

## Get Your Message Out

Lasa recently signed up for Charity Technology Trust's CTTM@il email marketing service. Ian Runeckles looks at why and how the decision was taken.

For some time it had been felt that Lasa was not taking advantage of online marketing techniques (or e-communications) as best it could. A number of marketing campaigns were set to take off and with Lasa's website redevelopment and a new marketing manager in post, it seemed like an appropriate time to look at whether a centralised bulk emailing system would help.

To establish what the appropriate solution might be we looked at what other parts of Lasa were currently doing, the issues which this brought up, the features we might need, what we might use it for and tools which might be appropriate.

### Current situation

We had a system for emailing to our Rightsnet subscribers ([www.rightsnet.org.uk](http://www.rightsnet.org.uk)) that has been in place for a number of years. It sends out a daily html (webpage format) summary of the new articles Rightsnet website which is handled automatically and attaches more static information. Although fairly basic it does the job and the number of mails being sent would be difficult to afford using alternative hosted services we decided to leave Rightsnet as it is for the time being.

The Training team was also using a text-based email system developed by the Rightsnet web developer which goes out on a fortnightly basis to about 850 addresses. It was thought that this could definitely do with an upgrade.

Other services such as our AIMS case management software were using Outlook distribution lists for subscribers with support contracts to advise of upgrades etc and a bought in list which was mailed to annually to market the product. The Information Systems Team, which produces Computanews, was looking at how the distribution of the publication could be done with the switch over from paper to the pdf format.

Other marketing efforts were mainly ad-hoc using distribution lists in Outlook. The problem with this is that they are personal to the individual user and there is no overall centralised control.

### Management issues

Whilst it can be relatively straightforward to assess, purchase and even install software or (even easier) sign up to a hosted service, there were a number of considerations which needed to be thought about before going ahead...

**continued on page 5**

### in this issue

Lasa's Ian Runeckles on buying an email tool pages 1, 5-6

ICT news from around the sector - page 2

Twitter for non-profits page 4

ICT events page 6

SMEX09 report page 6

Web services and tales of the unexpected page 8

### circuit riding

Lasa Circuit Rider conference and circuit riding update pages 9-10



## Contribute

Disagree with an article?

Believe there's an issue we should be looking at?

Know of an initiative we should mention?

We welcome all feedback about *Computanews* so if we've missed something out send us your thoughts or news, or submit an article for inclusion in a future issue.

## Subscribe

If you would like to subscribe to your own copy of

**Computanews** and other Lasa publications:

[www.lasa.org.uk/signup.html](http://www.lasa.org.uk/signup.html)

## computanews

is produced by lasa

Editorial & Production:  
Miles Maier & Ian Runeckles



Universal House  
88-94 Wentworth Street  
London E1 7SA

**Editorial:**  
020 7426 4473

**Email:**  
[computanews@lasa.org.uk](mailto:computanews@lasa.org.uk)

**Web Site:**  
[www.lasa.org.uk](http://www.lasa.org.uk)

**ICT Knowledgebase:**  
[www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk](http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk)

**Suppliers directory:**  
[www.suppliersdirectory.org.uk](http://www.suppliersdirectory.org.uk)

**Circuit Riding:**  
<http://ictchampion.lasa.org.uk>

### Lasa

Lasa has been providing the voluntary and community sector with high quality and impartial ICT advice since 1984.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 License [www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0](http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0)

# newsbits

## BT Community Connections

If you volunteer with a community group or charitable organisation, visit [www.btcommunityconnections.com](http://www.btcommunityconnections.com) to apply for a laptop and contribution to a year's free broadband connection.

Round One closing dates 9 June (postal applications) | 1 June online

## Nominet Foundation

The Nominet Foundation has launched its new grants programme to support distinctive and inventive Internet-related projects that can make a difference to people, primarily in the areas of education, online safety and inclusion.

**Find out more:**  
[www.nominettrust.org.uk/](http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/)

## Wales CVC Circuit Riders - new Circuit Riding guide

Last *Computanews* we reported on what the Wales CVC Circuit Rider pilot project had achieved. They have recently issued a new guide to setting up a Circuit Rider project.

**Download the pdf:**  
<http://ictchampion.lasa.org.uk/>

## Security in-a-box

Security in-a-box provides all of the information, tactics and technological tools that are required to recognise and address digital security risks and threats. It offers detailed step-by-step instructions as well as practical non-technical advice for anyone who uses digital technology to carry out sensitive advocacy work.

Security in-a-box was created by Tactical Tech in partnership with Front Line.

