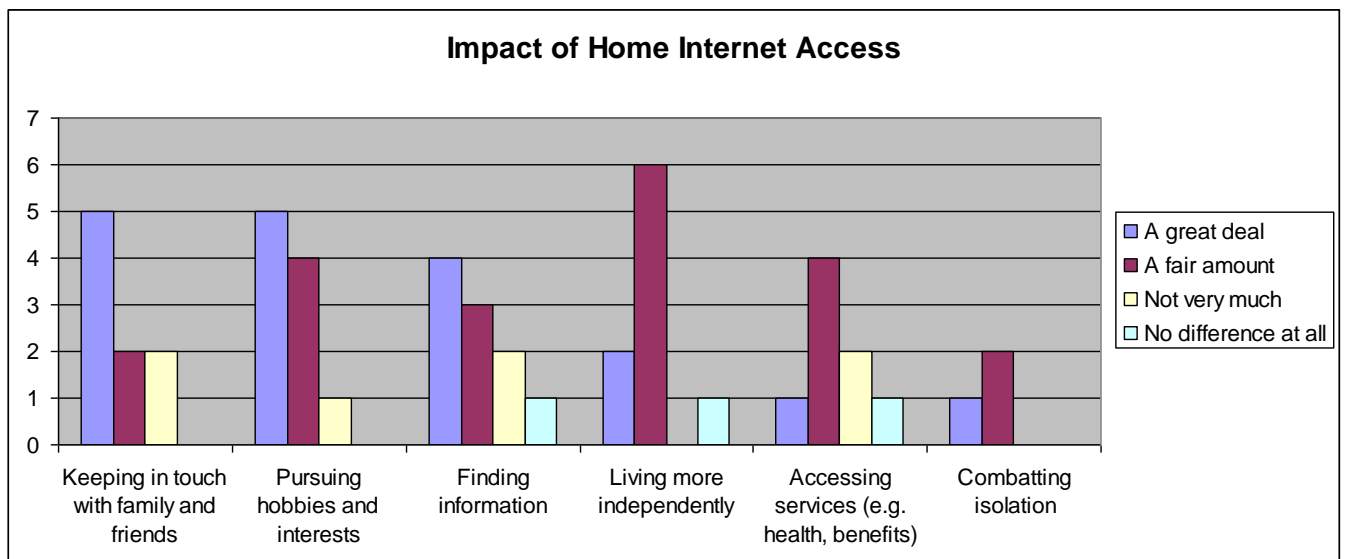
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277584/Ageing_Well.pdf

Evaluation forms were sent to both customers and volunteers upon completion of the training. Feedback from customers has been generally very positive. The following graph shows the increased levels of confidence prior and post training:



“I must thank you so much for sending ... my volunteer, she has been so helpful and kindness itself. I think ... it’s a lot to learn in 6 weeks for the over 90s... But I must emphasize what an excellent service this is for the elderly – well done! I’ve already bought my own iPad and I love it!”

Customers also reported that the training had made a significant impact to their daily lives, as indicated by the following graph:



“Mrs E enjoyed the trial, happily skypeing her son in Poland on a regular basis. She was also happy to email and do a bit of surfing on the internet, this was as far as she felt comfortable doing and was sorry to have to hand it back. She is now saving to buy one for herself”.

Volunteer feedback showed that they embraced the project’s aim of introducing HLS customers to the internet and hoped it would continue. They found the experience of sharing their expertise both enjoyable and rewarding.

“Wide eyed amazement at how many interesting and informative websites and services were available on the web ... I shall never forget the look of joy that was on her face when, after setting up her email account a few days later she received her first email from a niece across the other side of the world – that smile had made it all worthwhile.”

Volunteers identified a number of aspects of the training that could be improved:

- Flexible and realistic goals taking in account individual customer preferences and capabilities
- Provide some simple written instructions for customers
- Provide ongoing support for customers

All the volunteers expressed a desire to continue their involvement with the pilot.

As the project was rolled out a number of challenges emerged:

- Unexpectedly high numbers of customers who already had their own computer equipment early on in the pilot leading to a revision of the initial approach.
- Uneven geographical spread of customers and volunteers across the districts making it difficult to immediately match every customer with a volunteer.
- Delays caused by IT procurement issues and volunteer availability.
- Communicating with district staff: we had expected that briefed district volunteer champions would have cascaded the information to relevant staff and volunteers locally. This only happened in some districts.
- Issues connected with the set-up and security of the iPads – e.g. resetting iPads between customers, transport logistics and impact of protection measures on client's experience
- Lack of familiarity with the new device – none of the group who developed the training schedule had any prior knowledge of tablets
- Volunteer management in terms of communication, availability and expectations.
- Managing customer expectations with regards to requests beyond the scope of the project
- Variation in physical and mental abilities of the client group – weight of equipment, capacity of client to retain instructions from one session to the other
- Future sustainability – should this project become embedded in the service, revenue funding will be required to cover c. £5K per year connectivity costs and increase in volunteer expenses and DBS checks. Additionally capital funding is required to purchase carry cases for the safe transport of the equipment on our vans £50 to £100 per case depending on supplier (up to £2K for 20 existing iPads).

Touch a New World has proved to be a valuable and rewarding pilot for HLS customers, volunteers and staff. The stories of customers who have taken part so far have the potential to encourage other housebound residents to benefit from getting online.

We recommend

1. this pilot becomes a permanent offer and is embedded as part of the IT Buddy role available to LRA customers through our partnership with Time2Give
2. sufficient funding is provided to ensure the ongoing delivery of the project

3. as part of their initial visit by a member of KLRA staff, all new HLS customers are offered a demonstration of how to select their own material from the online library catalogue, an introduction to our eBook and other online library services, and the option to take up Touch a New World training if needed
4. all HLS customers are provided with their borrower number and PIN and given the option to independently reserve their own library materials and benefit from our other online library services
5. the service is offered to other homebound Kent residents to extend digital participation and attract new users to the HLS and wider LRA services
6. promoting the success and benefits of the pilot to existing HLS customers and the volunteer network in order to attract further take up from existing customers and volunteers
7. publicising the success and benefits of pilot to partner organisations (Age UK, AbilityNet, KAB, relevant KCC colleagues) and exploring joint promotion of the offer
8. sharing progress with the volunteers and customers who took part in the pilot
9. encouraging greater sharing of best practice among volunteers – e.g. via IT Buddy Yammer network, follow-up “regional” feedback sessions
10. involving TaNW volunteers to review the training in the light of feedback; emphasizing the need to adapt the programme according to customer preferences and capabilities
11. offering 8 sessions as standard - with the possibility of an extra 2 follow-up sessions later on to gauge progress and offer additional support if the user has purchased their own device
12. investigating options for secure iPad delivery using the existing van delivery service
13. investigating alternative (lighter) security cases and screen protection
14. exploring how best to manage the administration of Touch a New World at a more local level – though some elements (e.g. resetting of devices) have to be done centrally
15. ensuring TaNW volunteers have the appropriate levels of DBS checks in place
16. producing basic instructions to prompt user memory and boost confidence and building use of the new LearnMyWay Touchscreen Basics module into the training
17. sending user agreement/additional information to customer ahead of first session to allay any anxieties
18. asking for more detail about any physical disabilities before the first visit
19. investigate the potential for similar tablet training to be offered in libraries