



Report on the DCMS/Wolfson Fund 1998-99

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Section 1: Secretary of State's Foreword

I am delighted to commend to you this report on the 1998-99 DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund. This was the second year of the Fund which was established in 1997 and is a partnership between the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Wolfson Foundation. The aim of the Fund is to enhance the facilities and services provided by English public libraries and in 1998-99, we decided to focus on projects developing libraries' ICT capabilities, in line with Government's longer term plans to create a Public Libraries ICT network linked to the National Grid for Learning (the People's Network).

Other changes made to the Fund, after the experience of the first year, were extending the opportunity to participate beyond town centre libraries to smaller service points, and allowing authorities to bid to the Fund in consortia as well as individually. I have been very impressed by the way in which applicants took advantage of these changes: you will find described here projects which have brought services to remote rural or deprived inner city areas using branch and mobile libraries and community-based outreach points. You will also see a formidable array of partnerships across authorities and regions, extending to co-operative working with other public, private and community organisations.

As in its first year, the Fund proved popular, with many more good applications received than could be funded with the £3 million available. The 21 applicants who received awards can be justly proud of their achievement in attracting funding as well as their success in realising their projects. They have created imaginative and sustainable new ICT-based services for their library users and wider communities. Together, they represent an investment in library services of over £6,324,000.

As well as this material investment, the DCMS/Wolfson Fund continues to provide the benefits of enhanced experience and expertise for library staff and to raise the profile of public libraries within their authorities and communities. The projects supported this year have also provided important information about best practice which will be invaluable as we now move to establish the People's Network, linking all UK public libraries to the Internet and National Grid for Learning by 2002. Most importantly, however, the projects have provided library users with a better service.

The services established by last year's DCMS/Wolfson Fund enjoyed over half a million users during their first six months or so of operation. I am confident that those provided in 1998-99 will be similarly popular.

I am extremely grateful to our partners, the Wolfson Foundation, for helping us to prepare public libraries to meet the challenges of the Information Age, and to Lord Wolfson of Marylebone for his valued and continued support. We currently have a further 18 DCMS/Wolfson ICT projects underway, funded by the 1999-2000 Fund, and we recently issued an invitation to bid for a 2000-2001 funding round which will support reader development projects and British history collections. The DCMS/Wolfson scheme is thriving, and, in commending the 1998-99 report to you, I look forward to seeing libraries and their communities benefiting from the services it helps provide for years to come.

CHRIS SMITH

Section 2: Introduction



Alan Howarth MP visits Derbyshire's DELTA Project.

The 1998-99 DCMS/Wolfson Fund sought applications from English library authorities for funding for public library ICT infrastructure projects, in line with the Government's response to the Library and Information Commission's report "New Library: The People's Network". Applications were received from 74 authorities. In July 1998, twenty-one awards totalling £2,924,716 were announced. The Fund requires authorities to provide at least 50% matching funding for projects and over £3,400,000 in partnership funding was levered in.

There were various types of applicant, including new unitary authorities, two-tier authorities, regional library systems and consortia. Four consortia were among the successful applicants. One of these, the regional library system "Information North" received the largest award: £498,000 for a project whose total cost was £1,027,043. This major award, 17% of the total funding awarded, enabled networking of all 284 library service points in the Northern region, covering both urban and rural areas.

Four of the successful applicants (Liverpool, Luton, Birmingham and Derbyshire) had also received awards in the previous DCMS/Wolfson funding round. The Fund Committee felt that it did not wish to penalise success, or to discourage authorities which received awards in the first round from making further applications. In agreeing second awards, however, it required that authorities should have managed their previous awards well, and that their 1998-99 applications should show a new or imaginative project direction rather than simply adding to or completing work which could not be achieved in last year's timetable.

Although the projects were managed differently, some experiences were common. Clear objectives, agreed by all partners, and project planning from the earliest stage were important. Good communication between the different teams working on a project was critical to success, as was the formation of partnerships at a local level, bringing together the necessary skills and resources. The involvement of commercial organisations in some of the projects showed the potential gains of public-private partnerships. It is worth noting that some of these partnerships continue even after the projects have been completed, yielding further benefits.

The projects had to solve various technical problems. They had to determine how new ICT facilities would relate to authorities' existing technical infrastructure. They had to ensure that systems would have sufficient bandwidth to cope with demand. Security raised a series of issues, both in terms of the physical security of the ICT equipment and in terms of preventing unauthorised access to confidential or offensive material.

All the projects demonstrated ably that libraries are in an ideal position to provide ICT facilities for the local community. Many aimed to reach people who otherwise would not gain experience of using ICT, through careful targeting of services. Marketing and publicity events were tailored by some to focus on specific groups. Outreach campaigns were also effective in drawing in new users. Training library staff was vital to ensure that services to the public were supported.

Sustainability is one of the criteria for judging DCMS/Wolfson Fund applications. Projects gave commitments to cover maintenance and revenue costs from their funds for libraries and ICT, in some cases increasing library service budgets. Revenue can also be earned by charging for specific services – most libraries who intended to charge also proposed monitoring the effect of charges. Some authorities intend applying for further funding from various sources to develop their schemes. Most said that they will continue staff training and look to expand the range of facilities on offer to the public.

Following are sections which report the 1998-99 award winners' experiences in relation to a few common aspects of work on DCMS/Wolfson projects, and describe what they achieved. General comments on managing the projects, partnerships, technical requirements, meeting community needs and sustainability are followed by details of individual projects. Five projects representing the range of DCMS/Wolfson 1998-99 in scale and type of venture are described in more detail.

Section 3: Overview of Project Experiences

Managing the projects

Authorities who were managing DCMS/Wolfson projects for the second-time found their previous experience extremely valuable, particularly in handling timetable pressures and the rigorous financial controls placed on projects. These authorities in particular noted the benefit of the earlier start date for work on projects in 1998-99.

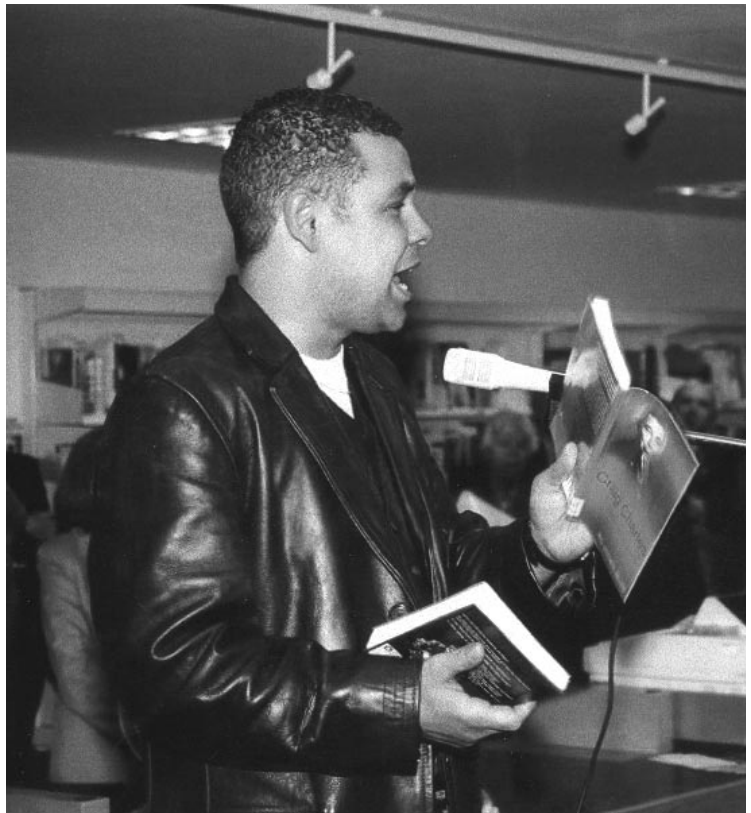
Authorities took different courses in deciding who should be responsible for project delivery. Usually project management involved senior staff in the Libraries Department co-operating with representatives of the authority's ICT unit. In one case, however, ICT rather than library staff controlled the project. Some opted for more than one project management team: for example, a project board with senior managers and a project team for day-to-day implementation, or separate technical and service development teams. Others supplemented general project management teams with specialist teams meeting as required to tackle particular aspects of the project.

