

UK online centres / Online Centres Foundation **Annual Review**

April 2012 - March 2013

Introduction

Looking back over the year, again it seems like we've come such a long way. 2012-13 has been the year of building what was a fledgling mutual this time last year - clarifying our strategy, developing new partnerships and new ways of working, and growing our delivery and our ambitions.

In December 2012, we celebrated our first birthday as a mutual - and I'm so proud of all that we've achieved. The road hasn't always been a smooth one, as we've focussed on securing funding to take the organisation forward, which has been challenging at times. But I'm delighted that we end the year on a solid footing, with a new delivery model, having generated income through a number of different streams to help nurture some green shoots for our longer term sustainability.

We're now a smarter organisation and we are iterating all the time - constantly seeking to improve. We do this through dialogue with as many of our 5,000+ community partners as we can - listening, adapting, evolving. Our focus is always about increasing the action and impact at grassroots level so that more people benefit from using digital technology.

As always, the highlights of the year are numerous, but as a numbers person, time and time again I'm impressed at passing the one million people helped by UK online centres mark, in July 2012. But there's so much more that we've achieved, as this review shows.

We'll continue to broaden our scope this year, and although we'll continue to put digital inclusion at the core of what we do, we'll work with community organisations outside of the sector to ensure they have the skills they need to do more, we'll apply our model to the world of non-formal learning, and we'll continue working with government and other organisations, supporting digital by default service development and ensuring people have the skills they need to access these new services.

None of this is possible without partnerships so I want to thank everyone in small and big organisations who help us and each other to achieve so much. I am certainly very excited about the year ahead, and I look forward to working with many of you.



Helen Milner,
Chief Executive, Online Centres Foundation

The landscape

Digital by default - and the impending introduction of Universal Credit - meant digital inclusion and digital skills remained on the policy agenda in 2012-2013.

The government's continued commitment to supporting Online Centres Foundation, and the UK online centres network, shows the importance they place on ensuring the move towards digital by default service delivery doesn't exclude those most in need of government services but who are lacking digital skills. We will continue to work closely with government to ensure that digital skills remain a key focus as new services are developed, and ensure that support at a grassroots level is always available for those who need it most. We will work particularly closely with the Department for Work and Pensions on a national level to support the roll out of Universal Credit, and we also want to support other government departments to effectively develop and launch digital services for everyone.

Over the previous year, attention has begun to turn towards people who have been online before but don't have the skills to benefit from the internet. This interest was supported by the BBC's research into Media Literacy, which found that 23% of adult non-users had used the internet before, and 21% of internet users felt restricted in what they could do due to lack of skills. At the end of the year, ONS statistics revealed that there were still 7.4 million people in the UK who had never been online before, but there also an estimated 8.5 million people who don't have the skills to use computers and the internet. Through the support of our network, dedicated campaigns and learning content, we've been able to make a significant impact in supporting these groups.

In April 2012, we were delighted to throw out support to Go ON UK - emerging out of Race Online 2012 - a cross-sector partnership which aims to make the UK the most digitally capable nation in the world. In October, they published the excellent report - This is for everyone: The case for Universal Digitisation - which set out the significant economic benefits that the UK could experience as a fully digital nation. Alongside this, the eight Go ON UK founder partners have also made pledges to support digital skills by helping their staff and customers to get online. Over the year, we have continued to work closely with Go ON UK and their founder partners to maximise resources and impact.

We will continue to work with partners in order to sustain this impact, not only supporting individuals to improve their digital skills, but helping them to progress to further learning.

Digital inclusion

At OCF, we still believe technology has the power to change individual lives for the better, and to bring communities together.

Digital inclusion figures

16m lack basic digital skills



of whom approximately 7.1m are offline

About our network

2,000 access points.

3,000 centres.

168 specialist centres made up of:

31 Community Capacity Builders/ Community Hubs

104 centres in the Specialist Into work network

14 centres in the Specialist Carers network

50 centres in the Specialist Disability network.

A learning offer that has supported thousands

69%

of learners progress to further learning

71%

of learners go on to use government websites

63%

of learners go on to employment, or improved job prospects

85%

of learners are socially disadvantaged prospects

Improving digital skills has remained a core focus this year, and we've supported 125,000 people to get to grips with computers and the internet over the last 12 months.

