

**PRESS RELEASE – UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL:**

**09.00 hours 11<sup>th</sup> MAY 2011**



## **100,000 Volunteers to Help get Millions More Online by the Olympics**

- **Race Online 2012 pulls together biggest ever cross-sector volunteer force**
- **Campaign partners work together to ensure cost is no longer a barrier for low income families to get online: low price recycled PC products launched nationally today by Microsoft from £95; Remploy from £92 and XMA from £120**

The UK's Digital Champion, Martha Lane Fox, today announced a national network of local volunteer 'digital champions' who will help to inspire, encourage and support nine million offline adults in the UK to get started with the internet.

The recruitment drive is part of a national Race Online 2012 challenge to 30 million daily internet users in the UK to pass their skills on to those who are yet to go online.

Recent Ofcom<sup>1</sup> and BBC<sup>2</sup> research findings show a lack of awareness of the benefits of being on the web and initial lack of confidence in taking their first steps online are the biggest barrier to internet take up from non-users and that families and friends play a key role for nearly all recent adopters.

**The Prime Minister said:** "Today there are nine million adults in the UK who have never used the internet - and nearly half of them are among our most disadvantaged people. That's why the work Martha Lane Fox is doing as the UK's Digital Champion is so important. And it's also why I'm so keen for everyone to get behind Race Online 2012 and its ambition to get as many people online as possible by the time of the London Olympics.

"Already we are making encouraging progress. Since Martha launched her Manifesto for a Networked Nation in Downing Street last July, we've seen eleven hundred partners of all sizes and sectors get on board.

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“But we need to go further. And often it is the impact of volunteers that can make the biggest difference. So today I am delighted to welcome the announcement of 100,000 new local Digital Champion volunteers - the UK’s biggest ever cross-sector volunteer force and a make a massive plea to those of you who aren’t yet involved, to sign up now.

“By supporting this vital campaign we really can become the first nation in the world to get everyone online and ensure that something the vast majority of us take for granted can be enjoyed by all of us.”

Race Online 2012 is now at scale to fulfill its ambition for the UK to be the world’s first ‘networked nation’ with at least 100,000 ‘digital champion’ volunteers from organisations including Mecca Bingo, John Lewis, Post Office, Age UK, Scouts, BT and Jobcentre Plus. To recognise the volunteers’ efforts, learndirect has also now announced the development of a digital mentoring qualification to demonstrate to employers that there are tens of thousands of people in the UK with the training and skills needed to help coach and mentor people online.

**The UK Digital Champion, Martha Lane Fox**, said: “Today is a massive step forward in our ambition to create a truly remarkable digital UK where the internet is a tool that everybody can use for their benefit. Race Online 2012 always intended to solve the critical social and economic issues that arise when people are left behind as technology advances. By bringing together an extraordinary mix of cross-sector partners we aim to eliminate the three major barriers that we know prevent people from getting online – access, motivation and skills. Today we are beginning to address all of these by creating a massive local digital champion network aimed at giving people advice, support and assistance on a local level and by kick starting a low cost recycled marketplace’.

**Become a Digital Champion**

- To find out more about how to be a digital champion, including how to join the champion network, inspire people to start using the internet and how to signpost to great starter packages please go to [www.helppassiton.co.uk](http://www.helppassiton.co.uk)

**Low Cost Products**

- With the support of UK Online Centres, Post Office and BT, Microsoft has brought together a group of refurbishers - Europc, Remploy and Partners IT – to create

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[www.getonlineathome.org](http://www.getonlineathome.org) and provide affordable, accessible, ready-to-use refurbished computers to people across the UK. Get Online @ Home is working with Three to deliver low-cost mobile broadband as well as offering fixed line services with TalkTalk, Post Office, BT, Sky, O2, plusnet, Everythingeverywhere and Primus Saver. The Get Online @ Home Windows 7 package includes a rich software suite, flat screen, mouse and keyboard and starts at £95 for people claiming certain government benefits and registered charities. There is also a £165 package which is open to all.