Most projects began by setting objectives agreed by the whole team and then developing a project plan from these.

Communication was a key feature of project management, with teams meeting regularly. As a rule, information from these meetings was cascaded to library staff affected by the project, with many projects producing progress updates for general circulation. Cascading often proved helpful for troubleshooting, with library staff spotting problems not foreseen by project managers and suggesting solutions.

Several library authority managers paid tribute to colleagues in other parts of the authority for their support in realising projects. The administrators of the DCMS/Wolfson scheme (staff who were at the British Library Research and Innovation Centre during the 1998-99, but are now part of the Library and Information Commission) were also congratulated for their prompt and helpful responses to queries, providing "clear guidance and constant support". Other partners were also generally helpful. Some took an active role in project management as well as contributing matched funding. Difficulties arose occasionally, however, particularly in securing prompt action when tight deadlines had to be met.

Some projects used externally developed project management standards such as Gantt charts and the PRINCE standards developed by CCTA for Government IS projects, and many used project



Craig Charles launches the new Suffolk services.

management software. This helped to keep the focus on tasks, responsibilities and deadlines. Standard reporting systems were also used, with some teams opting for exception reporting. Most projects used some kind of risk analysis and plan for managing change. Some who had to respond to delays noted that these were not always reported promptly. Staff changes during implementation of projects also caused difficulties.

Many projects commented on the difficulty of fitting project responsibilities around everyday work. There was a tension between the desire to involve library staff in the project and the need to cover regular duties. Further staff time was taken up by training. Time demands on project managers were particularly heavy and several authorities met this by appointing dedicated project managers, free from other responsibilities. One alternative approach employed was spreading project responsibilities as widely as possible to minimise the burden on individual staff.

Many teams discovered that they had to deal with other changes to library and authority-wide systems at the same time as managing projects. One authority regarded this as an advantage, however, noting that the additional workload of the project was manageable because the project dove-tailed well with wider developments to the service.

Partnerships

Projects could not have been completed without the formation of local partnerships, bringing together the necessary skills and experience. Library staff were, of course, also important partners in all the projects. Close teamworking with the library staff who would ultimately be responsible for delivering project services ensured their enthusiasm and commitment.

Authority ICT Departments were key partners in implementing most projects. Heavily relied on, they were highly praised by many project managers. Other local authority departments were frequently involved. Some found that relationships with other departments could be more successful at one level than another: for example, heads of service might be co-operating closely but failing to cascade to their administrative staff the need to respond to time pressures.

In many cases partnerships pre-dated work on the project and it was easy to build on these. Partnerships had often been developed in order to address the same kinds of issues – education, social inclusion – public library networking hopes to impact on. Projects benefited from the links and reputations partnerships had established, but brought added value, invigorating and extending existing working relationships.

Some authorities sought new partnerships with specific objectives in mind. A common example of this was approaching local education providers, both to offer learning resources and to provide training for projects. Projects also often acted as a catalyst for forming new partnerships, attracting new funding interest, or leading to joint funding bids. Sometimes partners came on board as they saw the project begin to be delivered. Successful delivery and marketing of projects to the community was certainly helpful in encouraging the business community to see the potential of libraries. One authority noted that a well-used library service, well-developed ICT systems and a reputation for making projects work in the long term made it much easier to attract commercial partners.

Partnerships with commercial providers sometimes showed strain, and misunderstandings could arise about what was to be provided. One authority used an in-house consultancy to mediate in its dealings

with a big commercial partner. Generally, however, commercial partners were helpful and the partnerships developed through work on projects have continued in many cases.

The change in DCMS/Wolfson rules to allow consortia bids added an extra partnership element for some of the applicants. Benefits of consortium working included the opportunity for more advanced authorities to share their experience with those just starting out with ICT provision. This often worked well over the project-implementation period, with strong working relationships and frequent meetings. Consortium relationships did not always develop after project launch as the teams would have liked, but good communication links between authorities have begun to be established. The establishment of the People's Network will encourage more communication between authorities.

Technical requirements

Technical solutions varied from project to project, depending on each authority's existing technical base, geographical and design requirements and, in some cases, partnerships with providers.

Most projects built on their authority's existing technical base. Often an upgrade to or development of this was taking place at the same time as the project and ensuring interoperability was a concern. Flexibility to upgrade further was also important.

Several projects expressed concerns about having sufficient bandwidth to deal with the expected volume and complexity of traffic for their new services, particularly in connection with multimedia applications. Plans to increase bandwidth after project launch were common.

Security was also a common source of concern, taking in aspects such as theft or vandalism of equipment, as well as unauthorised access to systems and access to "inappropriate" content and functions. Many used existing authority networks with firewalls to prevent public access to staff information. Filtering of Internet access was an issue in meeting conflicting needs to offer free access while ensuring a "safe environment", particularly for children. Monitoring of use, user registration and child access restricted by parental consent were some ways of dealing with this conflict.

Some projects used a mix of state-of-the-art equipment in a few centres and more basic provision across all libraries. This approach reflected a decision to balance the desire for high-specification technology and the need to secure best value.

For several projects, the design of the technical specification was outside the library department's area of expertise. Authority ICT Departments were generally helpful and several projects received significant assistance from commercial ICT provider partners in technical design and implementation. Providers seemed particularly eager to offer such assistance where it enabled them to pilot new systems, applications and structures. It was important to ensure that technical partners understood the particular needs of libraries and their staff.

Several projects mentioned "front-end design" as an important factor in ensuring that the public and staff felt comfortable with new services. This was sometimes incorporated in project implementation and sometimes planned for future development.

Meeting community needs

Libraries are uniquely placed to deliver access to ICT resources to people who might not otherwise think of using them or be able to do so. Research has shown libraries are a preferred point of access to learning resources for people who are unfamiliar with or wary of ICT. Many projects gave particular attention to meeting the needs of such people, but recognised also the needs of the wider population. Defining the communities at whom new services were targeted was an important part of project planning for most teams.

A number of tools were used to identify user needs. Formal demographic analyses of the workforce and recruitment patterns could be helpful as well as general information on local populations (low skills, high unemployment, social and rural deprivation, poor transport links, ethnic minority populations). These could in some cases show specific concentrations of need within the areas covered by a project. A few libraries had attracted research funding from the British Library Research and Innovation Centre, and used this to help them to establish community needs. Consultation of library users and communities was another available option. Some authorities were cautious about this, however, as experience had shown it could produce a short-term, over-simplified wishlist, despite an area's problems being long established and complex. Even where needs were known before implementation, most projects tried to build in the flexibility to respond to community needs identified by feedback once up and running.

In many cases, use of existing library ICT facilities had shown demand for this sort of service and confirmed that it could attract increased usage of libraries. Initiatives like Computers don't Bite and IT for All had also played a part in establishing a demand for library based ICT.

Established community links could be used to inform project planning and existing community information networks were helpful. Sometimes target organisations were already using the library as a meeting place. User feedback was useful in identifying local demands for specific services. It often seemed to be the case that people expected such facilities to be part of their library service. User feedback was useful in informing decisions on some specific questions in connection with new services, such as charges for use.

Where libraries had consulted their users, many had admitted to having little or no experience of computers. This was sometimes also true of library staff. Training staff to support the public was therefore an important need for most projects. In most cases, training included practical tasks like unjamming printers as well as navigating the Internet. It also met a more indirect need by enabling staff to provide enhanced levels of service to library users, and so improving staff morale. Some project teams identified library staff as a target "community" and reported success in meeting their needs.