Between April 2010 and March 2013, we'd set ourselves the target of reaching one million people, and we achieved it nine months early in July 2012. We celebrated by getting some of our one in a million learners together for a special day out at Facebook HQ.

The Learn my way website and Online Basics course are the main tools the UK online centres network uses to help people find their way online, and become confident internet users. Learner satisfaction is still very high at 99%, and more than two thirds of learners go on to further learning or employment.

The website was renamed Learn my way in September 2012 from its previous name - Go ON - as we made way for the expanding presence of Go ON UK, the new charity which continued the work of Race Online 2012. The website has continued to grow as Learn my way, with the UK online centres network using it as their first choice of learning tool for digital skills as well as for help with employability and financial literacy.

Three new specialist networks

Amongst the 16 million or so UK adults who still lack the skills to confidently use computers and the internet, there are some groups who have specialist needs. In order to provide for them, we have set up three specialist networks working with carers, unemployed people and disabled people.

Between them these networks have supported tens of thousands of people to get online and helped to develop training packages to support other centres in working with these target groups.

To support the development of these networks we also held regular specialist events throughout the year to bring them together, giving them the chance to hear from experts, and to meet others who are supporting similar target groups.



Marketing campaigns that reached thousands

We ran three high-profile campaigns in the year ending March 2013, and they each played a significant part in helping us to inspire and rally the centre network, reach out to new and excluded people, and raise the profile of digital inclusion on a local and national level.

Spring Online

The UK online centres network again supported Digital Unite's annual Spring Online campaign in April 2012, inspiring older people to get to grips with computers and the internet.



As with all campaigns, event-holders received a marketing resource pack to help them promote their events out and about in their communities.

Before the internet, I don't know how I would have been able to find out half the stuff I have. It's just so easy. Even if you're a bit scared of computers, I'd recommend finding a class to help you get started. If you're anything like me you won't believe the things you can learn.

Genealogy enthusiast and Spring online visitor Gillian Westwood, 67

Get online week

The sixth national Get online week took place from 15-21 October in 2012, with more than 2,300 events taking place at more than 900 venues across the country, helping 50,000 people to find a bigger life online.

The campaign was supported by partners including the Post Office, TalkTalk, BT, Lloyds TSB and Age UK, with Post Office spokesperson Tanni Grey-Thompson and TalkTalk spokesperson Angela Rippon helping to promote the campaign on national and local radio.



If you don't use the internet, getting online is one thing you can do that will really change your life. The internet has so many benefits ranging from online shopping, getting good deals through price comparison websites, to accessing government services, organising personal finances, staying in touch, learning, and job seeking. In front of the screen, we can all be equal.

Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, former Paralympian

Start something

For six weeks across February and March, UK online centres challenged the nation to leave failed New Year's Resolutions behind and start something new online instead - and another 50,000 people got involved as a result.

Whether it was getting a new job, getting connected or getting healthy, the idea of the Start something campaign was a second chance to make a lasting change. Hundreds of Start something events took place across the country, and more than 400 UK online centres and 200 Jobcentres took part, building on the key partnership between UK online centres and Jobcentres across the country.



Lancashire woman finds independence - with a little help from technology

In 2008, Sue Wakeley from Cleveleys near Blackpool, was diagnosed with a rare condition which severely reduced her vision. After diagnosis, she found more and more restrictions on her independence and was frustrated that the hopes she'd had of getting online seemed thwarted.

But Sue's luck changed when she found out about The Den, a local UK online centre where she found support from volunteer Kevin Drury.

Kevin explained how a tablet could help Sue access the internet, even with her sight impairment. She saved up and bought an iPad, and was soon enjoying hobbies she thought were lost to her forever. Sue explains: "I'd always loved reading but it was getting so hard because I needed such a large magnifier. But Kevin showed me how the iPad lets me zoom in and make the characters as big as I need. I couldn't believe how easy it was!"

After thinking that much of her independence and the hobbies she enjoyed were gone forever, getting to grips with technology has given Sue confidence and a new optimism.



I feel now that whatever life throws at me I'll be able to overcome it, one step at a time. I know how valuable every minute that I can still see is, so now that I have the opportunity, I just want to learn as much as I can for as long as I can.

Community action through digital

Working with so many local partners it's important for us to grow how we support communities and community organisations to do more using digital technology. We're passionate about the social impact that can only be achieved through local action and the potential for digital technology to amplify that work.

