

# Knowle West Community Contribution to Connecting Bristol Bid.



## Report

Roz Hall December 2006

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## **1 Introduction**

This report has been produced on the basis of information gathered through dialogue with relevant people in Knowle West. Notes from the meetings have been sent to those engaged in dialogue, for their approval and feedback. Once approval has been given, or feedback offered and changes made, the notes have been posted to the Connecting Bristol Website. These notes are also in the appended diary.

This report begins with summaries of the findings, and consequent recommendations, that have emerged from the dialogue. The third section of this report contains detailed accounts of the findings, supported with evidence from the dialogue. The fourth section outlines relevant recommendations for projects, activities and provisions, as have been indicated through the dialogue.

This report and its contents indicate the starting point of an outward looking process, which has as its starting point a robust grounded grass roots centre. Therefore, what follows is the representation of a set of experiences, from one community, which are clearly relevant to other communities within the region and beyond, nationally and internationally.

### **2.1 Summary: The Findings**

The dialogue that has taken place has highlighted the following:

- Access to digital media, including the internet is currently far from equal.
- Many who do not have access feel left out or excluded from ongoing opportunities and debates.
- Access to digital media, such as the internet, needs to be understood as more than simply ensuring on line provisions.
- A variety of activities and provisions need to be ensured in order to build the capacity within communities to deliver co-production and e-democracy work.
- Access to digital media, including the internet can only be meaningfully facilitated through practical, co-production projects, which introduce and familiarise people to using digital media in ways they identify as useful or interesting.

- Access to digital media, including the internet, can only be meaningfully sustained through the facilitation of technical and practical support to ensure its continued use.
- The achievement of access and familiarisation could lead to services being delivered in entirely new ways:
  1. Based on priorities agreed by local people
  2. By using the internet to connect people to information
  3. Through more personalised or bespoke services
- Easy access to platforms for communication is essential in order that people can use digital media to effectively voice their opinions and articulate their priorities.
- There are a range of organisations, individuals, ideas and spaces that could be resources in addressing the above, which are outlined in detail in section three: Outcomes and section four: Recommendations.
- There are an in depth and complex set of relationships between communities and technology which can be built upon through co production via KWMC.
- The trust that has been established through previous collaborative experiences between KWMC and the wider community give scope to bring in different kinds of practitioners to experiment with new ways of using technology.
- The nature of existing relationships between different organisations and individuals in Knowle West is such that it would enable innovation in practice.
- There are many pertinent links, some that are already established and some that are still to be made, across the city, relating to the use of digital media in community contexts. These links range from examples such as linking digital stories in KWMC with the wider Bristol Stories network, to connecting local aspirations around radio with Bristol Community FM.
- There is further potential to make useful links between Knowle West and other communities and networks, into citywide initiatives and across and beyond the region, nationally and internationally. Knowle West residents and their grass roots organisations have a valuable set of experiences about the meaningful use of digital media. Their informed understanding and knowledge of how digital media can be usefully applied in community contexts is such that other communities would benefit from the sharing of these experiences.

- Environmental concerns and sustainability has been shown to be a priority across the community and should be reflected in the Connecting Bristol bid. The local solutions to these concerns and issues can be facilitated using digital media where individual and group interests and motivations can connect people to media opportunities and back to nature.

## **2.2 Summary: The Recommendations**

The bid should ensure:

- Technical support, which needs to be put in place to enable the work and a growth of expertise in communities. This support would be best implemented through a range of provisions, such as: traineeships, mentoring, and technical posts based in communities, all of which could be appropriately coordinated through Knowle West Media Centre, as the community has articulated both its trust in, and familiarity with, the work of KWMC.
- Support for the communities networks, to build capacity with a range of organisations, like Knowle West Web, to support increased access and use of connectivity.
- Support for co-production projects. See sections three and four for details of these projects.
- Support for connecting with different platforms, so that people are able to make real choices and in order that a range of platforms for communication are easily available. See sections three and four for details of relevant platforms.
- Support for the development of a community resource of equipment, such as projectors.
- Support for action research, through a multi agency approach, to identifying pertinent ways of introducing people to using the internet in informal public spaces.
- Support to ensure the ongoing presence and accessibility of practical support in the use of new media for the community.
- Employ artists to experiment with new ways of using internet / digital media, in ways that utilise the nature of existing relationships in Knowle West.
- Bring in business support to develop creative ideas into social

enterprise and small business ideas, building on the legacy of previous participatory work using new media.

- The integration of processes that will ensure a thorough consideration of the environmental impact of the work and of the potential to use new media to minimise our carbon footprints.

