

eWell-Being Awards

Promoting the environmental, economic and social benefits of ICT

15 March 2006

Key issues

Technology that really
makes a difference

Produced by

THE INDEPENDENT

for SustainIT's
eWell-Being Awards



Supported by



PROMOTING BENEFICIAL USES OF ICT

A winning opportunity

The eWell-Being Awards are designed to promote the tangible benefits that ICT can bring to society, the economy and to the environment. But they also raise the profiles of individual category winners, says **Gareth Chadwick**

SustainIT's eWell-Being Awards, now entering their fifth year, are not about recognising potential, they are about rewarding projects that are already bringing tangible, practical benefits to the whole of society.

Launched in 2002, they are the UK's only national awards that identify and promote the social, economic and environmental benefits of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

The awards aim to showcase best practice and to stimulate the application of technology for social and environmental benefits, to highlight and promote emerging technologies where they have the potential to provide environmental and social benefits and to raise awareness of the beneficial and inspirational uses of ICT. *The Independent* is the national media partner for the 2005 awards and, with 134 entries this year, competition for space on the winners podium was tougher than ever.

The awards were established by SustainIT, an initiative of the UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development (UK CEED), a national sustainable development charity. Professor Peter James, associate director of SustainIT, says: "The eWell-Being Awards are all about rewarding organisations which use technology in an innovative way to benefit the environment and society."

As well as being worthwhile and deserved of recognition in their own right, winning an eWell-Being Award can bring significant benefits in terms of profile and public awareness, too.

Helen Anderson of South Witham Community Broadband, a winner in the wireless category last year, says: "Getting the eWell-Being Award really raised our profile and our spirits, and it has given us even more enthusiasm for the work we are doing. The recognition led to us being featured on the BBC's *Working Lunch* programme, which really helped to raise awareness of community broadband initiatives. It has led to the mobilisation of many voices across the UK and we have been inundated with enquiries."

Similarly, Alex Huke of Plymouth City Council, which won the mobility award last year, says: "Since winning an eWell-Being Award the city council has benefited considerably through increased publicity and from improved and enhanced relationships with its partners who now use Plymouth as a showcase example." And Jill Attenborough of The Woodland



Raise a glass: residents have benefited from the services offered by South Witham Community Broadband - winner of the 2004 wireless category DAVID MARSDEN/PAGE ONE

Trust, which runs the UK Phenology Network - last year's Environmental Efficiency category winner - says: "Being an award-winning project has helped us to stand out from the crowd. It has been an exciting year for us and the project has gone from strength to strength as a result of the national recognition we've received."

This year's contenders for one of the coveted awards were competing in five different categories

Digital inclusion: sponsored by BT, this category is for voluntary sector projects that use ICT to enhance access to services and opportunities for individuals and groups. Examples may include projects that aim to reduce social exclusion, increase social interaction and improve access to jobs, education, entertainment, shopping, cultural and leisure interests. The category was only open to public or private organisations if they were working in collaboration with the voluntary sector.

Age and disability: also sponsored by BT. This category was introduced for the 2004 awards. It seeks entries focusing on improving ICT access and services for elderly and disabled people.

Improving public services: open to national, regional and

local government, this category, sponsored by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), seeks entries that utilise ICT to deliver better customer services and public service delivery.

Better ways of working: sponsored by Brother; this category

is for projects which make use of ICT to reduce energy, water and resource use. It is also open to projects which increase our understanding of the impacts or science of climate change.

With more entries this year than ever before, the judging

panel faced a challenging task. Entries ranged from a scheme in Cumbria to provide free computers and IT training for farmers and their families to an on-line transcription service with teleworkers all round the world. There's public service-related projects such as Islington council's "Technology Mile," the largest wireless broadband zone in London, or Big Barn, a web-

based map that connects consumers with local producers. The judging panel included representatives from SustainIT, BT, IDeA, Brother, UK CEED, Oracle, Voipfone, Samsung, AOL, SOCITM, Ability magazine, ZDNet, ODFM and Ofcom.

Fiona Miller, national manager for age and disability action at BT - and one of this year's judges - says: "The entries were of a particularly high standard this year, not just in the two categories we sponsored, but right across the board. Narrowing it down to the winners was tough."

Simon Hills, Head of SustainIT at UK CEED, says: "So many people do not realise the benefits technology can provide. As these projects show, you don't have to be a technical wizard to be able to make a tangible improvement to society through improving accessibility and making better use of ICT."