**Find out more:**  
<http://security.ngoinabox.org/> or request a printed version from [security@ngoinabox.org](mailto:security@ngoinabox.org)

## Digital Mentors

Digital Mentors aims to inspire, engage and support disadvantaged and isolated communities to get their voices heard through digital media.

Led by Media Trust, Digital Mentors will provide funding for 26 grassroots groups, alongside one major new initiative and a further 40 small grants for specific digital projects. Digital Mentors will also provide comprehensive tools and resources.

**Get involved now:**  
[www.mediatrust.org/digitalmentors](http://www.mediatrust.org/digitalmentors)

## Lasa Circuit Rider Conference 2009

This year's conference for circuit riders and accidental techies will look at 'Riding the crest of a slump - surviving in tough times'. Prices from £80 for charities.

**Book your place now:**  
[www.lasa.org.uk/crconference/](http://www.lasa.org.uk/crconference/)

## Legal Guide

The best selling guide to the law and good practice for voluntary organisations, *Voluntary But Not Amateur* is now available from Directory of Social Change.

## Internet skills overcome isolation

If you work with older people you might be interested to find out more about a new research project by the University of Wales, Newport which reveals how the Internet has helped Newport's senior citizens overcome loneliness and social isolation. A community project has equipped them with free computers and the skills to surf the internet and communicate with each other using the latest online technology.

**Find out more:**  
<http://idl.newport.ac.uk/newportdigital/>

## Computanews now accepts advertisements

If you offer a technology product, service or event aimed specifically at the voluntary sector you can draw attention to it through the pages of **Computanews**.

**Computanews** is a specialised magazine covering the use of technology within the voluntary sector. It has a key audience of:

- organisation managers and trustees
- staff responsible for their own organisation's IT
- Circuit Riders who provide advice and technology support to other organisations.

The circulation of **Computanews** is currently around 2,500 copies per issue, distributed 4–6 times a year. We anticipate that the circulation will increase now that it is becoming available as a free, downloadable file.

To place an advert, or for more details about rates and dates, please email: [computanews@lasa.org.uk](mailto:computanews@lasa.org.uk) or phone: 020 7426 4473

## independent consultancy for your information and communication technology (ICT)



**Free initial advice:** We offer an initial one hour meeting, with no strings attached to explore your needs and define the project.

**Independent:** We are an independently funded so we can give you unbiased advice.

**Understanding:** As a non-profit agency ourselves we understand the values of the sector

**Collaborative and transparent:** We want to build your knowledge, not keep Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a mystery

**Thorough:** We evaluate your ICT knowledge and your ICT support needs and set out the best options for you according to your needs.

**Fee discounts for smaller organisations of up to 50%. We recognise 'small is beautiful too'. For a free 1-hour meeting to help you explore the ICT project for further consultancy work...**

**Contact us: London Advice Services Alliance (Lasa) Information Systems Team  
Email: [ist@lasa.org.uk](mailto:ist@lasa.org.uk) or call 020 7426 4473**

You're right - I should have used a consultant!



## aims

advice + information management system

Looking for a highly configurable

### Client Contact Management System?

- task automation
- key date reminders
- extensive design & reporting tools
- affordable and flexible
- 200 users across the UK

For a free fully working DEMO version email [demo@lasa.org.uk](mailto:demo@lasa.org.uk) or call 020 7377 2806

For more information go to [www.lasa.org.uk/aims](http://www.lasa.org.uk/aims)

appiChar  
FOR ALL YOUR IT NEEDS



IT Support & Consultancy with a human touch.

**Not for Profit Specialist**

- IT Support and Management
- Remote Working Solutions
- Helpdesk
- Consultancy
- Network Design
- Online Backup
- Server Hosting

To make IT work for your organisation telephone: **0845 456 3970**  
or email: [info@appichar.co.uk](mailto:info@appichar.co.uk)  
[www.appichar.co.uk](http://www.appichar.co.uk)



# Events

## 15 May 2009 - Silver Surfer's Day

With more than 750 events helping thousands of older people get online and discovering how computers can change their lives.

<http://silversurfers.digitalunite.com/>

## 21 May - Outcomes Monitoring and IT

This conference will help you understand more about the processes involved in implementing an outcomes-based IT system.

<http://outcomesandit.wordpress.com/>

## 28 May - Managing Social Media

This morning seminar will give organisations the tools to seed and grow, manage, and build their online networks.

<http://tinyurl.com/odaex3>

## 5 June - Better writing for charities

This free afternoon seminar from NGOMedia will cover everything you need to know about how to make your charity's publications as effective and powerful as they can be through great copywriting.