### **3 Outcomes**

Key themes and ideas have emerged from the dialogue, as is evidenced in the extracts presented and more extensively in the appendix. These are:

#### **3.1 Communication**

Digital technology has a potential role in furthering and enhancing communication, between different agencies and between agencies and the local community. The following ideas have been suggested as ways of ensuring such communication:

- Using existing platforms such as the new KW 'issues forum' to communicate more effectively and widely
- Developing an online reporting process for people who want to report a local issue anonymously
- On line chat opportunity for local people to discuss issues with local police
- Exploring the potential of 'red button' technology on cable tv, to communicate effectively with all residents
- Using mobile phones to communicate, especially with young people
- Using the creative application of digital technology to engage more widely and meaningfully with the local community through production
- Utilising the positive nature of local pride to engage people in dialogue through digital platforms
- Identifying common local interests that can be built upon using digital technology – such as family histories – to engage people in wider debate about their community
- An on line news platform so that local agencies and organisations can let each other know of the work they are doing and identify ways of working together more effectively
- Using Pod casts as a way of communicating local news
- Extending the use of the existing Plasma screens to include more local news and to have them in more venues; e.g. at the Healthy Living Park More online signposting would be useful; the marketing of the Knowle West website as one that links to all the others would be useful.

Exemplary evidence from dialogue to support the above:

*'The group discussed witness support and the potential for developing more ways of anonymous reporting and witnessing. There is clearly the potential for new media to support such developments.'* From Knowle West Action group meeting: 17 October

*'They agreed that most people do have cable or satellite tv and Iris suggested that 'red button technology' might be of potential use. She said that there could be ways of working with Telewest or with local tv companies to research and implement ways of using red button technology locally. Suzy added that this would also be a way of getting a whole family involved.'* From meeting with the Restore project: 13 October

*'They told me a bit more about Sandra's work. They said that she has done a lot of work regarding the shape of democratic processes using mobile phones as part of the process of coordinating the student council. They agreed that this was a great way of getting student input and feedback.'* From meeting with Clive Harry at The Park: 9 October

*'Pat said that many people come in wanting to research their family trees and that such a task is quite complicated for a beginner so inevitably there will still be people who require a lot of support.'* From meeting at the Library: 10 October

*'She then talked about the wider set of organisations in Knowle West and pointed out that all the different organisations have separate web sites with nothing driving any communication between them. She said that it is important that money is spent on developing the use of the internet as a local means of communication, to ensure that it is used to enable two way communication between agencies.'* From meeting with Annie Beardsley: 11 October

*Stewart then talked about the possibility of pod casting. He told me about a talking newsletter that he had developed with Wokingham district council, with schools. The scheme worked by lending out ten iPods to parents who could then listen to the newsletter during shopping trips or walking to and from school. In this way people were able to catch up with news from the school during their busy lives, rather than having to find the time to read such news. From meeting with Stewart Weston at the Mede: 17 October*

*'Vicky then talked about the plasma screens with community info on, which are situated in various venues in Knowle West. Vicky said she thinks it would be useful to have a screen in the café at the Healthy living park as people in the café are a static audience. She added that there is an absence of any health info on those screens and that it would be useful to add such info. She suggested that people's own stories might be included in the info on the screens, for example, someone's story about how they manage to ensure 20 minutes of exercise in a busy day, or how they manage to eat healthily on a day to day basis.'* From meeting with Cheryl, Vicky, Sue and Louise at Knowle West Health Park: 17 October

### 3.2 Access

There are a variety of ways in which people in Knowle West can access the internet, but there is no clear indication of how many people have access at home or work. It is important therefore that access is ensured through public opportunities:

- Points of access need to be developed more widely; e.g. the library is already over used and the demand for internet use is increasing
- Access is not just about ensuring equipment is available but is also about supporting people to become familiar and confident users
- Access could be made more inclusive if it were on a mobile basis
- Organisations already working to enable access, e.g Knowle West Web, are struggling financially but have made the relevant connections and have established the necessary trust with the local community

*'Lesley commented on the public access computers at the Mede and the Library, but said that she thought there was the need for more computers to be accessible, and to this end she would like to see an internet café, for example on Filwood Broadway, with a facilitator who would help people to do whatever they wanted.'* From meeting with Lesley Belgium: 30 October

*'There was general consensus that people needed more help to do what they want to do with computers.'* From meeting with the Lunch Club: 8 November

*'She added that some people were unlikely to want to travel far to go to an internet café and so a mobile internet café, perhaps using the beat bus, might be a solution.'* From meeting with Mandy Shute: 10 October

*'We talked about the role Knowle West Web has in familiarising people with the technology and how the community based nature of the organisation means that local people trust Kevin and Diane in ways that might not be achievable by a large international company.'* From meeting with Knowle West Web: 6 October