Enquiries about the 2006 Awards are being taken. If your organisation is interested in entering or being a partner, please contact Simon Hills on s.hills@ukceed.org or 01733 312286. For more information visit: www.sustainit.org; www.ukceed.org; www.bt.com/betterworld

Message from the awards organiser

"The organiser and initiator of the eWell-Being Awards is SustainIT, which works to promote the environmental and social benefits of ICT. The awards are a highlight of SustainIT's year, earning national recognition for the organisation and its aims, as well as for the deserving winners. SustainIT's research areas include broadband and conferencing technologies, digital and social inclusion, public service transformation, online toolkits and consultation, better ways of working, climate change and environmental efficiency and the disposal of waste electrical and electronic equipment. It is part of UK CEED, a national sustainable development charity working in partnership with business, government and the voluntary sector to encourage more sustainable policy, practice and technology."



DIGITAL INCLUSION WINNER NOTSCHOOL.NET

When a school is not a school

Notschool.net encourages 'researchers' to learn online without entering a classroom – helping those who have struggled with other learning environments

One of the messages says, "thanks 4 the email iv showed it to my mum and sister they like to think I don't do work for once iv done work wear im proud of it."

Another, signed Paul, says, "I am really interested in notschool it is a wonderfull experience. It gives many people a second chance at education so u can go on into further education and get a good job."

These are just two of the thousands of positive comments and messages about online learning community Notschool.net; and they come from the people who matter most – its users.

The spelling and punctuation would make most teachers flinch, but then Notschool.net is not about teachers and pupils. As the name implies, it is not about school-based learning at all. Notschool.net offers an online alternative to traditional education for young people between 14 and 17 years old. It is for those who can no longer cope with school, home tutoring or specialist units for a range of reasons, including illness, pregnancy, bullying, phobia, exclusion or disaffection. It aims to re-engage teenagers in learning, to rebuild confidence, self-esteem and social skills and to provide a bespoke pathway into further education, life-long learning and further qualifications, rather than try and return them to school.

It started off as a small research project funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 1998. It established a virtual community of 100 young people who were given the opportunity to develop their self-esteem and be reintroduced to learning through the use of technology and the all important support of mentors.

Such was the success of the pilot that by 2000 it had grown into a full-scale programme, although the DfES still provides some funding. It is now in its third phase and has been rolled

out across the whole of the UK, working with 25 local education authorities (LEAs).

It is the LEAs which refer potential candidates to the programme. Notschool.net then introduces them to the online learning system and provides them with a computer, printer, digital camera and an internet connection free of charge.

There are no lessons on Notschool.net. Instead, pupils, or "researchers" as they are referred to, work with mentors to produce a personal learning plan based on their interests, be it music, English, web design, physics or anything else. The plans include learning gains which can be achieved in a short period of time.

Researchers are encouraged to log on every day, at any time of the day or night, to further their interests in their chosen areas – at the same time joining the online community of hundreds of other Notschool.net researchers around the country. They communicate with others

in the community – fellow researchers, mentors or buddies – using e-mail, sound files, text messaging, video and on-line discussion boards.

"At first, many are reluctant to log on, but once they do, they tend to like what they see and enjoy taking part. They enjoy the way information is presented to them and the way learning is tailored specifically to their interests. They also realise that there are lots of people in similar situations, and facing similar challenges, to themselves," says Jean Johnson, director of Notschool.net.

Researchers follow their learning plan, supported by the core Notschool.net team, personal mentors, a number of subject experts and virtual "buddies". They compile and present their own work as documents or on their own pages, accessible only to themselves, their mentor, team leader and curriculum expert. As their work develops, it is assessed and accredited according to a national framework.

"Notschool.net is about re-designing learning to capture the imagination of our researchers. We present information in short, manageable chunks, using cartoons, video clips, graphics and music. We encourage polls and discussions. We try and get researchers to help and learn from each other. About the only thing we avoid is long screens of text," says Johnson.

"There are between 800 and 1,000 researchers currently using Notschool.net, 76 per cent of whom are from the bottom two socio-economic groups, which makes the programme's success rate all the more impressive.

"Around 98 per cent of our researchers are successfully re-engaged with learning of some form, whether they go on to college, training or life-long learning. It is a success rate that we're all very proud of," says Johnson.

www.notschool.net



Lean on me: Jean Johnson from Notschool.net at TheCademy, Takeley in Essex JOHN MCLELLAN

DIGITAL INCLUSION COMMENDED

The Digital Inclusion category was tightly fought, with a broad range of strong projects in contention.

Everybody Online in Broad Green, Croydon, uses digital technologies to improve social inclusion within the diverse community Broad Green. Run by national charity Citizens Online, it has created partnerships to deliver English courses, complemented by ICT training; it has developed ICT outreach programmes for target groups who face cultural restrictions to learning; it has organised creative learning events to encourage cross-cultural engagement and demonstrate the ease and fun of ICT and developed a volunteer strategy to engage local people.

Project coordinator Ray Cortis says, "Everybody Online can be the key support that gives people the motivation and the confidence to make progress with their lives; but as well as that, it can help them feel part of the community and included – and that's vital."