Community Hubs

In a joint project with Nominet Trust, OCF funded 31 large scale 'community hubs' between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. Each hub aimed to build the capacity of their local communities through technology, driving social action and change. They were also charged with contributing to an online 'hub' to support community capacity building on a wider scale, a service now known as Community How To.

The idea for the project came from the very simple observation that whilst digital technologies have profoundly changed society and the economy across Britain, small communities and the third sector groups driving them were still trailing significantly behind the curve.

Community Hubs focussed on small communities, and used technology to improve lives, life chances and community growth. In order to capture the social and organisational impact of Community Hubs, each project worked with OCF to develop a unique evaluation framework. Between them, the projects supported c.75,000 individuals and c.2,200 organisations. The results found that social impacts for individuals (both learners and facilitators) included increased confidence (100% of programmes delivered significant changes in this area), mental well-being, social inclusion, skills, advocacy, employability and progression. Key capacity building outcomes for organisations included improved profile, communication (strongly related to the embedded use of online tools and social media), new partnerships, organisational efficiency and innovation, and cost savings.



Community How To

Also part of the Nominet Trust project, the Community How To website was launched in November 2012. It brings together top digital tools under one roof, alongside case studies of community organisations who are already putting them to good use. The website helps organisations find digital tools quickly, grouping them under common activities identified as key by community organisations, like managing projects, recruiting volunteers, and profile raising. The site was developed from the ground up with extensive consultation ensuring it met the needs of community organisations, supporting them to do more in their communities.



Since its launch, the www.communityhowto.com site now contains more than 70 digital tool recommendations, and has had more than 6,000 visitors. By registering on the site, visitors can add their own tools and case studies, leave comments and join discussions.

Having a website like Community How To with all the information in one place is a really good idea and really helpful for organisations like mine. I think something like this - a knowledge hub where people can drop in and drop out, and look for the things they need when they need them - is terrific.

Sacha Bedding, Manager, The Wharton Annexe

Digital evolution, local action conference

The *Digital evolution, local action* conference, run by OCF and hosted by BT at the BT Centre in London, aimed to uncover the barriers organisations face when engaging with new online tools, and inspire change in local communities.



The conference was chaired by OCF chair and former Minister Lord Jim Knight of Weymouth, and it brought together grassroots community organisers with technologists and policy makers, offering a series of practical workshops and keynote speeches - including from Minister for Civil Society Nick Hurd MP. He stressed the importance of community organisations as the only truly trusted public intermediaries, and talked about his 'bingo moment' in finding out about the new Community How To website.



It's excellent news that the voluntary and community sector are meeting challenges by embracing digital technology - and that they want to do more in this space. That's why I want to encourage organisations to use the Online Centres Foundation's Community How To service, which will offer them new exciting ways to inspire, involve and connect people so together they can build even stronger communities.

Minister for Civil Society Nick Hurd MP

We heard from some really brilliant speakers and I've got some great ideas to take away - for instance top tips about different ways to use Twitter. It was great to meet and spend time with other community organisations, and to feel like we're all part of a bigger picture. Everyone attending was willing to try every trick in the book - and on the internet - to do more for the people we work with.

Conference delegate Kim Wood, Blackpool Community and Voluntary Service

Community Development qualification

We wanted to help people working in community development to build their skills, get recognition for their expertise and share best practice with others and so we developed our Community Development Award - a Level 3 qualification in community work delivered by OCF and accredited by NOCN.

It's the only nationally recognised Level 3 community development qualification, and we're enormously proud of our first 16 graduates, who were part of the first learning cohort in July 2012. The second cohort began their work in January 2013, with eight more people set to complete the qualification shortly.

The award is delivered through both face-to-face and online learning, and consists of three core units; Community Development Values and Processes, Community Group Dynamics and Social Inequality, Injustice and Diversity in Communities.



I come from a corporate background, initially the community sector was something of a shock! You need to know how to navigate it, and how to drive and direct change. That's exactly what the Community Development course has taught me. I've learned how to take a step back and evaluate what I'm doing, how to recognise areas of commonality and pull together a lot of different strands into an effective whole. It's given me confidence, a group of peers to bounce ideas off, and most importantly a professional qualification that's already giving an edge to our new funding bids. If I could do it all over again, I would, and I'd most definitely recommend it to anyone else working in community development.