<http://tinyurl.com/r45llz>

## 8 June - Multi-Media Explained

For those who want to use multimedia to get their message across.

<http://tinyurl.com/pbhpm5>

# Tips 152

## Twitter for non-profit organisations

Twitter is increasingly being taken up by voluntary and community organisations like NCVO, RSPB and the Dogs Trust to promote their work to new audiences. Heather Mansfield of Change.org gives her Twitter Top Tips.

Twitter is an online application that is part blog, part social net-working site, part mobile phone/IM tool, designed to let users answer the question "What are you doing?" Users have 140 characters for each posting (or "tweet").

- 1 Authenticity before marketing. Have personality and build community.
- 2 Be nice. Be thankful. Reply and Retweet!
- 3 Follow everyone who follows you.
- 4 Don't worry about those that 'unfollow' you.
- 5 Provide value to your followers.
- 6 Don't only Tweet your own content.
- 7 Use 'Favorites' to organise the chaos!
- 8 Send messages, but not auto-responders.
- 9 You get out what you put into it

### Read the full article

[http://nonprofits.change.org/blog/view/10\\_twitter\\_tips\\_for\\_nonprofit\\_organizations](http://nonprofits.change.org/blog/view/10_twitter_tips_for_nonprofit_organizations)

### About the author

Heather is the Nonprofit Community Manager for Change.org. She also created and maintains the Nonprofit Organizations MySpace, Nonprofit Organizations Facebook Page, Nonprofit Organizations YouTube Channel, and the Nonprofit Organizations Twitter profile

Follow Heather at: <http://twitter.com/nonprofitorgs>

### Lasa ICT Knowledgebase

[www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/twitter](http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/twitter)

### Tools

[www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com)  
<http://twitterfeed.com/>  
<http://search.twitter.com/>

### Follow on Twitter

<http://twitter.com/bullyinguknews>  
<http://twitter.com/greenpeaceuk>  
<http://twitter.com/dogstrust>  
<http://twitter.com/ncvo>

## Lasa's email checklist

- Is there a business case for this?
- Who will use/manage the lists?
- Does the system comply with Data Protection legislation?
- Will it link to the existing CRM database?
- Is there a budget?
- Ability to send out around 5,000 – 10,000 emails per month
- Bounce management
- Statistics – tracking click-throughs on links in mailout etc
- Ability to breach spam filters
- Adhere to accessibility best practice
- Easy management and production by a number of staff (but be centrally managed)
- Ease of use and potential for training
- Have a number of different, but not mutually exclusive, lists for different types of mailing

## To host or not to host

Once we knew what we were after, we did some research into the products that were available. This basically split down into those which we'd have to host ourselves on our server or which were hosted online. A useful article which helped with our research is Idealware's survey of newsletter tools at [http://www.idealware.org/articles/fgt\\_email\\_newsletter\\_tools.php](http://www.idealware.org/articles/fgt_email_newsletter_tools.php)

## Locally installed bulk email software

This would need to be installed on a local PC or server. Whilst this might give more control and perhaps flexibility, there could be more administration and we'd be responsible for backing it up. Training could also be an issue.

Examples which we looked at included **SendBlaster** ([www.sendblaster.com](http://www.sendblaster.com)), **Atomic Mail Sender** ([www.amailsender.com](http://www.amailsender.com)), **e-Campaign 7.0** ([www.lmhssoft.com](http://www.lmhssoft.com)) and **Handymailer** ([www.bulkemailsoft.com](http://www.bulkemailsoft.com)). The feature sets are fairly similar, some allow sending to a limited number of addresses for a low cost, then upgrading to a pro version for full functionality.

## Hosted services

There is any number of hosted email services – Idealware looked at those which were mainly US based such as **Graphic Mail** ([www.graphicmail.com](http://www.graphicmail.com)), **Constant Contact** ([www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com)), **MailChimp** (great name [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)) and **Network For Good's Email Now** ([www.groundspring.org](http://www.groundspring.org)). However, the one we looked at in most detail was **CTTM@il** ([www.ctt.org/products\\_\\_services/ctt\\_mail](http://www.ctt.org/products__services/ctt_mail)).

Based on the successful **DotMailer** service ([www.dotmailer.co.uk](http://www.dotmailer.co.uk)) CTTM@il is being offered to UK charities by CTT (Charity Technology Trust). CTT offers price bands based on the number of emails sent per month, starting at 100 recipients for £10/month with a one-off set up fee of £100 which includes setting up a template for the email, address books and a training session. CTT also offer ad-hoc services for

setting up new templates etc. CTTM@il is being used by LVSC who said, "We found them very helpful and they also have just started doing free training sessions for existing clients so if we get new starters etc they can pop along to a morning session. We have the 20,000 emails option and it's more than enough even with every team sending out bulletins. The stats are fantastic. Also it organises all the subscriptions and unsubscribes."