Also commended was the **New Horizons** project run by Cambridge Housing Society (CHS), which helps disadvan-



taged people to enter the digital world. It loans out laptops to its residents so that they can learn from home, and employs a mobile ICT tutor to provide support and guidance in people's homes. People use the service to learn computing basics, e-mail friends and relatives for the first time, and gain qualifications. A number of related additional services have been developed, including home tuition in literacy and numeracy.

The third commendation was for **Online Communities** in Richmond-upon-Thames. It is a network of 15 community portals covering the whole borough, with news, information, special features such as election projects or local campaigns, and a discussion forum. Users can also feed in news, debate and put up their own topical news links. Co-ordi-

nator Jill Sanders, says: "If you live in Richmond, your local online community website has everything you need, including train timetables, weather, online media, search engines, amenity groups near you, charities, churches. It is life, the universe and everything in Richmond-upon-Thames."

The final commendation in the digital inclusion category went to **The Pentalk Network** (left), an online community developed for farmers in Cumbria. Launched as a charitably-based rapid response network to improve communications for farmers at the height of the foot and mouth crisis in 2001, Pentalk offers farmers a free computer for six months, plus accredited IT training. There are now 2,000 members in Cumbria, with a team of farmers acting as co-ordinators. Dairy farmer Steve Pattinson, runs the website which is the hub of the community, providing an online farming forum, weather forecasts, a rural crime alert and advice on animal health, as well as farming news and information.

www.citizenonline.org.uk
www.cambridgehs.org.uk
www.oncom.org.uk
www.pentalk.org

Message from the category sponsor

"Digital technologies have the potential to make a difference to how someone can interact with others. Access to ICT can open the door to education, jobs, entertainment and communication with friends and family. However, it is not just about having access to ICT, it's about having the skills, confidence and motivation to use it. The Digital Inclusion Award recognises organisations that have engaged with, and empowered others, to utilise this powerful medium to improve their lives."



AGE AND DISABILITY WINNER GAMEON!

Staying ahead of the game

The GameON! project enables young people with disabilities to enjoy the lighter side of computer technology

Like many 17-year olds, Dale McKewan loves his computer games and can spend hours playing his favourite football manager simulator. Until a year ago, however, using his computer for anything as fun as playing games was something he only dreamt of.

Dale has arthrogryposis, a condition that severely limits his movement, which means that he cannot use his arms to operate a traditional keyboard or game console. He is typical of the children that the GameON! project is helping.

Simple in its conception, GameON! is about enabling young people with disabilities to play computer games and leisure software in the same way that their able-bodied friends do. Run by the ACE Centre in Oxford, a charity dedicated to harnessing technology to meet the communication and education needs of disabled young people, GameON! provides accessibility information on games, and adapts them for use by youngsters with disabilities and provides advice on specialist access devices, such as head pointers, voice-operated controllers and adapted joysticks. It also runs a game-lending library.

"The initial idea came from a conversation I had a few years ago with one of our 'gamers', Claire Malone, who was seven years old at the time. She was doing fantastic stuff with her computer, which she called Lucy. It impressed on me the huge impact that the computer had on her leisure time – board games, art and design, writing music, but I also saw that there was still a lot of potential that wasn't being exploited," explains Mick Donegan, project coordinator for GameON!

There is already a range of access devices on the market that are designed to enable disabled people to use computers, but when it comes to playing games, Donegan explains that a lack of accessibility information from the games publishers themselves – such as the required dexterity, speed of response, game duration, required level of concentration – means that it is rarely possible to assess a game's suitability before actually buying it.

Filling this information gap is one of the primary aims of GameON! At the heart of the project is a website and huge database of computer games and leisure software, all of which have been tested, assessed and categorised according to their accessibility by disabled gamers.

Claire Malone is one such gamer. Claire has athetoid cerebral palsy and has difficulty controlling her limbs. She accesses the computer through a spe-



Screening process: Mick Donegan, project coordinator for GameON! working with volunteer Claire Malone on computer software for the disabled DAVID ROSE

cial joystick and a switch and has tested a number of games for use by youngsters with similar disabilities.

"I include in my assessment the genre of game, which access device the game needed, whether there was a timing element that could not be switched off, the number of players and whether people could play the game with

others over the internet. I also include a best and worse features comment and an overall 'fun' rating," says Claire.

When it is launched publicly GameON! will be accessed over the internet. Users type their particular needs and preferences into the website, which searches the database and returns a list of suitable games, many of which have been specifically adapted for disabled users by GameON!, together with the specific details on the game's accessibility.