Sue Oxley, Doncaster West Development Trust

Learning through digital

Over the past year, we have begun to widen the impact of our network and our online products to support people not only with their digital skills learning, but with other learning, both formal and non-formal.

This came both from demand within the network for a progression route beyond basic digital skills, and also from the experience that with a local approach and expert online products, learning could reach people who had traditionally felt excluded from it.

eReading Rooms Pilot

In March 2012, the then Skills Minister, John Hayes, announced support for OCF to run the eReading Rooms pilot. The pilot, which took place in 20 locations throughout the country, aimed to open up non-formal learning opportunities to those who hadn't traditionally engaged with them.

The 20 projects were given a small grant, but most importantly were supported and mentored by the OCF central team, and given the opportunity to share their experiences in order to maximise the impact in their own communities. In total, the programme's 20 pilot centres used 77 paid staff to engage 134 volunteers, who in turn reached 1337 learners. All of the eReading Rooms pilots attracted and engaged hard-to-reach groups, with 60% engaging older learners, 65% working with unemployed learners, 55% working with disabled learners and 30% working with ESOL learners.

There were five key themes that emerged from the eReading Rooms pilot. These were:

- **Hyper-local and very non-formal learning is important**
- **Learner-led sessions lead to local ownership**
- **Culture shift is needed, with organisations becoming more open and innovative.**
- **Technology inspires new content and new learning**
- **The OCF network effect drives increased scale, speed and impact**



Although the eReading Rooms pilot came to an end in February, we will continue to develop My Learning Zone, the curated site that was developed alongside the pilot, to broaden its reach and improve the journey for learners. We'll also work to embed the eReading Rooms findings for the wider UK online centres network.

Starting Point - an eReading Room

Starting Point is a social enterprise cafe based in Woodley, near Stockport, which offers free internet access, IT classes and other learning. The eReading Rooms project offered them the opportunity to extend their reach and use new ways to engage people in the community.

The project used the alpha My Learning Zone site to break the ice, offering "a first step into learning with other websites". The classes started out in a room at the back of the coffee shop, but soon moved to a corner of the coffee shop itself, an even more informal site - and the sessions began catching the eye of some of the coffee shop's other customers.

Tutors Nicola and Ryan were able to respond to what learners wanted to explore, and put on sessions specifically about tablets, family history and Skype. They also bought tablets they could lend to learners.

One of the main outcomes of the project for Starting Point - and especially the new technology - was that it made volunteering "a bit cooler", driving intergenerational learning. Another real success has been in using it to take learning out of the classroom, attracting more learners and volunteers.

For Nicola, the eReading Rooms sessions have been the missing link in building learners' confidence, as well as providing a real progression route from learning through to volunteering, allowing many learners to achieve personal rewards.

Starting Point will continue to build on the eReading Rooms pilot, setting up a centre at a local day nursery to teach parents and children, using touch screen technology to ensure children have opportunities to experience it before they start school.

Action on Adult Maths

In order to support and encourage other learning activity within our network, in December 2012 we got involved with NIACE's Action on Adult Maths project. The project aimed to help the UK online centres network to embed maths activities within the existing learning journey, with the aim of encouraging learners to improve their maths skills "through stealth".

The pilot project kicked off during the Start something campaign, weaving maths activities into the other digital skills and employability activities run by centres. The project will be developed over the coming year, through regular embedding of maths activities into the learner journey, and a mini campaign - Baking with Friends - which will use baking activities as a way of hooking learners, then supporting



them to improve both their maths and digital skills.

Online Basics qualification

Following demand from within the network, in 2012 we began to offer the Online Basics Entry Level 3 qualification. With UK online centres acting as a City and Guilds accredited super-centre, centres within the network can deliver without having to become accredited themselves, reducing administration significantly.

The qualification has provided a great opportunity for both organisations and learners, allowing centres to extend their reach and provide broader learning opportunities. For learners, a qualification helps them to build their confidence, and is recognised by employers, providing a real boost in their search for work.



Being able to deliver this course has also helped us to extend our reach and strengthen our relationship with important partners. We are able to offer entry level accredited learning to the JCP's suppliers and contractors such as the Working Communities Team and Advanta - this benefits all parties and the area through helping people to get back into employment.