Marketing new facilities was important in bringing them to the attention of the community and particularly in attracting new users to libraries. In many cases marketing was targeted: for example, mailshots to small businesses. Keeping library staff informed about projects proved essential here, enabling them to encourage use of new facilities. Some authorities also used celebrity launches to attract press coverage and publicity and others developed presentations to take out to target groups.

Often DCMS/Wolfson projects were leading-edge parts of wider Council plans to deliver coordinated community information and interactive government. Where such services were delivered, or pre-existed, they have been heavily used.

On the whole, the libraries experienced an enthusiastic community response, which some have exploited to develop the projects further.

Sustainability

The maintenance and revenue costs involved in sustaining project facilities are likely to be covered by authority funds for libraries and ICT in most cases. Resources to be drawn on included libraries' running costs budgets, materials funds (for software and software licences) and authority central budgets, as well as "in-kind" contributions like ongoing technical support.

Several authorities increased their library service budgets to support the new services. In some cases new funds were directed specifically to maintain and develop project facilities; in others they were part of a more general upgrade of resources for library services or corporate ICT. The new investment represented a recognition of the part new library ICT services could play in authorities' strategies for lifelong learning, economic regeneration and social inclusion. In a few cases, however, libraries were developing new facilities against a background of cuts to the overall service.

In several authorities, other ICT developments were taking place at the same time as the DCMS/Wolfson projects. Where these directly affected library services, they were able to dovetail with projects, extending and developing the services provided.

Most authorities were committed to continuing training for library staff, either extending training to more staff or offering advanced training. Equipping staff to offer first-line technical support was also part of some strategies. One authority elected to keep its project manager in post for a further 12 months to develop a further phase of the project and to employ additional staff to run its new learning centres. Extending software ranges, creating additional content and learning packages, linking to the National Grid for Learning and adding additional PCs were common aims for future development. Also mentioned were plans to introduce video-conferencing, develop smartcard access, digitise local history and heritage materials, start homework help services and create interactive government facilities. A number of authorities pioneered new services to extend access to people with disabilities. Several were analysing feedback from users in order to get the best from projects. Some teams had deliberately designed their projects to allow for flexibility in their development plans.

A variety of possible funding sources for future developments was mentioned, including New Opportunities Fund and other Lottery funding, DfEE funds, and European funding via the Single Regeneration Budget and Economic Development funds. Several authorities expressed an intention to apply for further DCMS/Wolfson funding. Some revenue could also be earned by charges for some services. Monitoring of the effect of charging policies was usually a feature where they were introduced.

Information North, the largest project, was aware that its work to ensure its sustainability would be of value to any similar future regional networks. The consortium worked hard to broker negotiations to secure reduced telecommunications costs for libraries. Although telecommunications costs are often cited as a key impediment to library IT development, one authority suggested that the cost of software licences might prove a bigger threat to their viability. The present arrangements often involved protracted negotiations on licences for each title, which may then need to be reopened as further libraries are added to the network.

Continuing and developing partnerships was important for the projects. One consortium intended to use its project as a platform for resource sharing between the partner authorities, with co-operative purchasing and subject specialisation as potential future developments. Ongoing support from education providers and from outside project partners such as BT was also encouraging, and there seemed to be genuine enthusiasm among some commercial companies for developing their relationships with libraries. Promotion of project services to target communities was another factor often mentioned, with many authorities forging productive partnerships with local community groups.

Section 4: Summaries of the 1998-99 Projects

Birmingham

20 PCs provided to 10 libraries

The project has enabled the Council to provide: access to the Internet, free of charge, at all sites; to support the provision of information services, homework help clubs and other learning services; use of email facilities (using free sites such as Hotmail) to support communications and ICT skills within communities and access to the City's network of CD-Rom services. Library staff have been trained to help the public to use the services.

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Blackpool Borough Council

46 PCs provided to 12 libraries

The Blackpool Community Network was created in response to expressed public demand and to support the Council's policies on social inclusion and economic regeneration. Special facilities for sensory impaired users were provided, as well as public access to the Internet and National Grid for Learning, and services including email, WP, spreadsheets, DTP, CD Roms and community and business information.

blackpool.library@cwcom.net

Cornwall

42 PCs provided to 6 libraries

Video conferencing facilities were among the services provided at libraries on the mainland and the Scilly Isles, and linking also to the Tate Gallery St Ives. The need for greater IT facilities was identified at a local level through staff liaising with local community groups and library users (*see featured projects for further details*).

enquiries@isg.cornwall.gov.uk

Croydon

18 PCs provided to 6 libraries

The Croydon Online Community Network Project is a three part project which enabled Croydon to complete its library infrastructure. Two new services have been delivered on Croydon Online (a local Job Mart and a Health Information Network) and a range of partnerships with the community have been established to pilot the use of the network and the new services (*see featured projects for further details*).

hkirby@library.croydon.gov.uk

Derbyshire

16 PCs provided to 8 libraries.

The project aimed to extend the benefits of the Derbyshire Learning and Technology Access Service (DELTA) to smaller rural libraries. In February 1998 phase one of DELTA was launched in eleven large libraries aided by a previous grant from the DCMS/Wolfson Challenge Fund. The network offers: public access to the Internet; a wide range of CDROM titles; video conferencing facilities and image-enhancing software for users with visual disabilities (*see featured projects for further details*).

robert.gent@derbyshire.gov.uk

HELP! (Halton Electronic Libraries Project)*22 PCs provided to 4 libraries*

An ICT infrastructure will give access to a collection of training materials. Its aim is to raise skill levels and improve the ability of local people to compete effectively for jobs, creating lasting benefits through relevant skills acquisition and sustainable economic growth. Library staff are trained to assist the public with access. The project also provides a large range of open learning materials at a purpose built suite at Halton Lea Library.

philip.cooke@halton-borough.gov.uk**Information-North***284 libraries networked*

This £1 m project – the largest implemented in DCMS/Wolfson to date – created a managed information network for all 284 libraries in the region, supported by 600 trained frontline library staff. It has accelerated library networking in the region, placing libraries firmly on the regional ICT agenda. The project included content creation to provide a base for subsequent development.

macnaught@ghead.demon.co.uk**Liverpool***61 PCs provided to 25 libraries and 7 schools*

Five video conferencing systems have been supplied to community libraries and a higher specification system has been supplied in the Central Library. The aim of the project was to provide IT facilities in an area of high deprivation and social exclusion. The project involved local schools and it is hoped that this link will lead to more children using library resources. There was also a recognition of the need to make services available outside traditional library environments to attract new users.

kathy.johnson@liverpool.gov.uk**Luton***17 PCs were provided to 7 libraries and 1 each to the Arndale Centre and Luton Museum*

The project established a network which linked the libraries involved to the schools library service and 2 non library locations, the Arndale Centre and Luton Museum. The network enables users to access all of the services provided by the Central Library. In the future the Museum link will be used to network their digitalisation projects of artefacts to Luton Libraries. The local paper 'The Herald and Post', a partner in the project has also provided access to its 24 hour news page and this will be available at all sites. A cable has been laid between Luton Central Library and Luton University so that the future shared catalogue and other information can be accessed.

owlth@luton.gov.uk**Manchester***120 PCs, 45 printers and 4 scanners provided to 23 libraries*

The project developed a new networked ICT service which will provide library users with access to information resources, learning/training packages and the Internet. Library staff have been trained to help the public to use the services (*see featured projects for further details*).

roses@libraries.manchester.gov.uk

Poole

24 PCs provided to 10 libraries

The network links the libraries with local study centres and the Civic Centre, providing Internet access, CD Roms and online training packages. A strong training element ensured that staff in all the libraries are skilled and confident in assisting the public in using the new services.