Phase one of the project began in 2005, with research, planning, preparation and an initial pilot project. The project is currently approaching the end of phase two, which is focused on designing and building the website and the database, trialling it with volunteers such as Claire and Dale. It is scheduled for launch later this year. Phase three will then concentrate on building up the breadth and depth of information, expanding the number of games and generally raising its awareness.

"It is not just about playing games. Youngsters with disabilities can interact with friends and relatives, stimulate their creativity, learn, boost their self-esteem and increase their confidence – and that's as well as being great fun, of course," says Donegan.

GameON!
www.ace-centre.org.uk

Message from the category sponsor

"Communication is at the heart of BT's business and it is committed to helping everyone improve the way they communicate, whether face-to-face, on the phone or via the internet. Everyone should be comfortable and able to use technology to enhance the quality of their life; whether young, old or disabled. The Age and Disability Award provides organisations with inspiration on how technology can be used effectively to enable an inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from ICT."



AGE AND DISABILITY COMMENDED

The commended projects in the age and disability category are all doing vital work in bringing the benefits of ICT to some of the most vulnerable members of society.

Roaring Girl Productions is pioneering new approaches to film accessibility. It is working to make audio description, captioning and sign language interpretation (together known as ACS) an integral part of the production process, so that people with sensory impairments can enjoy films as fully as others members of society.

Roaring Girl's objective is to bring ACS into the core of the creative process. It aims to increase the accessibility of films, promote public debate on how to develop ACS further and create a practical resource for practitioners.

Liz Crow, founder of Roaring Girl Productions, sums up the company's philosophy: "If a film only really exists at the point it reaches an audience, then surely every filmmaker is going to want all audiences to reach their film. But there's eight per cent of that audience that most films miss right from the start. Because, without captioning, sign language interpretation or audio description, an audience with sensory



impairments will be excluded from the film experience."

Also commended was **tenantspin** (above), a community-driven internet TV channel operated by FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) and co-managed by Arena Housing and its tenants in Liverpool.

Tenantspin is a series of one-hour discussion shows transmitted live over the internet to Arena's tenants, most of whom live in high-rise tower blocks and are elderly, vulnerable and isolated. First piloted in 1999, everything on the channel is developed by the elderly residents, trained by FACT in studio management, video-editing and presentation.

Recently, FACT and Arena have developed a new tenantspin "studio pod" within a community centre in South Liverpool. From April 2006, tenantspin will broadcast globally from here, and locally into 300 televisions utilising an exist-

ing CCTV system. Tenantspin also gives regular, live web-casts from FACT's box cinema. The box cinema is open free to the public, giving participants experience of working in front of a studio audience.

The final commendation for the age and disability category is **New Technologies for Elderly Care** (NTEC) in Ealing, London. NTEC's aim is to evaluate the benefits of modern aids and devices for older people living in institutions and the community. It focuses on preventing or detecting falls, wandering, and the failure of the elderly to cope – whether they are living in hospitals, nursing homes or their own homes. The aids and devices it evaluates include video-monitoring systems, electronic tagging, bed monitors, health monitors and fall detectors. A joint venture between the London Borough of Ealing, Ealing Family Housing Association, Hammersmith Hospitals Trust and Imperial College London, NTEC's objective is to promote independence in older people living in the community, as an alternative to institutionalisation, as well as to support carers.

www.ntec.org.uk
www.roaring-girl.com
www.tenantspin.org

BETTER WAYS OF WORKING WINNER BELLWETHER ENTERPRISES

'You get used to freedom and flexibility'

Owned by its staff, funded by its reinvestment and donating 10 per cent of its profits to charity, the only thing Bellwether doesn't have going for it is an office

Graeme Lloyd-Roberts is surprised to be an award winner. Not because he isn't immensely proud of what Bellwether Enterprises, the company he founded, has achieved in terms of flexible working, but because when he first started the venture he didn't think the teleworking model it adopted was anything other than commonsense, rather than the beacon of innovation it transpired to be.

"We started Bellwether in 1997, just when the internet was taking off. You could see that it was the future and that there was tremendous scope for changing the way business was done. We thought everyone would jump at the chance to use the technology to improve the way they worked, but it didn't happen like that. We're still waiting for large-scale acceptance of the potential of technology to improve our working lives," says Lloyd-Roberts, now the company's technical director.

Bellwether Enterprises is a specialist railway engineering and technical consultancy which pushes teleworking to the limits. It has no premises and its entire team of consultants work flexibly from home, on the road or at clients' premises. It is wholly owned by its employees, funds its growth by reinvesting profits back into the business and distributes 10 per cent of its after-tax profits to charity.

When Lloyd-Roberts set up the company, he says that the question of whether or not to have an office was not even an

issue. If the technology was there to work without a central office, he did not see the point in wasting money renting premises. That way, he reasoned, staff members would spend less time (and money) commuting and more time working.