## What then?

After a demonstration from LVSC as to how they were using the tool, it was recommended to Lasa's management that we sign up for CTT M@il hosted service. As an NCVO member we also took advantage of a discounted scheme whereby we could get double the amount of emails for the same rate. We signed up for a year's contract with an allowance of 10,000 emails per month at a cost of £700.

A template for the emails was set up which reflects Lasa's online identity using the same colours and a similar layout to the new website. The mail tool was tested using a list of new AIMS Free subscribers and subsequently it has been used for Computanews subscribers and the Rightsnet training list.

The CTT tool means that not only can we send bulk emails without directly affecting our own systems and handling the inevitable bounced mail. The reporting is fairly sophisticated and shows how many mails were sent, how many delivered, number opened and forwarded, links clicked and so on.

cont'd from page 5

Maria Diaz at CTT has been incredibly helpful with setting up the system and answering the inevitable queries. We have now also bought the domain lasanews.org.uk through CTT which means that mailings will originate from the mail@lasanews.org.uk email address. CTT offer a service whereby the domain is registered with appropriate spam monitoring services so that it avoids being mistaken for a spammer (and therefore increases the chance of reaching the target audience). If a respondent replies to the address the mail is then forwarded to a lasa.org.uk mail address.

There is still more work to do with other Lasa products able to be marketed through the service and lists to be set up. We may also be able to establish links to our database to synchronise data so that we are holding up to date information on both systems. We also need to think about what data we want to capture from new subscribers which will assist with the marketing effort and also reporting to funders. So far, it's been an encouraging start...

Next month in Tips #153 Maria Diaz's shares her top tips for email good practice.

## Resources

[www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/bulkemailsoftware](http://www.ichubknowledgebase.org.uk/bulkemailsoftware)

[www.idealware.org/articles/fgt\\_email\\_newsletter\\_tools.php](http://www.idealware.org/articles/fgt_email_newsletter_tools.php)

# SMEX09: Social Media Exchange

Computanews reports from the recent SMEX09 masterclass and a surprise visit from acclaimed filmmaker Ken Loach.

Many larger non-profit organisations are using social media tools like blogging, Twitter and Flickr to promote their campaign messages directly to the audience, but how does that apply to the vast majority of the sector's small and medium sized organisations? **sounddelivery's** Social Media Exchange (SMEX09) masterclasses

aimed to answer the question by providing delegates with bite-sized sessions and case studies to help organisations apply social media tools to their own situation.

The recurring theme of the day was using story-telling to communicate messages - whether it be via blogging, video or audio. In the current climate with funders cutting back, organisations able to tell their success stories and connect with funders and supporters would be best placed to survive.

To reinforce the point, acclaimed film-maker Ken Loach spoke at length about the value of story-telling to illustrate quite complex and often political issues.

Four masterclasses running throughout the day connected delegates with real-life examples of non-profits using social media tools to tell their story and

build online communities. The Dogs Trust uses the social networking site Facebook and micro-blogging tool Twitter to communicate directly with their supporters, run awareness raising campaigns, and find homes for dogs.

During the lunch seminar, Steve Bowbrick, *blogger-in-residence* at the BBC, said that focusing

too much on social media tools such as Twitter, Flickr, blogging and podcasts could exclude people with visual or hearing impairments as well as those who have no access to the internet. Nevertheless, he said this was not a reason to stop testing the limits of social media, and that ignoring technological shifts was no longer an option.

## Resources

<http://socialmediaexchange.org.uk/video/ken-loach-video-clip>

<http://socialmediaexchange.org.uk/tag/presentation>

[www.dogstrust.org.uk](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk)

## Book now

**sounddelivery** will be running another Social Media Exchange in London on 1 June.

<http://socialmediaexchange.org.uk>



Ken Loach at SMEX09

**more clients?  
more problems?**

**lasa**

**more answers. more support.**

**rightsnet welfare rights training**

Dear Colleague,

Busier than ever? Our **new welfare rights training programme** has been specifically designed to help you give the best and most efficient advice to your clients in the current climate.

We've created a **brand new welfare rights training programme** based on your feedback about your needs. But don't forget that we also offer a wide range of courses which we can tailor to your organisation's needs as part of our in-house service.

