



ICT HUB CASE STUDY – ONLINE COMMUNITY PORTAL

Organisation name:

Torbay ChangeUp Consortium

Summary:

Torbay Community Online (Torcom) is a community portal which has been developed by the local sector specifically as a resource for voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) in the sub-region. The portal is funded by the ChangeUp programme at sub-regional level and is being managed by the ChangeUp Consortia group. Each of the consortia members has lead responsibility for one of the themes on the Portal, with Torbay Voluntary Service (TVS) as overall lead partner. The Consortium exists to provide a focal point for voluntary and community action and access to support structures for voluntary groups throughout Torbay.

The portal promotes the benefits to groups as:

- Information about services to the public
- Networking
- Volunteer recruitment
- Online events diary
- Membership management
- Group emails
- Latest news
- Consultation
- Create your own web pages or links

Each VCO is provided with a set of web pages, based on a standard set but with some customisation facilities. The central TVS database has been used to generate a starter page for every organisation on their list.

The project is backed-up with training for individuals in organisations to help them access the web tools and understand how to use them effectively, keep entries updated and develop their own web content using the portal. The system is also being promoted on a range of public access PCs around the sub-region e.g. libraries, council offices and key VCOs.

What happened?

The main development area of the project is one to one training with VCOs, providing an opportunity to develop group pages and highlight the key features of the site. This in turn helps to build understanding of the aims of the consortium and the support available to groups in Torbay.

What difference has ICT made?

Torbay Advice Network is a key example of how the portal has helped with development. The network is a cross sector strategy grouping for advice and information providers. The network originally planned to develop an advice portal but after exploring the facilities available on Torcom recognised the benefit of having all the information in one place. The network uses Torcom to provide information about developments in the advice sector, collect consistent data from across agencies and provide details to service users of advice facilities in Torbay.

Similarly over the last couple of years a number of community partnerships (formerly ward partnerships) have been formed and have decided to use Torcom as their main source of information provision.

What was learnt?

There have been a number of key lessons learnt as a result of this project:

- to have a better understanding of the timescales required in developing this type of facility
- the difficulty in promoting the site with a limited marketing budget
- the delays in training when the supplier moved the site to a new web platform

The Consortium is currently working on an auction and classified website which will be linked to Torcom and will provide a fundraising facility for VCOs in Torbay.

FIND OUT MORE:

Organisation's web address

www.torcom.org.uk

Regional Champion

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Knowledgebase

Your online presence

www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/youronlinepresencebasics

Writing a Website Brief

www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/websitebrief

Web Accessibility and the Law

www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/webaccessibilityandlaw