l.pullen@poole.gov.uk

Reading

43 PCs provided in 2 libraries.

An ICT network was established to link the library network to other existing networks and services such as the schools network and museums network. The spread of information provided by libraries has been enhanced by establishing access points at other public sites. Library staff have been trained to help the public to use the services.

sara.lett@reading.gov.uk

Salford

8 PCs provided to 4 libraries

Salford's project provides an ICT network and a family learning centre. The aims are to: provide access to culture for all; to provide free and assisted access to ICT technologies for all; to provide facilities aimed at family use in areas where educational achievement and literacy levels are low and facilities for homework can be limited, and to provide material to assist employment seekers.

robin.culpin@salford.gov.uk

Sandwell

22 PCs and 19 fax machines provided to 19 libraries (including PC access at one mobile library)

Provision has been made to extend the Kurzweil reading system, for the partially sighted and people with reading difficulties, from 1 to 12 libraries. In addition Sandwell has upgraded its library management system network with new ICT technologies. Library staff have been trained to help the public to use the services.

barry.clark@sandwell.gov.uk

Slough

11 PCs provided to 4 libraries

The project provides a link to the Slough Schools' Grid for Learning and a development of the existing open learning centre. This project's objectives are to: enable better access to information and library resources; provide better access to learning for all, and to provide opportunities for people who may be "information poor" or socially excluded.

yvonnec@sloughlibrary.org.uk

Somerset

47 new and 39 upgraded PCs provided to 33 libraries and 13 mobile libraries

A 24 hour telephone renewal service has been created. Online access to the joint catalogue and to the Internet from the mobile van service has been established together with the use of microwave networking to link designated libraries within Somerset County Council to the Wide Area Network.

IWatson@somerset.gov.uk

Staffordshire

20 PCs were provided to 7 libraries

The project aims to extend the developing Community Learning Network (Staffordshire Learning Net) to support self-study and distance learning via video-conferencing and the Internet. Existing library open learning centres have been connected to the Staffordshire learning network and four new learning centres were created in libraries, in areas of established learning/training needs.

lynne.stanley@staffordshire.gov.uk

Stoke-on-Trent

25 PCs provided for 9 libraries and 3 mobiles

The project aims to increase public access to IT within and through public libraries by utilising upgraded communications lines and increased bandwidth to network the extra 25 PCs. The network includes links to schools, day centres and museums. Some PCs have access to scanners and digital camera equipment.

margaret.green@stoke.gov.uk

Suffolk

121 PCs provided to 132 libraries

Suffolk has provided a network infrastructure to meet the demands of local people and to develop the Suffolk part of the national public library network. It allows the County Council to promote participation in "Suffolk Government", modernise services, promote social inclusion, facilitate access to the National Grid for Learning and support economic development (see featured projects for further details).

guenever.pachent@libher.suffolkcc.gov.uk

WEBSLink

73 PCs for public use and 37 PCs for staff use provided to 147 libraries

This project was a consortium bid and covered the library authorities of East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey and Brighton & Hove. The aims of this project were to: extend access to books and information; achieve best value through the sharing of resources; modernise IT infrastructure and train to enable staff to use the new facilities and, in the case of public access to IT facilities, to help raise awareness of the services being provided.

apyant@westsussex.gov.uk

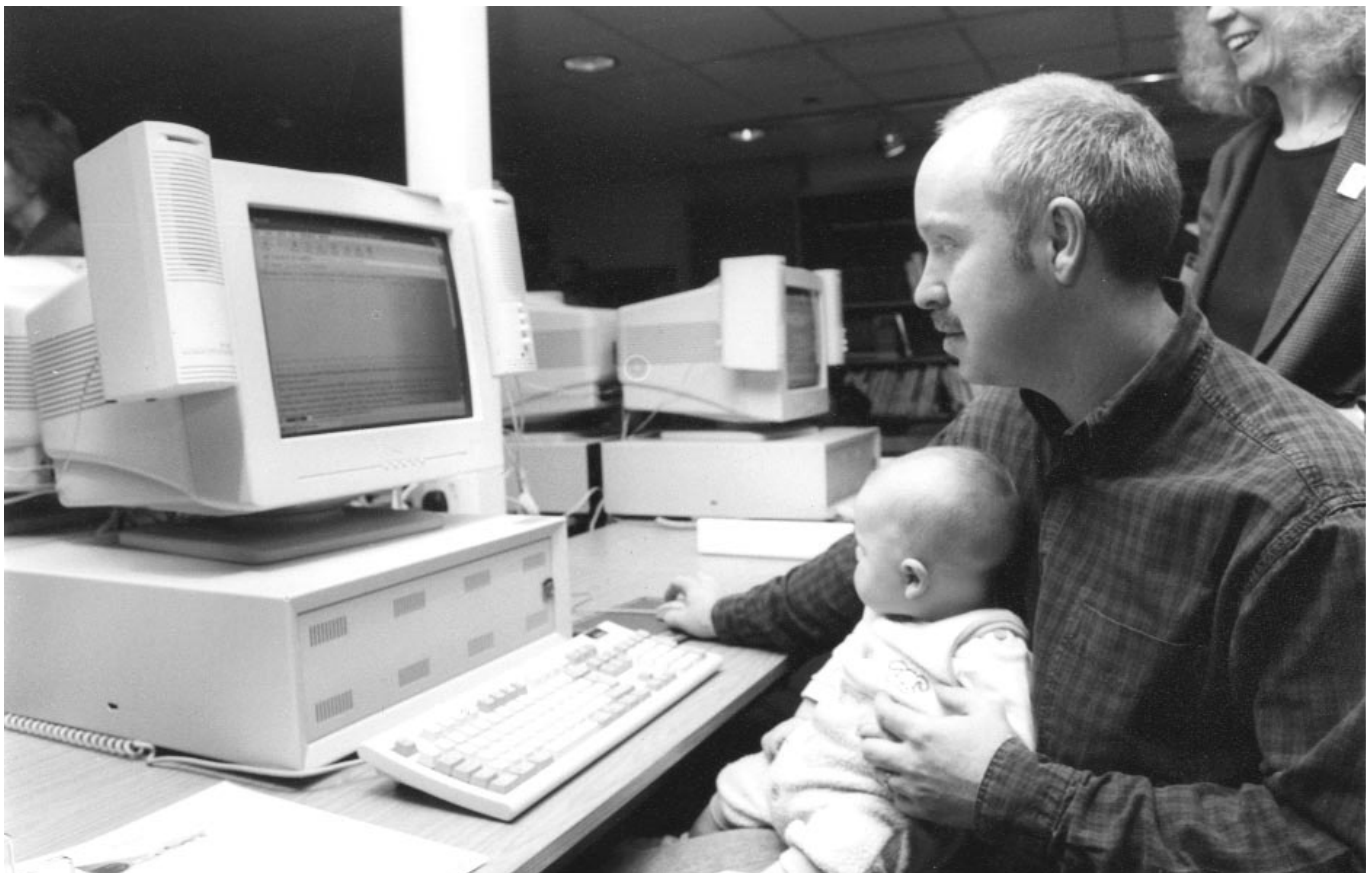
Wolverhampton

40 PCs, 37 for public use, provided to 8 libraries

The libraries were networked by the installation of a 100 port high speed Local Area Network, which has enabled public access to services including a CD-ROM reference facility, the Internet, and word processing. The libraries involved have also been linked to the central library based Learning Centre.

robert.johnson@dial.pipex.com

Section 5: Featured Projects



Using Suffolk's new services.

CORNWALL

Cornwall's CORTEXT project saw e-links connecting the mainland with the Isles of Scilly and libraries with the Tate Gallery St Ives. As well as the gallery, six libraries – five in Cornwall and one in the Isles – were networked, offering users access to learning and office resources via 42 PCs offering Internet, email, CD Rom, WP and video conferencing, and all supported by trained staff.

