

making IT personal

joining the DOTs



Welcome to the summer issue of the Making IT Personal: Joining the DOTs newsletter.

Read on to find out how many DOTs have signed up and to meet a Digital Outreach Trainee who tells us why he joined the scheme. Following the recent launch of the Race Online 2012 Manifesto, we also report on the national picture and how the government plans to tackle digital exclusion. Finally, we take a look at the project's innovative Fast Forward learning content.

A DOT Update

Over 130 South Yorkshire citizens are now officially registered as DOTs and are helping people throughout the region to see the benefits of technology.

With over 70 different discussions active on the DOT forum, it is rapidly becoming a busy hub for information and advice on technology, the internet, courses, jobs and qualifications. There are 16 E-Mentors from The Sheffield College and Access Space who have completed their DOT training and are now mentoring around five Digital Outreach Trainees each.

The delivery partners are using a range of methods to recruit DOTs. For example, RCAT has employed a full time Digital Outreach Worker and Doncaster IT Academy is working with local public libraries to help them identify individuals who might be interested in improving their digital skills.

The DOT recruitment drive will continue at full force in September when the new college term begins!

The DOT scheme has a lot to offer and is already helping a wide variety of people to meet new goals and aspirations. Here, three DOTs explain what the programme is doing for them and why they chose to become DOTs.

"I became a DOT because eventually I want a career in IT and I want to help others. I've already helped a lot of people and it's something I want to carry on doing. To someone who is thinking about becoming a DOT I would say 'Go for it!' - it really builds up your confidence."

Daniel

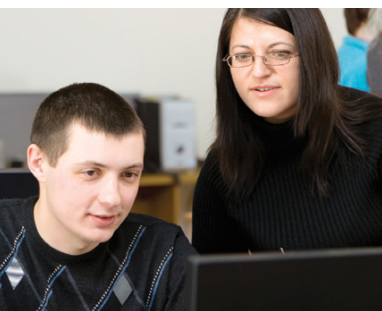
"I was invited to become a DOT by someone on the same course as me. It sounded interesting and since I gave up work I've missed part of my job which was training other people. I thought it was a good opportunity not only to learn something for myself but also to pass it on to other people."

Christine

"IT can be so useful and can make people's lives a lot easier. There are some people who may be old or housewives who find it difficult to go to college. The DOT scheme is good because people can learn at their own pace in their own house. Through IT they can become part of a social network and access services on line. They can become digital citizens."

"People have asked me how to do online banking, find websites, book holidays online, design invitations cards and even technical things like transferring iTunes to their iPod. Through being a DOT I am more involved in my community; I am helping my neighbours. And, through being a DOT you get recognition in society – people have faith in you and go to you for help."

Srabanti



Making IT Personal - Joining the DOTs Online

You can find out more information about the project on the website: www.makingITpersonal.eu and if you are interested in becoming a DOT, or would like to access some free IT tips, go to: www.makingITpersonal.org.uk.

DOT Profile: Iain Milner

Soon to be approved Digital Outreach Trainer, Iain Milner, tells us why he chose to join the scheme and how he has found the experience so far...

Why I Joined the DOTs...

There were a couple of reasons why the DOT scheme appealed to me. It seemed different to other qualifications because, realistically, it can be achieved without having to attend college or making any big changes to your day to day life. It also allows you to work at your own pace so it fits into your lifestyle and as a single parent, this is ideal for me. I have always helped colleagues and friends to use technology but I never thought I could get a qualification from doing this. One of the most appealing things about this scheme is the official recognition it gives to skills that you take for granted.

A bit about me...

I work as an Accounts Administrator for a company in the Creative and Digital Sector in Sheffield. I've used IT for the past 15 years and have picked up quite a lot of skills and knowledge, especially in Microsoft Excel. I've learnt lots of shortcuts so often suggest ways to my colleagues of doing things quicker and more efficiently when they ask for my help. I also love gadgets and I try to keep up to date with the latest mobile phone technologies. I'm an iPhone user and I'm also familiar with the Android operating system. I regularly use online forums as I get lots of hints and tips from here; this is probably the main way that I learn about technology – from others! I also contribute to the forums as I like being able to pass on what I have learnt.



Being a DOT...

So far, becoming a DOT has been a really positive experience for me. Documenting my activity makes me feel really good because I've realised how many skills I have to offer, which I took for granted before. My 80 year old neighbour fell over recently and couldn't leave the house so she was panicking about not being able to pay her rent. I took my laptop to her house and showed her how to do it online. Next thing I knew, I was showing her how to download music and she then bought herself a laptop! I always thought technology wasn't for old people but this just goes to show how much it has to offer to people of all ages.

Focus on: Owen Jarvis

Project Outreach Worker, Rotherham College

With funding from Making IT Personal: Joining the DOTs, Rotherham College has employed a full time Project Outreach Worker, Owen Jarvis, to raise awareness of the project and the opportunities it holds for citizens in South Yorkshire.

Owen has worked in this role since May 2010 and so far his outreach work has taken him into libraries, City Learning Centres, multi cultural centres, community centres, schools, colleges and sheltered accommodation. His focus is to target those who want to improve their digital skills and encourage them to become involved in MITP:JtD. Owen is trying to reach both men and women who are over 18

and he is specifically targeting ethnic minorities, the unemployed and retired people who might all benefit from improving their digital skills.