Paul Davies, Destinations at Saltburn

Even though I have used computers a bit in school, I never got to grips with them properly, and didn't get the skills on them employers want. This has got me on the road to doing even more and my CV looks more attractive already.

Scott, Online Basics learner

At the end of the year, 52 centres had become assessment centres. There is now significant interest in using the qualification both within and outside the network, with colleges and third sector organisations starting to realise its potential for their learners.

Digital strategies

In 2012-13, we continued to expand our work with organisations and with government, supporting the delivery of their digital strategies, and encouraging them to embed digital delivery and digital ways of working within their organisations.

Working with Government

Over the previous year, we have worked closely with government, including Government Digital Service, the team within the Cabinet Office that has been tasked with transforming government digital services.

As well as sitting on the assisted digital steering group, ensuring the advantages of online public services in upskilling the UK population are realised, we have also worked closely with the team developing GOV.UK, the single government website, ensuring it meets the needs of those with only basic skills.



Social housing

Our work with social housing providers has continued at pace during 2012-13, with Chief Executive Helen Milner offering consultancy to support a number of social housing providers to embed digital - and digital inclusion - into their strategy.

We have continued to build important partnerships within the social housing sector, working with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Communities and Local Government to create the Digital Deal Challenge Fund (launched in April 2013) - a matched funding initiative that aims to support innovative digital inclusion projects within social housing.



Reading resident finds an easier life online

At 84, Mary Parry, from Caversham, near Reading had heard about the benefits that computers and the internet bring, but thought it was too late in life to get online herself. However, with her son living in New Zealand, Mary was persuaded to give it a try to help her keep in touch.

Living at a sheltered housing scheme in Caversham, managed by the Southern Housing Group, the Digital Champion outreach scheme helped build her experience and confidence. She says, "I couldn't believe it when they said they'd help me to use the internet, especially for free! At my age it's very easy to get isolated if you let yourself, so I think it's fantastic to get the chance to make the most of the internet.



Mary now has her own laptop and continues to find new ways to use her new skills - recently starting to order repeat prescriptions online. She tells us:

I have to say, I was very proud of myself when I got to that point! It's saving me time and a journey to the chemist on the bus. It's just so convenient, especially in bad weather!

Digital Housing Hub

Launched at the beginning of 2012, over the past year the Digital Housing Hub has grown significantly, celebrating its 500th member in January 2013. The Hub acts as an online meeting place for people working in social housing who are interested in digital inclusion, giving each other tips for technology to use within their projects, finding partners to help with their projects and sharing successes.

Faye Saville, Communications Officer from Helena Partnership in Merseyside was 500th person to sign up to the Digital Housing Hub. She says: "It's exciting to have become the 500th member. The Digital Housing Hub will be an excellent resource for Helena, helping to support our plans to raise tenant awareness and change behaviours around digital inclusion. I'm really keen to start taking advantage of the materials and advice on offer, and check out the interactive facilities available to engage with colleagues in the housing sector."



Our network

The UK online centres network continues to be OCF's key asset, allowing us to understand and reach into communities.

Centres are able to adapt to their own audiences, personalising engagement and progression. Through being part of the UK online centres network, centres gain access to the resources and products on Learn my way, funding updates and sector news, training opportunities, as well as free marketing materials and campaigns to extend and promote their work.

This year, we've also supported more than 300 partner centres with grant funding, including large scale Community Hub projects, and our three specialist networks.

- **3,000 centre partners**
- **2000 access points**
- **14 carers network centres**
- **31 community hubs**
- **104 into work networks**
- **50 disability networks**
- **306 funded centres**
- **108 network support/innovation centres**

The Mercy Foundation - a Centre partner

Established three years ago in Wandsworth, south-west London, the Mercy Foundation Centre supports a community with high levels of deprivation and unemployment.

Director Victoria Rodney says: "This community suffers from a great lack of privilege, low literacy and numeracy skills, and many people do not speak English as a first language, if at all. Many people feel forgotten by official channels so the trust we build as part of the community is what lets us help the people that need it."

"Being a UK online centre is absolutely key to the work we do. It's fantastic to feel part of a national cause that's helping people all over the country and the brand gives us strength and credibility locally too. Although we support people with literacy skills and provide counselling, we have seen that digital skills make all the difference in helping people to a better future.