Managing the project

Close team working was essential between the different Council Departments implementing the project, and they rose commendably to the challenge. The commitment of "on the ground" local library staff was another key to the project's success. None of this teamwork prevented a heavy administrative burden resting on the Project Manager, however. Cornwall's advice to those applying for funds in future for projects with similar geographic spread and complexity is "include a project manager's assistant in your bid". Despite administration demands, the Project Manager put in regular site visits and noted both the importance of keeping project details at hand out of the office and the value of intuition: "if you get a feeling you should be at a (particular) site, there is probably a good reason". One large headache was completing service restructuring simultaneously with project implementation;

but this did allow long term project support to be factored into the redesigned service. Last minute changes to equipment and training squeezed the timetable, and some unforeseen premises refurbishment added to the pressure, but these changes – not unknown to DCMS/Wolfson projects past – were also largely overcome

Partnerships

The partnership opportunities the project opened up with the Scilly Isles and the Tate Gallery St Ives were particularly appealing to Cornwall libraries, and have already borne further fruit, with Scilly Isles drawing on Cornwall's experience in designing its new library. The project benefited from a decision taken before it began to amalgamate the Council's Information Systems Unit with the library service. Intra-authority working was smooth, as outlined above, and local contractors also proved helpful and responsive. The inclusion of videoconferencing in the project enabled development of services for hearing-impaired people, bringing in Cornwall's Audiology Department and the RNID who added a videophone to the equipment provided. The success of its DCMS/Wolfson project partnerships has now won Cornwall strong support from consultants for its more recent bid for ADAPT funding.

Technical requirements

Cornwall decided to double the server capacity specified in its initial application – a decision which has already proved wise. CD Roms caused some problems with networking glitches, incompatibility with other software, and security considerations. On the last of these, Cornwall opted to put CD Roms on the server rather than making them available on individual PCs.

Meeting community needs

From its design stage, the project drew on the expertise and contacts of local library staff and Community Liaison Officers, who talked to community groups – and continue to do so. Project managers also looked at the services provided in local schools with the aim of developing a complementary service in libraries. This collaborative approach has paid off, stimulating a sense of community ownership of the project which has provided a ready interest in using the new facilities provided. Another benefit has been the opportunity to showcase the project at local events and demonstrate to local decision makers the importance of the service.

Sustainability

On Cornwall's worklist is the task of standardising procedures and setting up systems to share good practice between the project libraries. Following a project launch which focussed on stimulating support from Councillors, the Chamber of Commerce and the public, a bid for further funding from Europe is now underway. Meanwhile the new facilities enjoy continuing promotion to schools, other target groups and the general public from Community Liaison Officers, and the services of a dedicated Information Officer.

CROYDON

Croydon's Online Community Network project had a three strand approach. As well as completing the area's library network infrastructure, it created two new online services, and worked to build the community links to give these resources the best chance of a successful pilot in the borough. The two new services developed are a local Job Mart and a Health Information Network.

Managing the project

Croydon made recruiting dedicated project staff an early priority. Good communication channels were quickly established by the project team – making the most of pre-existing staff goodwill. The main management problems were time related, and often could not be foreseen such as staff illness or were beyond the immediate control of the project such as delays from suppliers providing equipment or services. Doubling the size of the library network put extra pressure on ICT staff for a while supporting public access PCs in branch libraries and troubleshooting CD-ROM network problems. Requests for urgent help dropped quite quickly, however, as library staff gained confidence, through training and practice, in managing their new services.

Partnerships

Croydon reaped the benefits of a good working relationship established with its Internet Service Provider from the earliest stages of its library networking. The provider's commitment to library and community networking ensured an enthusiastic response to the Borough's project plans and a substantial contribution – via discounted services – to matching funding. Partnerships were also forged to support the new services the project developed with health and social care information experts, adult learning professionals, basic ICT training providers and business support services. One planned partnership with a Job Centre could not be realised as the Centre was committed to a different ICT provider to the one employed by the project.

Technical requirements

Croydon's early plans, in the initial development stages of Croydon Online, were to extend its network by radio linking between omni-directional aerials, a system that could have taken 2Mb Internet to all the borough's twelve branch libraries. This solution had to be abandoned when new licensing tariffs made it uneconomic for the Internet Service Provider to continue this type of delivery. Investigation showed that the only viable alternative was a cable network – trebling the cost for both the installation and the annual rental. This change in plans and costings has meant a slower implementation of the full wide area network of thirteen sites. Problems have also arisen as Ring Fence had not been updated beyond Windows 3.11, affecting staff's ability to ensure that only virus-checked disks go into the floppy drives. PCs can no longer be set to sound an alarm when an unchecked disk is inserted, so an alternative approach of locking the disc drives has been adopted. Access is on request from staff, who check the disc: which is time consuming and some drives have been broken by users attempting to remove the locks.

Meeting community needs

Croydon has established good relationships with a range of local organisations from community groups to businesses, and exploited these in designing and publicising its new services. The project got an enthusiastic response from library users and Internet access is booked a week in advance at most locations. The Job Mart service – online from advertisement to arranging interview – has already succeeded in filling several vacancies. The Healthy Information Network has also attracted a large number of hits and has been recognised as a valuable resource by the area's voluntary sector organisations.

Sustainability

Croydon was committed from the outset of work on its project to providing nothing which could not either be sustained or help to shape future service development. After project launch, the authority intends to develop some of the new services to be self-financing, and hopes that income generation may eventually help to underpin future expansion and development. The core maintenance of the network will, however, continue to be met by the authority.

DERBYSHIRE

Summary

Building on the success of the network established across 11 Derbyshire libraries with its previous DCMS/Wolfson award, the project brought Derbyshire Learning and Technology Access service (DELTA) to eight smaller libraries in the county's rural areas. DELTA libraries offer Internet access, CD-ROM business and marketing titles, word processing and spreadsheet facilities. Video conferencing and image-enhancing software are also part of service to facilitate access for users with sensory disabilities. DELTA is a Government Computing Innovation award winner, and fulfills DCMS/Wolfson's "pathfinder" criterion: providing research opportunities ranging from postgraduate dissertations on ICT/information access by disadvantaged users and rural communities to a British Library funded value and impact study.

Managing the project

Project management was split between a project team and a training group. Derbyshire learned from its previous DCMS/Wolfson experience and took advantage of the Fund's more generous timetable in 1998-99 to offer staff training over a longer period. This allowed all 60 staff trained two half days of training and access to in-service back up support. Another useful lesson learned from "Phase One" was the importance of good documentation for staff and users.

Partnerships

A good working relationship with British Telecom (BT) proved key to successful implementation of the project: no surprise, given that BT's involvement included project management assistance, creating

materials, development planning and day to day support. Benefits of this partnership have gone beyond libraries to enhance the effectiveness and cost efficiency of telecommunications throughout the authority. DELTA's success has provided a launchpad for collaboration with City of Derby, Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham authorities on a project to digitise local history resources for delivery across the DELTA network, and partnership with Derby University on a Research Support Libraries Programme bid.

Technical requirements

The two key elements to DELTA's infrastructure are networked connections through the authority's token-ring system delivering Internet access, and CD-ROMs and ISDN2 lines at each library carrying video-conferencing traffic. Access to CD-ROM, word processing and spreadsheet facilities is via a Citrix server at County Hall. This uses "thin client" technology to reduce storage capacity and processing power requirements on local PCs. Access to BT Internet is through a Cisco Pix firewall. Video conferencing uses a mix of Intel technology and VC8000 in the Phase One libraries. DELTA Phase Two included a connection upgrade to 256kb/s.. One problem experienced was the failure of LUNAR image-enhancing software to run consistently with multimedia applications – this is being addressed by the suppliers.