### 3.4 Technical Support

A range of needs have been indicated regarding technical support:

- Where there is specialist equipment, e.g. at The Park, there is often no one with the expertise to use it or to show others how to use it
- Tutors and others working in education are aware of the potential of digital technology in resource generation and storage, but have no way of accessing training in such uses of the technology.
- Introductory support is also needed in spaces such as the library where beginners often struggle to use the equipment if staff are busy
- Experts in technical support in terms of computers not working properly are also needed across agencies

- Technical support can be accessed, in terms of computer maintenance through Knowle West Web, but this provision is not generally known about
- There are many ways in which the local community could have input into agencies and organisations; e.g. emailing photos of trouble spots to the neighbourhood management team; if there was adequate support in introducing people to such processes

*'They also told me that sometimes there were issues with professional standard tools, such as the recording studio, because it is so good, and it is the industry standard, which means that not many people know how to use it. There is a lack of professionals working in the area who can show others how to use such equipment so consequently such equipment isn't always made best use of.'* From meeting with Clive Harry at The Park: 9 October

*'Ruth told me that lots of tutors need similar training in order to be able to use new media in ways that support their course delivery.'* From meeting with Ruth Adams, The Park: 18 October

*'They also told me that many users come in without much experience of using computers or the internet. This is problematic because staff can only offer limited support to people that is not regular or sustained as they also need to be staffing the counter. It would be ideal therefore to have more staff, perhaps a member of staff dedicated to computer support and development.'* From meeting at the library: 10 October

*'She said that technical and conceptual support from people who are experienced in using digital media to such ends was what was important and what could be extended. For example, when the website was being developed feedback implied that it could be better. She told me that they needed input from people who were experienced in making websites to work out how the website could be better. She added that there was also a significant role carried out by KWMC that was about IT support and that this could be very usefully extended so that voluntary organisations could ensure their equipment is kept up and running.'* Form meeting with Sue Moss, KWHA: 16 October

### **3.5 Content co-production**

There is a general awareness amongst agencies of the potential positive impact of people's engagement in the production of work:

- Local People's potential contribution to newsletters and other similar platforms is seen as having positive impact on people's sense of involvement in such agencies and their ability to influence local organisations priorities
- When local people produce content, e.g. photos, for inclusion in local newsletters they are more inclined to read the newsletters to see if their contribution or the contribution of others they know have been included

- Projects that focus on storytelling, and people telling their own stories, have been widely identified as having positive impact, firstly in terms of people having a sense of value for their own story and experiences, and secondly in communicating effectively to others who have similar experiences
- There is the need for more work that is about supporting people to produce content for local platforms such as newsletters
- There is a general enthusiasm, amongst young people especially, to be involved in content generation
- Work has begun on a website that will signpost young people to opportunities in creative applications of digital technology; this has been indicated to be a highly relevant and useful asset
- A local version of the popular 'You Tube' web site could stimulate a platform for local young musicians to make connections and link up with each other

*'Anita also told me how residents, especially young people, are encouraged to take photos for publication in the newsletter. She underlined how important it is to then credit the people who have taken the photographs in the newsletter. She said that this stimulates an interest in the newsletter amongst residents as people like to look through it to see if there is anyone they know in it; either someone in a photo or someone who has taken a photo.'* From meeting with Anita Pierce, Neighbourhood management: 10 October

*'Denise then said that, with this example, as with most others, we are often too busy doing the thing to be able to think about it. She said that making a story about the thing we have done is a chance to think about it as well as being a chance to get other people to think about it.'* From meeting with Denise Britt: 2 November

*'Cheryl said that she thinks that digital storytelling is a great way of using digital media because of the impact it has on people when they see such stories if the content of the story is in some ways similar to their own.'* From meeting with Cheryl, Vicky, Sue and Louise at Knowle West Health Park: 17 October

*'Sally then talked about the content that would be used in the contexts she was talking about, such as on the plasma screens. She suggested that such content could be produced through project work, like digital storytelling. She said that success stories, from people who identify that they have done things to change their lives positively, were powerful resources.'* From meeting with Sally Clements: 31 October

*'They said that they just liked doing different projects and would be interested in doing anything. One young woman said she would be particularly interested in making computer games. However, they agreed that they enjoyed being able to do work together and for it to just develop out of their ideas, as they went along.'* From meeting with young people at Drop Media session: 18 October

*'E-Shed is a website for signposting young people who are interested in new media to find out what projects and other opportunities they can get involved in.'* From meeting with Noel Goodwin: 12 October

*'He suggested that new media might be a way of making connections that could then be followed up in physical ways. For example, if there was a local version of YouTube, whereby people could identify other musicians with similar interests to their own, in order that they might then meet up and jam together.'* From meeting with Lester Freckleton, The Park: 18 October

### **3.6 Platforms**

- Radio has been commonly identified as a means of communicating with a wide and diverse range of people locally.
- Plasma screens in public spaces have been identified as useful, but it has also been suggested by many people that the content could be developed through the inclusion of digital stories produced by the local community.