"We started out with no premises and periodically reviewed whether we needed them. At every stage, we found that the benefits of a virtual office far outweighed the disadvantages and as technology has got better and faster, the benefits have got greater and greater," says Lloyd-Roberts.

Each of the firm's current roster of seven consultants (it has been as high as 24, including employees in Australia, New Zealand and the United States) has a laptop computer and an internet-enabled mobile phone. At home they have wireless broadband internet connections, paid for by the company, and when travelling they can log on to public wireless hotspots. The central server is a desktop PC which Lloyd-Roberts keeps plugged into an uninterruptible power supply at home.

The company has one monthly, in-person staff meeting. The rest of the time employees stay connected through e-mail, instant messaging and Voice Over IP (VoIP) internet telephony. The network is such that if two members of staff are working on the same project, they can access each other's laptops remotely and even work on the same documents concurrently.

Not having an office saves the company an estimated £50,000

annually, which is used to push down charge rates to clients. At the same time, consultants can work more billable hours, because they do not have expensive or lengthy commutes to a central office. In addition, the company can attract a higher calibre of consultant who may be looking for a change of lifestyle, such as those with young children or other commitments. Lloyd-Roberts himself, a single parent of two teenage boys, says that he often works in the evening when his sons are in bed.

Lloyd-Roberts is no IT-whizz, tapping into the kind of leading edge hi-tech gadgetry that is beyond the reach - or understanding - of the average organisation. In fact, none of Bellwether's staff are IT specialists. The secret of the company's success is that, after deciding to go down the virtual office route, it has developed gradually, adopting new technologies as they became available and evolving to accommodate them in the way the business worked. For example, it has started using electronic signatures to authorise documents, which are then delivered to clients via e-mail, ensuring faster delivery times and greater productivity, while reducing costs.

"I can't see us ever changing from the remote model," concludes Lloyd-Roberts. "You get used to the freedom and the flexibility, and as long as we keep doing good work, our clients don't care where we are based."

www.bellwether.co.uk



Always in touch: Graeme Lloyd-Roberts at work KYOSHI OTA/NEWSTEAM

BETTER WAYS OF WORKING COMMENDED

There were three commended entrants in the better ways of working category, each using ICT to pioneer more effective, efficient and, in one case, safer ways of working.

LookOut Call (below) is an automated personal safety system for lone workers. It uses the power of telecommunications technology to provide additional protection for people who often work alone, such as social workers, estate agents, NHS employees or utility meter readers. Each time they go out on an appointment, the workers use a land line or mobile phone to update LookOut Call of their activities. Typical information includes an address, details about the activity and the route taken to get there. LookOut Call then uses this information to initiate a pro-



gramme of countdown timers. If the timers reach zero without LookOut Call being updated, it automatically raises the alarm that a lone worker has gone missing or may be in trouble.

Leeds City Council's **Digital Pen and Paper** (above) was another commended entrant. It uses digital technology to reduce the bureaucracy faced by its home care staff, enabling home care services to be delivered more effectively and efficiently. Staff are issued with a "smart" digital pen and digitally enabled paper. The pens use an in-built camera to record where on the paper a user is writing and records the pen movements. When applied to a master copy of the form, this can be translated into an image or the data can be transmitted to a central database. It means that the actual paper copy

of the record can be left with the client as the electronic copy is transmitted to Leeds City Council's central systems. Over 1,400 home care assistants throughout Leeds are now using this technology to send care information directly from clients' homes through a secure mobile link.

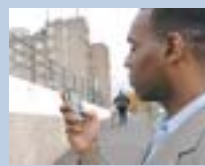
The final commendation in this category went to **OutSec**, an online secretarial, typing and transcription company. It has 85 typist/teleworkers supplying transcription skills to over 1200 clients in the UK and Europe. Six specialist departments cover legal, medical, property, inventory, estate agency, interview and conference work. Anyone with a PC and broadband access can use OutSec, both as a client and a typist. For clients, it is a way of accessing UK specialist secretaries on a pay-as-you-go basis, while for the teleworkers, who operate on a self-employed basis, it provides a steady stream of flexible work that they can fit around other commitments.

www.lookoutcall.co.uk,
www.leeds.gov.uk,
www.outsec.co.uk

Message from the category sponsor

"Founded in Nagoya, Japan, Brother has been a force in business technology manufacturing for more than 75 years. Brother is committed to developing technology to support emerging working needs, particularly flexible working. With 3.1 million teleworkers in the UK and the numbers growing each year, Brother has developed a broad range of multifunction devices offering printer, scanner, fax and copier functions all in the one space-saving machine. For those interested in teleworking, Brother has produced a dedicated guide 'There's No Workplace like Home' for a free copy please visit www.brother.co.uk. Brother is delighted to sponsor the eWell-Being Award's "Better Ways of Working" category."

brother.
At your side.



IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES WINNER HUMBERSIDE POLICE

Mind your language

A new interpreting service is helping Humberside police officers work in a diverse community

"Point to your language. An interpreter will be called." The instructions are clear and simple, and repeated in 10 different languages on the information card, ranging from Portuguese to Kurdish.

The card is one of the thousands used by Humberside Police as part of an interpreting initiative to enhance its relations with the diverse communities of Humberside. The initiative is run in conjunction with the National Interpreting Service (NIS). If an officer, whether on patrol or in a station, needs to talk to someone who doesn't speak English, he shows them the card. Once the appropriate language is identified, the officer calls a special number and is connected directly with an interpreter who can liaise between the police officer and the individual concerned. If the language is not on the card, the officer can use the NIS language identification service to have the language identified over the phone.

Humberside was the first police force in the UK to introduce this kind of interpreting service. Adil Khan, community and race relations officer for Humberside Police, says that before the interpreting service was launched in 2004, there was a lack of recognition of the needs of non-English speaking communities in the region.

"There was a disconnection between the police and certain parts of the community we were serving. If we couldn't understand what people were saying, we couldn't help them. It automatically raised barriers. Sometimes officers were scared of even saying hello because they were worried they wouldn't be able to understand the reply," he says.

The interpreting service operates at three levels. On air-wave handsets (the radios carried by the force's 2,300 officers and some support staff), interpreters are accessed by calling a pre-set number and asking for the language required, or requesting for a language to be identified over the phone. Every



Fair cop: chief constable Tim Hollis and Adil Khan, community and race relations officer for Humberside LES GIBBON/HULL NEWS AND PICTURES

officer carries one of the language identification cards for just such a development. Officers can also use the service in an individual's home via a free-phone number, costing the homeowner nothing, and it can be used in police patrol vehicles with hands-free equipment.

The second level is the command centre (or conference call) option. When a non-English speaking member of the community phones the police, the operator keeps the caller on the phone while contacting an interpreter, who can join the conversation like a conference call. The service is compatible with 999 calls as well as those that come through the normal switchboard process.

The third level is dual handset phones, which the force has installed on the enquiry desks in all its main stations and custody suites. Officers have one handset and the member of the community has the other, enabling the interpreter to talk directly both to the officer and to the member of the community at the same time.

"It means we can get an interpreter on the line in seconds, who can translate in real-time between the officer and the individual. It can be done actually on the scene, without having to bring the person back to the station and request a face-to-face interpreter, who might not be available until hours later, or longer," says Khan.

The interpreting service covers 150 languages and is available 24 hours a day. Although it was launched in 2004, the focus for the first few months was on getting the officers themselves comfortable with it, before introducing it, gradually, to the community as a whole. It's a step-by-step approach that Khan says ensured there was an absolute minimal amount of teething troubles.

"It was vital that we made sure that our own people were comfortable with the service and confident in using it before we attempted to go any further, or it might not have been so successful. As it is, it has proved very popular. It's reassuring for communities to know that they

can talk to the police about anything at all and be understood," says Khan.

Since the launch, use of the service has increased three-fold and calls have become considerably longer. Such is the project's success that quite a number of other police forces across the UK are looking at introducing similar services.

"There was obviously a short-term cost in introducing it, but they are hugely outweighed by the benefits in terms of improved service delivery and community relations. Like all the best ideas, it's very simple, yet incredibly effective," says Khan.

www.humberside.police.uk

Message from the category sponsor

"The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) is delighted to support the eWell-Being Awards for a third year. This year's wide range of entries demonstrates how national, regional and local government are utilising ICT to deliver improvements in customer services and public service delivery. The awards provide an opportunity to identify and promote the hard work and commitment from government, and reward them for their projects that deliver tangible social and environmental benefits using ICT."



IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES COMMENDED

The commended entrants in the Improving Public Services category demonstrate that the public sector can be just as innovative in looking after its customers as the private sector.

Brighton and Hove City Council has a good record of transport innovation. Already the UK's transport authority of the year, its **Real Time Information System (RTIS)** was one of four entries commended by the eWell-Being judges in this category. RTIS uses satellite tracking technology on buses to provide real-time transport information at over 100 locations across Brighton and Hove. The system uses a data radio to communicate between the buses, specific signs along the route and the bus station. It also links in to

the Council's congestion-busting website www.citytransport.org.uk, which provides traffic management information, including real-time information for all 1,300 bus stops in the city.

Home Care Direct's innovation is in providing social care for the elderly and vulnerable. It uses unique technology to support the delivery of in-home care services for its clients. It provides a support box which monitors care assistants' visits and provides a record of the hours they have worked. The box automatically sends an alert should a personal carer fail to arrive at the nominated time and it also checks to make sure that the training the assistant has received matches the necessary requirements at each visit. The box can also monitor the temperature in the home and send an alert



should the temperature fall below acceptable levels.