Meeting community needs

Derbyshire surveyed 16,000 library users over 3 years to get a clear picture of local needs, and reached out to non-users through a specially commissioned Priority Search exercise. These efforts gave a strong message that communities, and young people particularly, wanted to see public libraries providing good quality ICT. Extensive media coverage was generated for DELTA, backed with leaflets, posters and mailout to targeted local organisations. Arts Minister Alan Howarth launched DELTA 2, following up Chris Smith's "virtual visit" to Phase One of the project by video link, and the Princess Royal was another DELTA visitor. User feedback from the service is now being evaluated.

Sustainability

Derbyshire is making an initial commitment of £70,000 to help cover the DELTA's ongoing telecommunications costs. To help DELTA remain at the core of Derbyshire's information strategy, a migration to a new library management system has been proposed for 1999-2000.

INFORMATION NORTH

Information North is the North of England Regional Library System, covering Cumbria, Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton and Sunderland. This £1 m project – the largest implemented in DCMS/Wolfson to date – created a managed information network for all 284 libraries in the region, supported by 600 trained frontline library staff. It has accelerated library networking in the region, placing libraries firmly on the regional ICT agenda. The project included content creation

to provide a base for subsequent development. As might be expected from this scale of venture, evaluation and dissemination of outcomes were also key features, with the production of a technical development strategy and identification of transferable lessons.

Managing the project

Information North adopted a two pronged approach, with monthly meetings of a project management team representing all the partners complemented by individual authorities negotiating their network development with their telecommunications providers. Keeping the “big picture” of the project’s regional scale in view during individual authority negotiations was essential, requiring close inter-authority communication of any changes of plan. At one point, letting authorities adopt different arrangements for telecommunications provision appeared to put the regional strategy at risk: but in fact the range of network solutions is now judged a project strength. Clarifying technical and other requirements earlier would have minimised misunderstandings.

A full time Project Administrator took charge of the liaison job. With hindsight, Information North would also have taken on an overall technical manager. A significant time commitment was necessary from all the partners to ensure success. The tight DCMS/Wolfson timetable added to the co-ordinating pressures, together with the lengthy financial accountability procedures of the larger organisations involved. Troubleshooting proved a key activity to maintain good relationships between all the public and private partners and ensure everyone was satisfied with progress.

Partnerships

The project had 18 partners in all: the 13 Information North member authorities, British Telecom, Northern Informatics, Information North, the University of Northumbria at Newcastle and the North of England Assembly of Local Authorities. Information North aims to promote co-operative working between its members, so all had worked together before. Their commitment to co-working went beyond libraries to ICT departments who had the key task of integrating the new services with existing provision. Good working relations were also pre-existing between the leading private sector player in the project, BT, and Northern Informatics (a not-for-profit limited company which regards libraries as central to its aims). Co-working on the project left all the parties feeling they had learned something, and BT was keen to use its new understanding in developing further joint ventures with the authorities. The remaining partners in the project – the University of Northumbria and the North of England Assembly – had more specialised roles: the University provided staff training (and got a very positive response from library staff) and the Assembly brought the project partners together to begin tackling sustainability.

Technical requirements

The project’s initial technical design came from BT, who proposed a managed Intranet service and Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IPVPN). Maturity of the participating authorities’ existing infrastructures led to modifications, and changes were also made to reflect the project’s emphasis on public information dissemination. BT talked to each authority, balancing individual needs with the

overall project aims. Key requirements were: interoperability, scalability, managed service, minimal ongoing administration, management information and controlled Internet access. The eventual technical response was a managed dedicated server exclusively for project use; a managed firewall, proxy and blocklist with high-capacity Internet access; IPVPN dedicated connections in some authorities, and controlled access between the server and the Internet. One benefit of this approach was the facility for some kinds of content (eg. data-rich, copyright, licensed and commercial information) to be limited to the library network whilst other content was freely available via Internet. Scalability was another feature – inter-authority content sharing is a planned future development. As a pilot initiative, cellular technology in mobile libraries was used to reach rural areas and monitoring of this continues. One late development was the opportunity for the project to transfer to an improved server, changing its domain name to <http://thenortheast.co.uk>

Meeting community needs

Information North defined three target communities: end users, local authorities, and Information North itself. For users, it set a clear aim of increasing participation in the Information Society and ensuring that everyone has access to digital information through libraries. The scale of the project, involving all the region's libraries is a guarantee of some success in this, and developing content will be a key issue for the future. The other "communities" – authorities and Information North – have already begun to put what they learned in implementing the project to use in developing it.

Sustainability

Information North tied to its project a campaign to secure special telecommunications tariffs for libraries. Sustainability did not rely on success in this, but the partners were reasonably satisfied their efforts had kept the issue "live". Whilst tariffs are a maintenance issue, the partners believe content will become the central development issue for the network in the longer term. Since launch, two new sources of funding have been tapped: the New Millennium Festival Fund has awarded £400,000 to develop local cultural heritage content and the Regional Electronic Economy Project (REEP), led by Northern Informatics, the North East Development Agency and the Government will contribute to sustaining the network. Over 3 years, REEP aims to accelerate development of a regional electronic, knowledge-based economy, with integrated regional community, e-commerce and education networks, a smart card facility for users and an e-commerce centre.

MANCHESTER

Manchester's project saw the authority move from 25 stand alone PCs in 5 sites to a network of 120 PCs and 45 printers in 23 locations, and 4 digital scanners. The new service gives library users access to information and learning resources and the Internet, all supported by trained library staff.

Managing the project

An experienced project manager worked full time on implementing Manchester's project from the start. Seven areas of responsibility were identified – service issues; environment; ICT; finance; training; publicity,

and performance indicators. ICT proved a vital and major work area – unsurprisingly – and demanded almost a full time commitment from the authority’s ICT Manager, its system supervisor and two other staff. Building the infrastructure in the project’s outlying locations was particularly labour intensive; nevertheless Manchester plans to accommodate the new services into all service points at existing staff levels – reflecting, perhaps, the wider public belief that ICT is a part of libraries’ everyday work.

Partnerships

The important partnership for Manchester was between the authority’s Library and Theatres Department and its ICT Unit. Securing reliable Internet access was an important project feature, bringing about another partnership between the ICT Unit and an Internet Service Provider, after the Unit decided to buy in a managed service rather than providing it themselves. Another authority partner was the City Architect’s Department, doing the vital job of ensuring safe and sound installation of power and cabling supplies at each site. The benefits of partnership work on the project continue to be felt across the authority, with central units understanding better the issues involved in delivering a service directly to the community.

Technical requirements

Manchester avoided having to install a print server by using monochrome networked printers connecting directly to the network. This has had mixed success with some difficulties experienced in printing large files because printers do not use a file server to queue and spool jobs. Content filtering was another issue for the authority, and the ICT Unit has decided to use filtering software for Internet use.

Meeting community needs

The Manchester project had three elements: providing library access to computers; developing citizens’ ICT skills and offering access to electronic information. Public response has shown that there is a high level of demand for computer-based training packages, Open Learning packages for self-education and qualifications, word processors, the Internet, networked CD Rom databases, multimedia CD Rom systems and local community information. All of these services are now available and widely used by library users assisted as necessary by fully trained front-line staff able to give guidance on all aspects of computer use.

Sustainability

The authority remains firmly committed to staff development and ICT training for library staff is continuing. The Networks Project Manager will remain in post for a further 12 months planning Phase Two of the project. The city has created a new post of Network Centre Manager recognising the importance of the ICT developments.

SUFFOLK

Suffolk upgraded its network infrastructure, allowing graphical access to the Internet in all Suffolk libraries, and installing 121 PCs across the county. Self-service and issue library systems were brought in to modernise the service, releasing time for library staff to concentrate on helping members of the public make optimum use of library resources. The Suffolk Libraries Website was enhanced and a facility set up for online public consultation on council plans. Suffolk also purchased CD Roms focussing on literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, and linked 2 PCs to the Careers Office with careers software provided. All library staff received training and follow-up support.