*'Clive said that the young people who attend The Park are almost inevitably detached from their peers. One of the ways that this has been addressed is through a LSC funded radio station that was based at The Park on the basis that it would be a useful study support system. It was though unfortunately funded through a pot of money that ran out so the project couldn't be developed further. The radio station had proved useful as a platform through which young people could share their learning experiences with other young people both in and outside of The Park.'* From meeting with Clive Harry at The Park: 9 October

*'Phil suggested a need to consider the way in which young people interact with each other through radio and other digital technology. Phil told me that he has looked into setting up a digital radio station that could be run for and by young people. He said he thought this was a great use of digital technology and a great way of getting instant feedback from young people on anything.'* From meeting with Phil Cotgreaves, Youth Moves: 13 October

*He told me about the out of school theatre club which 10 – 13 year olds have been involved in and how this group also have a great interest in setting up their own radio station. Stewart said that there is also interest in setting up a radio station amongst 13 to 19 year olds who use the centre. He said that he thinks such a radio station would be an ideal platform for young people to engage in dialogue with each other.'* From meeting with Stewart Weston at the Mede: 17 October

*'Stewart then explained the community bus scheme that runs from The Mede. The bus scheme is like a dial a ride scheme, which goes as far as Bedminster to pick up members. He told me that membership of this scheme is free. He said that it would be useful to have plasma screens in the buses, such as*

*those at other venues in Knowle West.’ From meeting with Stewart Weston at the Mede: 17 October*

*‘Vicky and Cheryl agreed that there is a big gap in terms of the information that isn’t on the plasma screens that could be filled in an inclusive way by using people’s stories of how, for example, they do 20 minutes exercise a day.’ From meeting with Cheryl, Vicky, Sue and Louise at Knowle West Health Park: 17 October*

*‘He said that he thought these screens would be a fantastic vehicle if they were used for the community to communicate with itself.’ From meeting with Clive Harry at The Park: 9 October*

## **4 Recommendations**

### **4.1 Use the following existing expertise, skills and resources to build on the interests that have been articulated:**

(When planning activities and programmes with new media the SustainIT toolkit [www.sustainit.org](http://www.sustainit.org) could be used to minimise environmental impact – impact should also be monitored throughout the activities and aims to reduce impacts should be factored in)

#### **Knowle West Media Centre**

Digital Storytelling facilitation

Website facilitation: ensure local people can access resources and have input

Website content production

Communities network coordination

Support for tutors in digital resource use (e.g. training in Powerpoint)

Coordination of community based technical support

Co-production projects; planning and facilitation

Extending platforms and access to them

Continuation of action research into use of mobile phones as tool for democratic engagement

#### **Knowle West Web**

Website use facilitation

Technical support

#### **Radio: equipment and people**

Equipment at the Park

Phil Cotgreaves: access to equipment

Stewart Weston: access to young people and pod cast experience

Lester Freckleton: content production and connections with wider activities

Bristol Community FM – Phil Gibbons at the Beacon Centre, City Academy

#### **Extended Schools Network**

Internet use, community facilitation

Content generation workshops for website

## **Neighbourhood Management / Housing**

Internet use for reporting issues

### **Plasma screens**

Platform for more local information and content produced by residents; whilst this idea is popular, plasma screens have a significant environmental impact so some alternative might be sought

### **Library**

Build on existing uses of internet at Library through workshops

#### **4.2 Develop the following resources:**

Technical support

Pool of community equipment, e.g. projectors

Joined up local websites: links to all from KW issues forum

Extend local newsletters through additional websites (e.g. Mouth of the South)

On Line police chat room

Storytelling collective

Community Pod cast archive

Local ancestry archive

#### **4.3 Develop the following projects:**

##### **Local histories**

Web based research re ancestry

Visualisation of ancestry – family trees

Library resource

##### **Digital storytelling Knowle West: project and advocacy group**

KWHA

Lunch Club

Walkers group

The Mede

The Park

James Edwards

##### **Support E-Shed development**

Noel Goodwin

##### **Radio content generation project**

See individuals cited above

##### **Pod casting projects**

See individuals cited above

##### **Internet introductions agency and project**

Multi agency team to identify ways of introducing people to using the web in public spaces.