Opportunities Shop - an Into Work Specialist Centre

Supporting jobseekers in Merseyside gain the skills they need to get back into work, the Opportunities Shop is working in an area with some of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Their constant challenge is making sure that jobseekers have the digital skills essential for looking for work. Manager Julie Rigby explains: "It doesn't matter if you're an office worker, a builder or a dental nurse, today everyone needs to know their way around a computer to find a new job. Almost all jobs are advertised online now, and you've got to be looking in the right places. Most vacancies want you to fill in an online application, or at least have an email address and an electronic CV."

"Improving your computer skills and taking your job hunt online is the kick-start many people need to get back to work. Being part of the UK online centres network enhances the service we offer to jobseekers and the funding has allowed us to expand the centre and help even more people in a community that needs it more than most."



The Hope Foundation - a Community Hub

The Hope Foundation is a lifeline for many in the Middlesbrough community it supports, offering services and training to the long term unemployed, refugees and asylum seekers, and those suffering with poor mental-health.

Sue Kearney, the Chief Executive explains: "Literacy, numeracy and digital skills are at the core of what we provide but we have a broader mission to empower people to help build a safe and strong community. Being part of the Community Hub project has allowed us to expand by establishing a second, permanent location. We've been able to start working with the local Traveller community, reaching a traditionally hard to engage with group.

"For The Hope Foundation, being part of the UK online centres network means being attached to a respected national organisation, and the branded posters and signs are great for promoting our services locally. We also really value Helen's advocacy work too. It's good to know that someone is fighting the corner for organisations like ours at a national and governmental level."



The organisation

Online Centres Foundation (OCF) celebrated its first birthday in December 2012, marking one year as a staff-owned mutual.

2012-13 was the first full year that OCF operated as an independent social enterprise, and so generating income for the first time was a priority - and a huge success - for the organisation.

Income was generated through the selling of training and consultancy services, as well as from corporate partnerships and from third sector funding bodies, including Nominet Trust and Comic Relief.

All money made by the organisation is subsequently reinvested, to help the organisation meet its social aims - to create a better world for everyone through the use of digital technology.

For me, one of the highlights of this year is being appointed as a staff member on the OCF Board. It's a chance to think in a very different way about the organisation. Being part of key decision making process has been fascinating, and has actually changed how I think about my everyday work.

Christopher Andersson, Marketing and Comms Officer

My highlight for the year was getting such a glowing report from the external verifiers at OCN, who came in to check the work of our first Community Development cohort, and the quality of our course. It was a real buzz to see all that hard work pay off.

Alison Broadley, Training Officer

Technology has achieved so much this year, but I think I'm probably proudest of being part of the design and build of the very first totally online assessment for basic IT skills. People can learn online, take a test online, and get an Entry Level 3 certificate from City and Guilds. It's a great way to prove their skills, and it's already boosting CVs and confidence.

Kevin Maye, Product Development Manager

One of the best bits of my year has been the events I organised for the specialist networks. It was great to meet these centres in person, hear about their work, and capture some of that best practice. It's been a privilege to work with people who do so much for some of the hardest to reach and most deeply excluded groups out there. I've learned a lot.

Gabrielle Woodhams, Senior Network Coordinator

I came back from maternity leave halfway through this year to find a very different business, working with new partners, and developing new income channels beyond government. I feel very lucky to be part of OCF at such an exciting time, and I'm looking forward to seeing the projects we've been working on in 2012-2013 come to fruition in 2013-2014.

Anne Faulkner, Director of Business and Innovation

And also

- **We celebrated the weddings of both Gabi and Aniela, as well as two engagements - congratulations Charlotte and Amy!**
- **James became a dad for the second time and Anne gave birth to baby Alfie - plus Alice has a baby on the way!**
- **We moved to a brand new office - and made it our own**
- **We ran 10ks, half marathons, took part in triathlons and long bike rides**
- **We played rounders in Scarborough, said goodbye to some old friends and welcomed some new faces!**
- **And, of course we ate a lot of cake**

Our partners

Working with partners, pooling resources and sharing expertise has continued to be vital to having the impact we do as an organisation.

Go ON UK

As Race Online 2012 become Go ON UK, we continued to work closely with the organisation – and their 8 founding partners – to support them in their quest to make the UK the most digitally capable nation in the world.

