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Andrew Davies, Minister for Economic Development and Transport, National Assembly for Wales



Customer's Challenge

By the late 1990s, after several years of under funding, youth services in Wales were not really reflecting the needs of an information society. Young people and the staff employed within the sector lacked both access to technology and the skills to utilise it meaningfully. In response, the National Assembly for Wales (NAFW) began to fund a number of initiatives designed to combat social exclusion and transform the skills and economic prospects of young people in Wales.

One such initiative was an information service for young people delivered by a not-for-profit organisation, Canllaw Online. However, in 2000, Fujitsu joined forces with Canllaw Online to help expand upon what it was doing.

Elise Stewart, Director, Canllaw Online, adds, *“When I first met Fujitsu I was impressed by the technological leap into the future it could offer and crucially by its approach to upskilling the digitally challenged. The individual-centric methodologies of Fujitsu’s Cyberskills training programmes closely echoed the youth work principles and methodologies underpinning the information work in Wales in which I’d been involved.”*

Fujitsu Solution

Having secured funding from a range of private and public sector sources, Fujitsu and Canllaw Online established the CREDU (Welsh for “to believe”) project. Its aim was to create a network of digital production laboratories, or Digilabs, that would use the latest technology and integrate fully with existing youth services in order to help create a socially inclusive, highly skilled and entrepreneurial culture for young people in Wales.

As the project’s technology partner, Fujitsu is responsible for the design of the IT infrastructure, the specification of equipment, the cabling, installation and commissioning of new Digilabs, and the provision of mobile engineering support. Each Digilab is equipped with the latest hardware (with special needs adaptation), offering a range of flat screen PCs and portable Pen Tablets to electronic smartboards, printers, scanners, digital keyboards and microphones, digital video and stills cameras - all supported with sophisticated software, as well as access to existing networks and project portal services.

“The aim of the Digilabs,” explains Elise Stewart, *“is to help young people and their supporters to develop ICT skills and their own digital content, which can be disseminated via the portal to a wider audience of young people, thereby contributing to the skills bank in Wales and creating new employment opportunities.”*

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation
Canllaw Online

Service/s delivered

The design, installation, and support of the IT infrastructure for a network of digital production laboratories, or Digilabs, to help create a socially inclusive, highly skilled and entrepreneurial culture for young people in Wales

Key Metrics

- 112 Digilabs created
- Target of 23,000 young people to join by 2009
- Target of 575 new jobs to be created by 2009

Benefits

- Economic development – having a huge economic impact in the jobs arena, with over 100 new jobs created
- Personal empowerment – young people have the opportunity to develop new skills and realise their potential
- Community support – provides additional support and resources to help local community projects
- Staff motivation – youth workers have more confidence and self-esteem in their work using new technologies
- New opportunities – youth organisations now have advanced tools and skills to support their aims
- Additional funding – proves that private funding of public projects can deliver tangible benefits for everyone, opening up opportunities for expansion throughout Wales.

CASE STUDY CANLAW ONLINE

A key element of the initiative is that CREДУ will also deliver the necessary support to enable youth service organisations to make the most of their Digilabs. As well as having access to a technical helpdesk, staff will undertake a Knowledge and Leadership Programme through Fujitsu's Cyberskills programme. This enables them to exploit the opportunities presented by the technology so that they, in turn, can cascade the training within their own Digilab and raise awareness among young people.

By May 2005 82 Digilabs had been successfully installed and the portal was launched. Since then a further 30 Digilabs have been added to the CREДУ network, with more expected in the future.

Elise Stewart adds, *"CREДУ is enhancing youth work in Wales by enabling it and the young people it supports to participate as equal players within the new information age; the Digilabs are now up and running and everyone can now apply the technology and methodologies to their own work with great results: the creativity is infinite!"*

"What has started with phase one and two of CREДУ needs to be built upon. In particular, we are very much committed to an all Wales coverage for the CREДУ programme, as demonstrated by the recent installation of a Digilab in Wrexham through private sector investment. This initiative is breaking new ground, successfully demonstrating what is possible when the public and private sectors come together for the benefit of young people and the greater community."

Benefits to our Customer

The CREДУ project is already delivering significant benefits:

- Economic development – is having a huge economic impact in the jobs arena, with over 100 new jobs created already, and a target of 575 by the end of 2009
- Personal empowerment – nearly 3,500 young people have joined Digilabs and now have unprecedented opportunities to develop their IT, communication and teamwork skills, and realise their full potential
- Community support – provides additional support and resources to help local community projects
- Staff motivation – youth workers have more confidence and self-esteem in their work using new technologies
- New opportunities – youth organisations now have advanced tools and skills to support their aims and participate in a Wales-wide network of projects for young people
- Additional funding – proves that private funding of public projects can deliver tangible benefits for everyone, opening up new opportunities for the programme's expansion throughout Wales.

"CREДУ has created an inclusive programme utilising the latest technologies to support young people in Wales in achieving new levels of participation, leadership, skills, enterprise, innovation and sustainable employment," says Elise Stewart. "We are well ahead of schedule on the creation of jobs, which is very encouraging given the difficulties faced in targeting some of the most disaffected youngsters in Wales. The project is also developing and extending the ICT skills of those working with young people and expanding the electronic capabilities of the organisations involved."

Andrew Davies, Minister for Economic Development and Transport, National Assembly for Wales, says, *"Fujitsu has played an essential role in the CREДУ project, with over £5 million of private sector investment, as well as providing valuable expertise and IT knowledge, ensuring the project maintains its innovative 'state of the art' approach. I would like to thank Canllaw Online and Fujitsu for their considerable efforts in removing the barriers that are preventing young people accessing technology. Indeed, through the CREДУ project, young people are now being encouraged to embrace technology and use it to their advantage."*

Our Approach

The Digilabs are designed to be used by youth services, local authorities and voluntary organisations, and sited in places where young people naturally congregate outside of school. Digilabs are selected through a rigorous recruitment and selection process that enables applicants to demonstrate their ability to meet project objectives and commitment to the development of young people's ICT skills.

Elise Stewart adds, *"The project is not about changing what youth service centres are doing, but enhancing it."* For example, a breakdance group in Llandovery used the Internet to find a team of tutors and has set up spreadsheets to administer their accounts. In the same centre, a band is using software applications to create multimedia shows. The Bible Worship group created a video to support Christmas and Easter drama events.

16 year old Ryan is a regular user of the Digilab at the Abergele Youth Action Café. Having been encouraged to take a lead role, helping with the organisation and management of the facility, Ryan says, *"I'm going to be doing one day a week on work experience at the Café. It will be great 'cos I'll be learning new things."*

In Caerphilly, one group of young people set up a project on teenage suicide and produced information postcards to alert their peers to the issues. Homeless young people are taking digital cameras onto the streets and collecting stories and poems about homelessness. *"The Digilabs are about possibilities; the joy of this approach is that when individuals start out they do not know where they are going to end up,"* comments Mick Conroy, Manager, Caerphilly Digilab.

Our Expertise

Fujitsu has been delivering consistently high levels of service to the public sector and businesses around the world for more than 30 years. Its support services, procedures and infrastructure are constantly being refined to meet the evolving needs of customers, and ensure that they can be delivered effectively and economically.

"Not only does Fujitsu bring its own considerable planning and implementation skills, it also brings access to the skills of its many partners," comments Elise Stewart. *"We have established good partnerships at all levels, but then you have to have fundamentally good and trusting relationships with key funders and alliance partners like Fujitsu."*

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Contact us on +44 (0) 870 242 7998 or
askfujitsu@uk.fujitsu.com or visit uk.fujitsu.com