The third commended entrant, the **Technology Mile** (above) in the London Borough of Islington, is creating the kind of all-encom-

passing "wired" environment that was once the preserve of sci-fi films. Launched in 2005, it is the UK's largest wireless broadband hotzone, delivering free internet access along a 2.5-mile corridor. The service is fast and free and offers users the option of accessing council information and services as well as direct access to the internet. The network also provides for the installation of low-cost fixed infrastructure such as CCTV, traffic monitoring, bus lane management and automatic notification of faulty equipment, as well as facilitating mobile working in the borough.

A similar project by Preston City Council aims to empower local communities through a mix of web, telephony and wireless broadband technologies. **e-City Preston** involved installing over 100 wireless

broadband hotspots (pictured left) in the most needy communities; providing 45 free laptops to local groups; free website hosting and training for community groups; providing training for local people to develop and broadcast internet radio programmes, and installing internet kiosks in the city's most deprived areas, providing free internet access, e-mail and video e-mail.

"The project has enabled and encouraged the community as a whole to participate in our increasingly digital society, so that even the most disadvantaged groups can benefit from the advances in ICT," said Pete Ryder, IT chief at Preston City Council.

www.citytransport.org.uk
www.homecare-direct.co.uk
www.islington.gov.uk
www.preston.gov.uk

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFICIENCY WINNER ENWORKS

A real saving for everyone

A healthy balance sheet can mean an unhealthy drain on natural resources. Enworks has an efficient solution

Rocketing gas prices, landfill taxes, fridge mountains, restrictions on CO2 emissions, erratic weather patterns: if there's one thing that increasing awareness of environmental issues has taught, it is that the world's resources are finite.

As societies grow richer, they buy more goods and services, use more energy, travel further and they demand greater convenience. As a consequence, demands on the world's resources grow. And as any business manager knows, limited supply coupled with growing demand leads to only one thing – rising prices.

Manchester-based Enworks works with businesses in the North-west to help them address this problem and cut their costs by becoming more resource-efficient. It aims to raise awareness of the issues among businesses and support organisations in integrating simple resource efficiency practices into daily operations – with benefits not only for the environment, but also for their bottom line.

“Not only is there a powerful environmental argument for using resources more efficiently, there is a strong commercial argument. Being more efficient in your resource consumption means reduced energy bills, lower waste costs, and reduced production costs. You shouldn't think of resource efficiency as just saving the planet – it is also about savings for your business,” says Samantha Nicholson, programme manager at Enworks.

Enworks fields a team of environmental business advisers who visit organisations, learn about their production processes and resources usage, and then work with them to identify more efficient options.

A key part of the service is the online resource efficiency toolkit. Launched in the summer of 2004, the toolkit aims to assist businesses in adopting more efficient production and consumption patterns and to quantify the financial, as well as environmental, benefits of the improvements made.

According to Enworks' research, the average company can save 4 per cent of its turnover each year by addressing simple processes such as waste, energy use and raw materials, with many companies able to save much more.

The online toolkit is a bespoke piece of web-based software which allows organisations to log potential opportunities for resource efficiency, including any set-up costs, then calculates the specific cost savings, pay-back periods and environmental benefits that that opportunity will bring.

Each opportunity has a status so its progress can easily be tracked: 1. Initial Scope. 2. Investigation. 3. Feasible. 4. Non-feasible. 5. Implementation. 6. Achieved. Companies can view all opportunities together in order to prioritise action and manage the implementation process.

The toolkit reports in a variety of ways, allowing information such as the cost savings, CO2 reductions, water savings and material savings, to be analysed by individual companies, as well as via area, industry sector and for the whole of the North-west.

“A lot of businesses face problems in improving their resource efficiency, due to lack of time, personnel, expertise and the difficulties of managing large amounts of in-depth data across several improvement projects,” explains Nicholson. “The aim of the online toolkit is to remove some of those barriers. It's very user-friendly, it stores all their data securely, it does all the complex calculations for them and

enables them to manage the whole process easily.”

The toolkit currently has over 470 companies signed up, working on 1,480 separate resource efficiency strategies. To date, it has helped organisations in the North-west achieve annual savings of £9.4m by becoming more resource efficient, with another £5.9m of annual savings in the pipeline. This translates into resource savings of over 2.2 million tonnes of raw materials, over 415,000 cubic metres of water and over 44,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions every year.

Satisfied users include BSN Medical, a medical textile manufacturer in East Lancashire, which achieved savings of £100,000 through using the toolkit, with a further £150,000 of annual savings already identified; and FE Mottram, an aluminium recycler based in Cheshire, which is using the toolkit to manage its resource efficiency strategy and is expecting to achieve annual savings of £400,000 as a result.