Managing the project

Appointing a full time project manager was a key part of Suffolk's management strategy. Despite this dedicated resource, it still proved necessary to re-prioritise work to ensure that project deadlines and other requirements for the project could be met. Good communications across all library sites were key to the success of the project but again added to time pressures.

Partnerships

An excellent relationship with the Council's Corporate ICT Unit ensured good design and delivery. Relations with suppliers were sound, but some had difficulties working to the tight timescale imposed by the requirements of the Fund. One commercial partner withdrew from the project following an internal reappraisal of its commitments.

Technical requirements

The original technical specification proved sound, though some detailed work was necessary to ensure secure access to the Internet. A PIN number system was used to identify Internet users. A new public interface was developed for some systems to make them user-friendly. A further Internet related technical issue has been how best to manage priority circulation traffic over Internet traffic.

Meeting community needs

The new services were widely promoted. A high profile launch event featured actor and writer Craig Charles, and this was followed up by a leaflet and poster campaign and other events. The response from library users so far has been very positive. Marketing and public relations for the projects have stimulated public interest in library services generally and additional user sessions have proved necessary to avoid waiting lists developing. Project facilities are also supporting a local community learning project and will provide gateways to the National Grid for Learning. Some problems have arisen with use of Internet for inappropriate purposes, prompting a discussion about filtering devices. Suffolk have so far not introduced filtering, but the situation is being kept under review and monitoring of use against individual users' PIN numbers is carried out.

Sustainability

The library service intends to increase the capacity in libraries and have longer opening hours in response to public demand. The authority is committed to an ongoing staff training programme to enable them to deliver the new services. The new self service and issue systems have resulted in a rethink of the physical layout of a number of libraries and a revision of the job specifications for library staff. Time released through automated book issue is being used to assist library users in getting the most from library services. On the technical side, there is an immediate need to upgrade bandwidth and more technical staff are to be recruited. The library service is now looking to develop facilities at a regional level.



The Princess Royal visits Derbyshire's DELTA project.

Section 6: Forward Look

For 1999-2000, the DCMS/Wolfson Fund focus remains on ICT and no substantial changes have been made to the scheme. A change of direction is to come in 2000-2001, however, when the Fund will move away from ICT and support two programmes for reader development and enhancement of British history collections. Full details of the 2000-2001 programmes are currently available from DCMS and on our website at www.culture.gov.uk

Seminar for DCMS/Wolfson applicants

To enable those authorities who wished to bid to the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund in 1999-2000 to learn from the experience of previous rounds, DCMS hosted a seminar at the British Library in February 1999. Representatives from the Information North and Suffolk projects shared their experiences with delegates from over 100 library authorities, who also heard from the 1997-98 Cambridgeshire project head, the Chair of the Funding Committee, the Chair of the Assessors Panel and the Fund's administrators, the Library and Information Commission. The day long event, a mixture of presentations and workshops, was well received by those attending and provided a good opportunity for all those involved with the Fund to share experiences and ideas. It also provided DCMS with further feedback on the shape and structure of the Fund which we continue to use in developing it from year to year.

Appendix 1: Guidance Issued to Applicants to the 1998-99 DCMS/Wolfson Fund

Introduction

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has committed £2 million to a challenge fund for public libraries for the financial year 1998-99, to focus on the development of "Libraries of the Future". The Wolfson Foundation has committed £1 million to the Fund for the same period.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport

The aim of the Department is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, and to strengthen the creative industries.

We will:

- work to bring quality and excellence in the fields of culture, media and sport;
- Make these available to the many, not just the few; and
- Help to develop the jobs of the future in the creative industries.

To achieve our aim, the Department in partnership with others, works to:

- create an efficient and competitive market by removing obstacles to growth and unnecessary regulation so as to promote Britain's success in the fields of culture, media, sport and tourism at home and abroad;
- broaden access to a rich and varied cultural and sporting life;
- raise standards of cultural education and training;
- ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve excellence in our sectors and to develop talent, innovation and good design;
- maintain public support for the National Lottery and ensure that the objective of the Lottery Fund supports DCMS' and other national priorities;

In carrying out these objectives we will:

- exercise proper stewardship of the available resources; improve efficiency in our sectors; encourage creative partnerships with the private sector and local authorities; and
- promote the role of the Department's sectors in urban and rural regeneration and in combating social exclusion.

The Wolfson Foundation

The Wolfson Foundation was established in 1955 and has an income of more than £20 million a year which the trustees distribute within their discretion for valid charitable purposes. The areas supported

by the Foundation are medicine and health care; research, science, technology and education; and arts and the humanities, which includes libraries.

The DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund: "Libraries of the Future"

The Challenge Fund will help stimulate the development of a national public library network as set out in the Government's response to the Library and Information Commission's report *New Library: The People's Network*. The scheme will therefore focus on supporting projects which establish new, or develop existing, IT network facilities in public libraries in England.

Individual and consortia bids will be accepted from library authorities. Both large and small projects will be eligible. The average award in 1997/98 was around £100,000, but larger projects were also funded. Whilst library authorities which were successful in 1997-98 are not precluded from bidding in 1998-99, it is hoped that high quality imaginative bids will be forthcoming from authorities who were not successful last year.

Key Criteria For Awards

Each project should meet the following key criteria, and full account should be taken of them in developing proposals. Projects which fail to meet the criteria are unlikely to be successful.

Each project should:

- be compatible with proposals for the development of the network infrastructure set out in the Government's response to the LIC report **New Library: The People's Network**;
- be able to provide evidence of need;
- be a clear enhancement of, or addition to, existing services or facilities in a public library/libraries;
- have a minimum of 50% matched funding; and
- be able to demonstrate viable financial and implementation planning and long-term sustainability
- provide appropriate training for staff
- be achievable by 28 February 1999.

How To Apply

There will be one application round for funds in 1998-99. Applications for a DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Award **will only be accepted** on the application form accompanying this guidance. Although the form is not available on disc, the Fund Committee will accept applications on word processed documents which replicate the application form. Supplementary information will only be accepted in the form of appendices.

Who can apply?

In 1998-99 we will accept applications from individual public library authorities, regional library systems in England, consortia of public library authorities or consortia of regional library systems and public library authorities. In the case of consortia bids one library authority must be designated as the lead applicant and take full responsibility for all aspects of the bid. Applications will not be accepted from individual libraries directly or from organisations working within the public library sector.

What sort of projects will be eligible?

The Fund will support projects which develop IT network infrastructure, providing they meet the key criteria set out in paragraph 3. The Fund will also support any refurbishment/structural work which is directly related and essential to the establishment of the IT facilities, although it is expected that this would form only a minor part of the bid.

The Fund will not support any costs arising from unforeseen additional refurbishment work, such as asbestos removal, which was not specified in the original project specification. Applicants will be expected to have undertaken all the necessary preparatory work before submitting applications. Any unforeseen changes to a project should be notified to the Fund Committee immediately.

Can more than one application be made?

Each library authority is invited to make one application. More than one application may be submitted although it is unlikely that both applications will be successful unless it can be demonstrated that both projects are needed and will be adequately resourced and managed. Public library authorities which bid as part of a consortium are not precluded from also making an individual application although it is unlikely that both the consortium application and the individual application would be successful.

What is the timescale for projects?

Projects must be completed by 28 February 1999. Final invoices must be submitted, with supporting paid invoices, by 28 February 1999 to ensure payment. **Invoices submitted after 28 February 1999 will not be eligible for payment.**

How much money is available to each project?

The Department and the Wolfson Foundation have together allocated £3 million to the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund for 1998-99.

The minimum total cost of a project is likely to be around £100,000. The Fund would not expect to make an award of more than £250,000 to an individual library authority project. As the cost of consortia and regional bids is likely to be higher the Fund will consider awards of up to £500,000 for such projects. Applicants should, however, be aware that the Fund does not expect to fund more than two regional/consortia bids in 1998-99.

What form can the matched funding take?

