

GET  online READING

Volunteer project to provide digital support to Reading's residents

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The digital divide in the UK

23%

**12.6 million
adults**

lack basic digital
skills



10%

of the adult
population may
never be able to
gain basic digital
capabilities



88%

feel more
confident after
they get help to
use the internet



The digital divide in the UK

Why people are not online

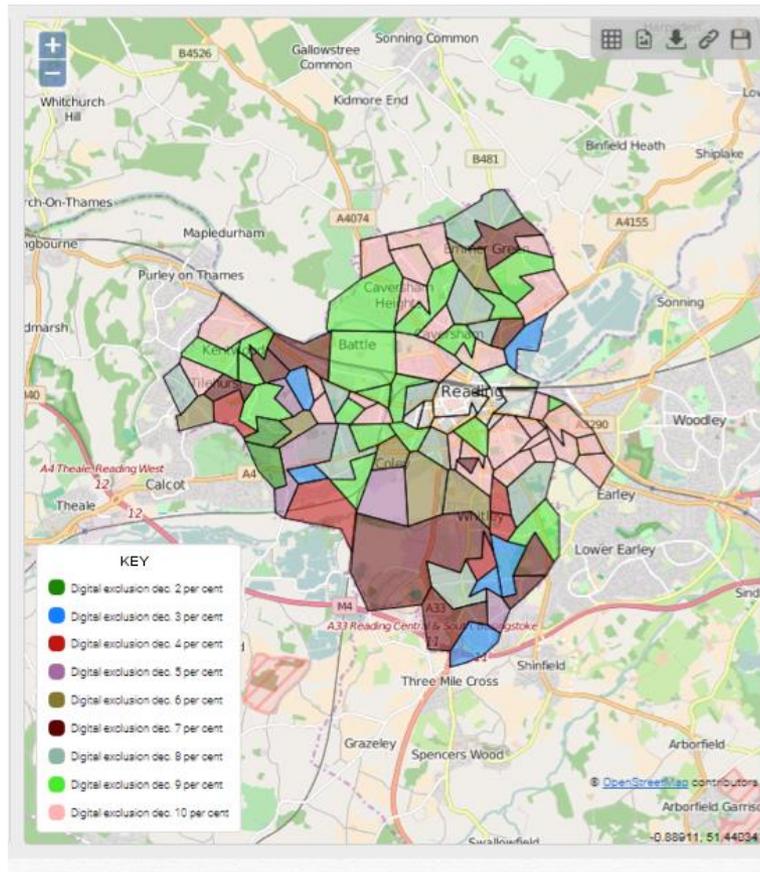
- **Access** - 21% say cost is why they're not online at home
- **Skills** – 17% are not online at home because of a lack of online skills
- **Motivation** – 82% are not online at home because they say they have no need
- **Trust** – there is a fear of crime, or not knowing where to start to go online

The digital divide in Reading

Main excluded groups	Nationally	In Reading
Older people	57% of those without digital skills	25,296 people over 60
People with disabilities	49% of those without digital skills	20,110 people with a long term health problem or disability
Housing tenants	Almost 50% not digitally included in any way	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over 10,000 social housing households• 50.3% of Reading's housing tenants do not use the internet
People with low incomes	60% of those without digital skills have no qualifications	Certain communities within the 10% most deprived nationally on IMD

Digital exclusion around Reading

DIGITAL EXCLUSION BY DECILES



Source: LG Inform Plus

- Main areas of exclusion are focused around South and West Reading
- Other pockets such as Amersham Road (NE corner)
- Even some of the most included areas have excluded groups

Why is digital inclusion important?

- Consumer choice and financial inclusion
- Social inclusion
- General community empowerment
- Better chances in life
- Reduce pressure on council resources

Reading's Digital Strategy

Vision: *'to optimise the use of digital technologies....in order to improve the customer experience, to enhance communication and participation, and to make savings'*

Supported by **Digital Inclusion Action Plan** and Steering Group:

- Get Online Reading scheme, partnered with Reading Voluntary Action
- Public IT in libraries refreshed and wi-fi installed
- Kiosks and PCs provided at customer hub and digital assistance provided
- Digital inclusion guidance for channel shift projects
- Where to Get Online leaflet

What volunteers are doing to help

- Reading has plenty of highly skilled volunteers
- We started with regular drop-in sessions at Reading's central library, with volunteers helping visitors with IT – basic computer and mobile device use, web browsing, email etc.
- Working with partner organisations who can provide additional training as appropriate – Age UK, New Directions
- We have been rolling out the project to local centres around Reading during 2015-16
- In 2015-16 the project was sponsored by Reading Borough Council and funded by the LGA Digital Experts Programme.

Get Online expanding around Reading

- East Reading – generally a young and vibrant population but with a high level of digital exclusion among older Asian people. We have partnered with an Asian lunch club and the Indian Community Centre.
- Silver surfer sessions for Reading Borough Council's sheltered housing residents
- South Reading Digital Inclusion Project – three centres in Whitley & Whitley Wood, areas with high levels of exclusion
- Battle Library, West Reading – a very diverse area with variable levels of exclusion

Beyond the outreach sessions...

- Partnership with welfare advice charity Communicare and Citizens' Advice Reading, to deliver pop-up advice sessions.
- Volunteers have helped local homeless charity Launchpad to refurbish donated computer equipment for use by their clients. This project is expected to expand in 2016.
- Future partners expected to include Reading Deaf Centre and AbilityNet, which provides volunteers in clients' homes and could therefore help those unable to go out regularly
- For 2016/17 the project has attracted corporate sponsorship from Microsoft.

Case studies

- Friends Claudette and Linda visited a session together to learn about using a computer. They have returned many times, have both bought laptops and tablets, both now have broadband at home with advice from our volunteers and one of them has found a new job.
- Retired teacher Ray could not get his laptop to function correctly after an upgrade to Windows 10 went badly. Volunteers helped him get his laptop working and he has returned for further sessions.
- Murray, 88, initially received help sorting and sharing photos and has gained enough confidence to start banking online.

Any questions?