“We are not here to tell people how to run their businesses, but what we do know is how to manage and reduce their impact on the environment. The online toolkit helps them manage that process and save the environment, as well as significant sums of money,” says Nicholson.

www.enworks.com



Todd Holden and Samantha Nicholson from Enworks. JON SUPER

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFICIENCY COMMENDED

The strength of the projects in the Climate Change and Environmental Efficiency category saw three entries commended.

Sonic Postcards (right) is a unique project that enables pupils from across the UK to explore and compare their local sound environments through swapping sound postcards with other schools via the internet. It focuses on the impact of sound on our lives and the possibilities for creativity through the manipulation of sounds with technology. As with an ordinary postcard, people can exchange information about their local environments, providing insights into a variety of places, lives and cultures – from urban to rural, coastal to suburban.

The project is aimed at young people aged between nine and 14



years, from school across the UK. So far, 75 schools have become involved, from the most northerly tip of Shetland to the coast of Cornwall.

The second commended entry was **BigBarn**, a virtual farmers' market. BigBarn uses maps to help people find quality, local food in their area. Enter a UK postcode and BigBarn brings up a local map

showing producers in that area. Everything is represented, from butchers to farm shops, farmers markets to smallholders. It's free to use and those who register receive regular, postcode-specific emails with news and offers for their region. The website currently attracts around 1,200 people every day and lists around 6,500 suppliers nationwide. Says founder Anthony Davison, “BigBarn is a simple idea that addresses a number of issues. It allows people to buy quality food from their local area at a fair price. They get a good deal and the producers get to sell directly, giving the local economy a welcome boost.”

The final entry in this category to be commended was **City Wildlife**, run by Brighton and Hove City Council. The project strives to cross the divide between

professional nature conservationists and the urban-dwelling public. At the core of City Wildlife is a database of special sites for wildlife in the area, ranging from local nature reserves to golf courses and cemeteries. Wildlife facts and figures are included and each site can be viewed as an aerial photograph, which enables viewers to zoom in for a closer look. Users can add their own wildlife records by clicking on the map to locate the sighting and then selecting the species from a menu. They can also add their own photographs, view existing records and read regularly updated information about local conservation groups operating in the area.

www.sonicpostcards.org
www.bigbarn.co.uk
www.citywildlife.org.uk

Message from the category sponsor

“The climate change and environmental efficiency category, sponsored by UK CEED, focuses on how information and communication technologies can be used to reduce the use of energy, water and other resources and enhance our understanding of the natural environment. The quality and breadth of the projects entered in this category are a tribute to the ingenuity and vision of the individuals and organisations involved and provide a vivid illustration of how the technologies can deliver tangible environmental benefits.”



Promoting uses of technology that enhance environmental and social well-being



The SustainIT initiative was established by national charity UK CEED (www.ukceed.org) to investigate and promote the role that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can play in:

- reducing social exclusion
- empowering and supporting communities
- protecting the environment through increased resource efficiency and enhanced understanding of environmental change.

Over the last six years, UK CEED's SustainIT programme has become the leading source of authoritative research, policy advice and guidance and dissemination in this area.

In particular, SustainIT has built a comprehensive evidence base of how and where ICT can be used to contribute benefits in the following areas:

- Public service transformation
- Climate change, energy and resource efficiency
- Support for excluded and disadvantaged groups
- Better ways of working (e.g. telework, conferencing)
- Enhanced information provision and delivery

Our work

In addition to the eWell-Being Awards, SustainIT carries out a broad programme of activities including:

- **SusTel (www.sustel.org)**, the world's most comprehensive study of the social, economic and environmental impacts of new ways of working

- **Connected Communities**, an appraisal of community-focused ICT initiatives in the UK intended to bridge the digital divide

- **Sustainable Broadband** - 36 case studies on broadband use at businesses and community organisations for the Northwest Regional Development Agency

- **Online sustainability toolkits** - interactive online tools that enable organisations to assess projects, plans and proposals against a defined range of sustainable development criteria. The toolkits have been used by over 1,500 individuals and organisations across three regions - the East of England, East Midlands and North-west.

Join our network

SustainIT works in partnership with a wide range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. For further information, please contact Simon Hills, Head of SustainIT at UK CEED on 01733 312286 or email s.hills@ukceed.org

Are you interested in being involved in the 2006 eWell-Being Awards? Contact us now to discuss application and sponsorship opportunities.

SustainIT would like to thank all those who took the time to enter projects this year and also the judges for their hard work and enthusiasm. We would also like to thank BT, Brother and IDeA, for their support of the Awards and ODPM, Digital Challenge and NWDA for their support of the Awards event. We look forward to welcoming many new entries for next year's awards.