Owen's approach differs depending on the needs of the individual but the messages he delivers are similar. To engage people in the DOT scheme, he emphasises the opportunities that are available to learn online with a support network of other DOTs and an E-Mentor. He also makes people aware of the ever increasing collection of bite size IT guides that are available on the website and the range of IT courses that are on offer at Rotherham College.

Since he began his Project Outreach

work, Owen has successfully encouraged seven people to register as DOTs and the overall response to the project has been positive. He explains,

"The majority of people I have spoken to and offered the scheme to have been very positive and interested. People initially want to know how the scheme works and what is in it for them, so I always make it very clear that it works on a voluntary basis and there are lots of ways that they can develop their skills.

"The uptake of the DOT scheme has been very promising in the Rotherham area and, in all, this project has been welcomed and encouraged by the communities we have introduced it to."

MITP-JtD on the National Stage

The Making IT Personal: Joining the DOTs team recently presented at a national conference to let the rest of the UK know how the project was developing. Ian Chowcat, who plays a coordinating role across our project, tells us a bit about the event...

"MITP-JtD is one of just three projects that the European Social Fund (ESF) is funding nationally to develop innovative methods of promoting digital inclusion. On the 13th July we presented the progress we have made to date at a meeting of these projects, hosted by the national ESF unit.

"We also heard about the work they are doing in the East Midlands on the DAIN (Digital Activists Inclusion Network) and eBusiness Champions projects. Other presentations at the meeting included one from the Race Online 2012 campaign. This is the national campaign headed by the Government's UK Digital Champion Martha Lane Fox, which just the day before had launched its 'Manifesto For a Networked Nation' at Number 10 Downing Street. The manifesto sets the aim of getting millions more of the 20% of the population who don't use the internet, including many of the most disadvantaged members of our society, online by the end of the Olympic year of 2012.

"Linked to this is the Pass IT On idea being promoted by UK Online Centres, encouraging people who use the internet to help their friends, families, neighbours and workmates to do the same. We were able to show how in South Yorkshire the Making IT Personal – Joining the DOTs programme is in tune with these national efforts, helping to empower people with digital skills, tackling digital participation alongside other forms of social disadvantage, encouraging them to pass on these skills and building a community of those who are prepared to help – the DOTs."

The Race Online 2012

The manifesto for the Race Online 2012 campaign was launched in July, outlining how the government plans to get millions more people online before the end of the next Olympic year.

UK Digital Champion, Martha Lane Fox, launched her 'Manifesto for a Networked Nation' at Number 10 Downing Street on July 7th. With 10 million Britons still unable to use the internet, the document calls for urgent action to get millions more online by the end of 2012. It identifies key roles for government, industry and charities and has an ambition to get everyone of working age online by the end of this Parliament.

The manifesto sets out plans to inspire, encourage and support everyone in the UK to enjoy the benefits of the web. Martha Lane Fox comments,

"Networked Nation is a rallying cry for the 40 million internet users in the UK to help 10 million people who have yet to enjoy the huge benefits of the web that the vast majority of us enjoy every day. By getting more people online, everyone wins. Businesses are competing for more online customers. Government needs to deliver better for less. Charities want to support the people they serve better. So we are calling on them to work together and tackle the unfairness and lost opportunities caused by digital exclusion, and deliver positive social change."

The manifesto sets out plans to identify 'digital champions' in key locations such as libraries, job centres and public and private sector organisations who can identify and help the digitally excluded. With a focus to deliver the benefits of the web to everyone, the MITP: JtD project clearly fits in with the aims and objectives of the national campaign. South Yorkshire is in prime position in the Race Online!



www.raceonline2012.org

www.helppassiton.co.uk

Fast Forward Learning

South Yorkshire citizens now have access to a unique set of learning materials that are focused on Entry Level employability, literacy, ICT and numeracy skills.

Designed by the team at The Sheffield College, the 'Fast Forward' materials are ideal for delivering in a local setting; in colleges, libraries and community learning centres. A key feature of these materials is that they are all contextualised to a different locality in South Yorkshire.

There are separate versions for the four boroughs: Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. The materials base activities around famous landmarks and people, and reference local resources such

as Job Centres and the council's website. The content is suitable for adult learners and is easy for them to relate to. It is also ideal for those who are new to the area, and especially those new to the UK, as it provides a good introduction to the local area whilst also helping to develop skills for employability and citizenship.

A member of staff at a Digital Outreach Centre in Barnsley comments,

"Up to now we have taught people basic IT and digital skills but now, with the Fast Forward resources, we can teach IT and basic Literacy together. The materials are so good that the learners do not even realize they are learning basic skills. They think they are studying Barnsley.

"The employability aspects are excellent. Before these resources were developed, it was impossible to get resources that covered employability skills properly at Entry Level."

The Fast Forward materials go hand in hand with the DOT scheme as the DOTs are trained to 'signpost' and encourage the use of these learning opportunities by their clients. They also form part of a learning ladder and can lead to other resources like the 'Fast Forward Bites'. This is a set of bite size tutorials about the internet and digital technology, such as mobile phones and photo editing software, and so far there have been over 2000 downloads of these guides!



The learning materials are available online to registered members of the website:

www.makingITpersonal.org.uk