We're also currently offering **20% off our courses**. We'd like to give you a voucher entitling you or a colleague to 20% off your next course with us! To claim your voucher simply ask when you attend your next training course. And you can get **10% off any course booked three months in advance**. And finally, don't forget to register your organisation for our **new loyalty card** when you next attend a course with us – **for every five events the sixth is free!**

With **100% of attendees rating our courses as very good** or good you can be sure that you'll be getting the high quality training that you'd expect from the UK's leading welfare rights website.

Find out more and book at:

**[www.rightsnet.org.uk/training](http://www.rightsnet.org.uk/training)**

Contact us: **[training@lasa.org.uk](mailto:training@lasa.org.uk)** or call us on **020 7377 9981**

# Web 2.0 and Tales of the Unexpected

Web based services or cloud computing – where computing power is delivered over the internet as you need it, rather than from your desktop computer – can potentially offer many benefits to voluntary and community sector organisations. However, before making the jump to web based services, organisations also need to be aware of the potential pitfalls.

With a web browser and a few mouse clicks we can share documents and collaborate with colleagues, buy goods and services and save on venue and travel costs by attending online training. Whilst this is fine for individuals, organisations with services to deliver need to be aware of issues around accessibility, privacy, data protection and business continuity - because even in the wonderful world of web 2.0 it's not unknown for users to be locked out of their own files.

## Accessibility

Web based services have barely begun to address issues of web accessibility. AbilityNet's State of the e-Nation 2008 report found that web based social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Yahoo and Bebo, were effectively 'locking out' disabled visitors, the majority of whom couldn't register or participate, in clear contravention of Disability Discrimination Act (1998).

## Data Protection and Privacy

In the real world, national borders and national laws of sovereign states take precedence, but this lags some way behind the reality of cyberspace, where Google and Microsoft make no promises about where an end user's data is physically stored. Under the US Patriot Act, the FBI and other

agencies can demand to see content stored on any computer, even if it is hosted on behalf of another sovereign state. Paul Ticher discussed this issue in the knowledgebase article Data Protection and Web Based Applications.

It's also worth remembering that as of April 2009, a new EU directive now requires all ISPs in the European Union to store records of user emails and internet phone calls for 12 months.

## SLAs and Terms and Conditions

The Service Level Agreements (SLA) provided by Microsoft and Google make it quite clear that their services are provided 'as is', 'with all faults', 'without warranty' and 'as available'. Until online service providers get serious about SLA's that do something for the customer, ask yourself if a service provided without warranty is fit for your organisation's purposes. The recent wave of outages suffered by Twitter due to surging demand also highlight that despite all the promises, web based services do fail.

## Reliability

As for service reliability, a case in point is Ma.gnolia, a social bookmarking site that stored bookmarks for tens of thousands

of users – or at least until their servers collapsed, irretrievably losing their user's data in the crash. Head over to <http://ma.gnolia.com> to watch a video of Ma.gnolia's founders admitting that they didn't carry out any back-up testing. If your data only exists in one online service you should take immediate steps to back it up to a location you have physical access and control over.

Do your research and choose a well established product by a respected provider – you don't want to find the company goes belly up taking all your data with it. A quick trawl though Google will flag up service providers with a poor record of customer care.

## Conclusion

As with all things, take the time to think about the risks you are entering into. Whilst millions of individuals are quite happy to live with web services that offer no guarantee and is entirely at their own risk, managers of voluntary sector organisations should think carefully and ensure risks are recognised and planned for.

## Resources

[www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/webservicesrisks](http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/webservicesrisks)  
[www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/dataprotectionandweb](http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/dataprotectionandweb)  
[www.abilitynet.org.uk/enation85](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/enation85)

# Lasa Circuit Rider Conference

9 June 2009

## Riding the crest of a slump • surviving in tough times

essential recession survival tools for circuit riders, individuals and organisations interested in circuit riding.

- Practical, relevant solutions for small voluntary organisations
- Show you how to apply them in your work
- Focus on the tools you need to survive the recession
- Encourage everyone to discuss issues and share experiences
- Delivered in plain, jargon-free English

### Venue

IBM Bedfont, New Square, Bedfont Lakes, Middlesex which is situated to the south of Heathrow Airport.

### Booking is now open and closes on 29th May

To register for the conference and the drinks reception go to:  
[www.lasa.org.uk/crconference](http://www.lasa.org.uk/crconference)

### Keep up to date

Get the latest news by joining the UKRiders mailing list  
<http://lists.lasa.org.uk/lists/info/ukriders>



Lasa is grateful to [IBM](#) for donating the venue and to [CTT](#) for supporting this conference