BT

BT continued to be a huge advocate for digital skills - and for Online Centres Foundation - during 2012-13. Not only did they continue promoting the UK online centres network through the Get IT Together campaign, but they also made our annual conference possible by hosting almost 200 delegates at the BT Centre.

Digital Unite

Digital Unite continued to be an important partner during 2012-2013, as once again the UK online centres network got behind the Spring Online campaign. We also continued to embed Digital Unite's learning products within the Learn my way site, ensuring learners using the site can access the best resources for their needs.

TalkTalk

TalkTalk continued to be a big supporter of OCF during 2012-2013. They lent their name to the Get online week campaign, supporting it with media activity to encourage people to get online during the month of October. We also began working with them on a volunteering programme, directly training their staff as digital champions, and partnering them with local UK online centres where they could give their time.

EE

One of the Go ON UK founding partners, in 2012 EE made the commitment as part of their CSR objectives to train staff up as digital champions, so they could go out into the community and support people to improve their skills. We put together a bespoke volunteering programme for the organisation, enabling them to partner up with local UK online centres to take part in outreach activity, as well as directly training almost 50 staff as digital champions.

Nominet Trust

We have continued working closely with Nominet Trust this year, as we developed Community How To – the pioneering website funded by the charity. Community How to closely meets Nominet Trusts social aims, of using the power of digital technology to improve lives and communities, and we will continue working closely with the organisation over the coming year.

Post Office

The Post Office continued to be an important partner in 2012-13, encouraging their Crown Post Offices to refer customers on to UK online centres for support improving their digital skills. They were a key supporter of Get online week, supporting key PR activity as well as encouraging activity in branch. We will continue to work with the Post Office in 2013-14, bringing our networks closer together to ensure their customers can find the support they need to improve their digital skills.

Three mobile

Three mobile continued to be a big advocate of digital skills - and of the UK online centres network - over the previous year, and their sponsorship and support of a number of our Community Hubs by providing them with free mifi and dongles had a huge impact on some of the hardest to reach communities, connecting them for the first time.

These are just a snapshot of some of the partners we've worked with over the last year, so thanks to you all for your continued support – we couldn't do what we do without you!

The future

With a number of new projects set to begin in April, 2013 again looks to be a year of considerable growth.

The three specialist networks established this year will become four, with the addition of the Older Peoples' Network to join the Into Work, Carers' and Disability Networks. 150 centres will be funded within these networks, joined by 23 Community Capacity Builders (CCBs). These CCBs will deliver large scale digital inclusion projects in their communities, recruiting volunteers and working with partners to have a bigger impact. Each of these CCBs will sit within one of the Specialist Networks, enabling them to share best practice and learn from others.

While this year the UK online centres network will continue to help people to gain basic computer and internet skills, they will also take them further along the journey, supporting them to become confident internet users too. A new package of courses on the Learn my way website will be launched at the beginning of April, helping learners to shop, bank and fill in forms confidently online. This activity supports a new joint contract with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions, ensuring learners can confidently and independently access online government services. We will work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions over the coming year to support the roll-out of Universal Credit, ensuring everyone that needs it can find the support they need to improve their skills in a UK online centre. This will begin with the Digital Deal, a funding opportunity that specifically supports digital inclusion activity within social housing, with the aim of preparing tenants for Universal Credit.

Our strategy will continue to diversify in 2013-14, as we develop our presence in two key areas - community action through digital, and learning through digital. We will continue to develop our Community How To website, growing it into a leading resource for community organisations to maximise their impact. We will also continue to train leaders through our Community Development Award and will build on the success of this year's Digital evolution, local action conference, with another event in the autumn.

We will also roll out the eReading Rooms pilot on a wider scale, developing My Learning Zone as a vital curated resource that will support non-formal learning within and outside of our network, creating new content to fill the gaps where it doesn't already exist. The Action on Maths pilot will conclude in May with an exciting new campaign - Baking with Friends - which will support learners to improve both their digital and Maths skills through fun activities.

As the organisation moves into its second full year as a not-for-profit social enterprise, again a great deal of focus will be placed on ensuring we are a sustainable organisation, able to support both our network and the population with low or no digital skills. We will work closely with our partners across the sectors; in Government, in the third sector, and within private organisations, to ensure we can do this.