Matched funding demonstrates the commitment of the authority to the project and enables the Challenge Fund to be spread more widely.

At least half of the matched funding must be in the form of cash, either from library authority budgets or public or private sector partners. The remainder will be accepted in the form of contributions in kind. The Fund Committee will accept the following costs as contributions in kind: staff time, professional fees, training costs and travel and subsistence. **Contributions in kind must be clearly related to the project and incurred during the period of the award.** Costs which are incurred either before the formal offer of funding or after the project completion date will **not** be accepted.

The Fund Committee encourages applicants to seek private sector support for their projects. The details of any private sector support should be described on the application form. Bids which have secured private sector support will be considered favourably by the Fund Committee. The Fund Committee recognises that some authorities may have difficulty in securing such funding and this will be taken into account when making award recommendations to the Secretary of State and Lord Wolfson.

Will the Fund pay for running costs?

The Fund will support any running costs associated with establishing the project and which fall within the award period. **However, the Challenge Fund will not fund on-going running costs which are incurred after the award period.** Applicants must be able to demonstrate how projects will be funded after the final award payment. Projects which cannot demonstrate long-term sustainability are unlikely to be successful.

Timetable For The Application Process

16 April 1998	Application packs issued to library authorities
12 June 1998	Closing date for receipt of applications.
*w/c 10 August 1998	Applicants informed of award decisions.
28 February 1999	Final invoices to be submitted to the British Library Research and Innovation Centre. Completion of projects.

* conditional upon the number of applications received.

Will there be further application rounds?

The Department and the Wolfson Foundation have agreed that the programme will run for a third year in 1999-2000. Details, including eligibility criteria and objectives, will be published at a later date.

Assessment of Applications

All applications will be assessed against the key criteria set out in paragraph 3 above. Applicants should take full account of these criteria when developing proposals as projects which fail to meet any of the criteria are unlikely to be successful. Please read the guidance carefully before completing the application form.

The British Library Research and Innovation Centre has been contracted by the Department to assess the bids and make recommendations to the Fund Committee. There will be a two stage assessment process. The initial assessment will be conducted by British Library Research and Innovation Centre staff and will identify whether bids meet the key criteria in 3 above. Those that meet the criteria will then be subjected to a more detailed appraisal to be conducted by a panel of expert external assessors. The second stage will involve a detailed assessment of all aspects of the bids, particularly the financial information. It will also involve a qualitative assessment of the extent to which bids meet the LIC report's recommendations and represent value for money.

How will Award Decisions be Made?

Award decisions will be taken jointly by the Secretary of State and Lord Wolfson, following recommendations made to them by a joint DCMS/Wolfson Fund Committee comprising of representatives from two organisations and independent experts. Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of applications. There will be no correspondence with applicants about award decisions.

However, informal feedback may be given by the British Library Research and Innovation Centre over the telephone.

Payment of Awards

Award recipients will be required to submit monthly certified invoices to the British Library Research and Innovation Centre identifying all the project costs (including matched funding) incurred in the previous month. **Award payments will be made monthly in respect of up to 50% of these costs. Award recipients should note that the Department can not make award payments in advance of need. Award payments will therefore only be made on receipt of evidence that project invoices have been paid.**

Government accounting rules prohibit the Department from carrying funds into the next financial year so all award payments must have been made by 31 March 1999. **Award recipients are therefore required to submit final invoices to the British Library Research and Innovation Centre by 28 February 1999.**

Award recipients will have the flexibility to make variations of up to 10% of the total project costs between line items of their project bid, but remaining within the total project cost. **This only applies to items which have been individually identified on the original application form.** Advance approval will be required to use the award to purchase any items which are not in the original project specification and for all changes above 10% of the total project budget. **All changes to expenditure,**

regardless of size, must be notified to the British Library and Innovation Centre before invoices are submitted. The Fund Committee reserves the right to intervene if it considers any variations under 10% to be inappropriate.

What happens once an award offer has been made?

Successful applicants will be informed in writing of their award offer and will be required to enter into a contract with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Award recipients will also be required to complete monthly progress reports, culminating in a final report at the end of the award period. Performance indicators specified in the award recipient's original application (see section 7, point 26), will be measured in March 1999, and subsequently at six and twelve months after the award period. The Fund reserves the right to conduct monitoring visits to project sites during, and after, the award period.

How to Complete the Application Form

The application form is for completion by library authorities or regional library services and should not be completed by individual libraries. It should not be completed until the guidance material has been read thoroughly. This section offers guidance on what is required in each part of the application and should be referred to in completing the application form.

Applicants will not be contacted for clarification during the assessment process and it is therefore essential that you provide as much detail as clearly as possible on the application form. Insufficient detail or clarity could jeopardise your chance of success.

For further advice on completing the application form please contact Liz Napier at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, on 0171 211 6098.

Appendix 2: Statistical Information on the 1998-99 Projects

Name	Libraries involved in Project	Total Cost (rounded to nearest thousand)	Equipment Provided	Region
Birmingham CC	10	479	20 PCs Central Telecoms Printers Furniture	West Midlands
Blackpool BC	12	104	46 PCs Printers Computer Chairs	North West
Cornwall CC	6	321	42 PCs Printers Routers BT Line upgrade	South West
LB Croydon	6		18 PCs	London
Derbyshire CC	8	211	16 PCs 12t routers 16 port hubs Video conferencing-units Printers	East Midlands
Halton BC	4	164	22 PCs Printers Server Hardware CD Tower Furniture	North West
Information North (consort.)	284	1,340	Industrial strength managed dedicated server Managed Firewall Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network	North East
Liverpool CC	24	221	61 PCs	North West
Luton	7	120	18 PCs Wide Area Network Furniture Printers	Eastern
Manchester CC	23	363	120 PCs Printers Scanners ISDN Circuit	North West
Poole	10	155	24 PCs Printers Network installation Furniture	South West

Name	Libraries involved in Project	Total Cost (rounded to nearest thousand)	Equipment Provided	Region
Reading	2	178	43 PCs Printers Servers Furniture	South East
Salford	4	109	28 PCs 4 Server PCs Printers Kilostream lines ISDN 30e lines Hubs and routers	North West
Sandwell	19	182	43 PCs 2 laptop PCs and Printers 11 Kurzweil reading systems Printers Fax machines Scanners	West Midlands
Slough	4	262	24 PCs Printers Coynet – terminals Wide Area Network and 4 Local Area Networks	South East
Somerset	33	315	47 PCs Firewall Cabling Local Microwave Links	South West
Staffordshire	7	118	28 PCs Printers 8 PCs with video conferencing facilities	West Midlands
Stoke-on-Trent	12	347	47 PCs Server Cabling Printers Furniture	West Midlands
Suffolk	132	565	121 PCs 4 new servers Self issue systems	Eastern
WEBSLink	149	311	73 PCs 3 Servers 3 dual-port routers	South East
Wolverhampton	8	424	40 PCs Printers Furniture	West Midlands

Appendix 3: Financial Summary

DCMS made available £2 million and the Wolfson Foundation £1 million to the Fund in 1998-99. Administrative costs for the Fund are paid by DCMS.

	by DCMS	by The Wolfson Foundation	Total
Paid to projects:	£1,884,504	£942,252	£2,826,756
Administrative costs:	£44,487	–	£44,487
Costs of seminar:	£2,796	–	£2,796
Total paid out:	£1,931,787	£942,252	£2,874,039

Appendix 4: Membership of the DCMS/Wolfson Funding Committee 1998-99

Chairman

Neville Mackay Esq – DCMS

Members

Dr Victoria Harrison – Wolfson Foundation

Lord Quinton – Wolfson Foundation

Frederick Friend Esq – Independent member for the
Wolfson Foundation

Michael Messenger Esq – Independent member for DCMS

Peter Beauchamp Esq – DCMS

Ms Jennie Shaw – DCMS

Secretary to the Committee

Ms Liz Napier – DCMS