- Remploy's £92 refurbished computer is now on sale nationwide via [www.ecycleonline.co.uk](http://www.ecycleonline.co.uk) or by calling 08450 268293. The package includes a PC with flat screen monitor, mouse and keyboard including, operating system and an Office package.
- XMA is offering a leading brand Windows XP PC from £120. The package is being trialed by Mecca Bingo where customers can purchase a computer via [www.getonline.xma.co.uk](http://www.getonline.xma.co.uk) or by calling 0115 846 4120.

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### **For further information, please contact:**

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### **Notes to editors:**

- Ofcom UK Adults' Media Literacy Report (published April 2011), BBC Encouraging Home Broadband Adoption Research Report, July 2009. A study by Essential Research and Ipsos Mori
- For further information about the low-cost products and the digital champion network visit: <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/28488560/Race%20Online%202012%20ND11%20Press.zip>
- A digital champion is someone who supports their family, friends, colleagues or customers to get all the benefits that the internet can bring. They can inspire people to take their first steps online by telling them about a site or service that matches their interests, showing them how to use the web, and helping people to gain internet access. To find out more, and join the digital champion network go to [www.helppassiton.co.uk](http://www.helppassiton.co.uk).
- If you'd like to access all the great things the internet can do for you, including staying in touch, renewing car tax online and finding health information, there are lots of friendly people who want to help you get started with computers and the internet. You can call freephone 0800 77 1234 to find a local, low-cost internet course, or why not ask a friend or family member who uses the internet to show you how? Tell them the website [www.helppassiton.co.uk](http://www.helppassiton.co.uk) has advice on how they can be your Digital Champion.

### **About Race Online:**

- PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) research was conducted between 16<sup>th</sup> September and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009
- For a full copy of the PwC report & a Manifesto for a Networked Nation please visit <http://www.raceonline2012.org>
- As part of their promise to Race Online 2012 brand communications agency 23 Red created the Go ON badge – a visual and messaging device that makes it incredibly easy for organisations and companies to promote the benefits of the internet in communications. It also helps to unify all the valuable initiatives that are available to people who are taking their first steps online. Organisations can find out more at [www.raceonline2012.org/go-on](http://www.raceonline2012.org/go-on)
- As the UK's Digital Champion, Martha Lane Fox chairs the Race Online 2012 campaign and sits on the Cabinet Office's Efficiency and Reform Board. She is also non-executive director at Marks & Spencer, Channel 4 and MyDeco.com. In 1998, with Brent Hoberman, she founded

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lastminute.com, Europe's largest travel and leisure website. In 2000 they floated the business and Martha remained on the board until its sale. In 2005 she co-founded Lucky Voice, a karaoke business with five venues and a growing online business. In 2007 she launched a grant-giving foundation, Antigone.

- UK online centres provide millions of people with access to technology and support in using it. They offer free or low cost access to the internet and email, deliver online courses and encourage people to progress onto further learning. For more information, please visit [www.ukonlinecentres.com](http://www.ukonlinecentres.com)

### **About BBC First Click Friends:**

- The BBC today launches a new media literacy campaign – '**First Click Friends**' – the next phase of the BBC's **First Click** campaign. It aims to mobilise and support the millions of us already using the internet to help a relative, neighbour or friend to get online.
- At the heart of the campaign is a new website, [www.bbc.co.uk/firstclickfriends](http://www.bbc.co.uk/firstclickfriends) which will host a series of inspirational films in which popular TV presenters demonstrate how they use the internet to pursue their interests and hobbies to enhance their lives. The site also provides advice and tips to support those wanting to help others; offers assistance to 'friends' in finding local computer courses for beginners and aims to build the confidence of those who have recently gone online.

### **About Civic Agenda:**

- **Civic Agenda** is an independent organisation that seeks to equip political leaders, policymakers and opinion-formers with evidence, advice, new thinking and networks around leveraging technology for economic and social benefit. Working with an extensive network of organisations from across Industry, Government and the non-profit Sector it has a track record of attracting thought leaders, provoking action, connecting interests and people, and nurturing ideas. It founded the National Digital Conference 6 years ago and this year GoOn:ND11 has given over the first day of the two day Conference to the Raceonline2012 campaign **for free** allowing over 1,200 Digital Champions to meet in London at Old Billingsgate. The programme also includes a second day of Government Policy debate and in the evening the National Digital Leaders Dinner with Francis Maude MP and host Clive Anderson for 400.

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