

NESTA funded project

(Re)-teaching people with dementia to use computers and the internet

Final Report

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1 Executive summary

In November 2007, Dementia Voice-Housing 21 secured funding from the NESTA Mental Health Innovation challenge to run a project jointly with Innovations in Dementia CIC to pilot the use of computers in day centres for people with dementia.

Two pilot computer projects were run based on a model for introducing computer use in day centres that had been developed by Innovations in Dementia. The pilots involved providing training and support to staff at two Housing 21 day centres to increase their skills and confidence with everyday software such as PowerPoint, Word and Internet Explorer.

One of the aims of the project was to develop accessible training materials for use with people with dementia based on the learning from the project.

The project ended in December 2008, and has shown that people with dementia can engage in computer work at many different levels.

The project found that the 'human interface' – i.e. the skills used by care staff to enable people with dementia to engage with computers – is the most important aspect when encouraging people with dementia in day care settings to interact with computers at any level.

In addition, in order for computer work to succeed in day care settings, the computer needs to be used as a tool that can help in activities such as reminiscence and art, and for making records of activities such as outings and parties.

The main barrier to this work succeeding was found to be lack of staff time for both effective training and working with people – especially on a one-to-one basis. There were also lessons learnt with respect to the most relevant accessibility settings for people with dementia and most appropriate use of hardware and software.

Training materials based on the learning from this project have been developed by Innovations in Dementia CIC. One of the findings from the project was that the training materials be refined to have a 'training the trainer' approach, where facilitators or champions of computer work are trained to pass on their skills and expertise to other care staff. Other recommendations include ensuring that the importance of the 'human interface' as a concept in the training and the role that computers can play in all aspects of day care activities.

The final recommendation from the project is for methods of dissemination of the training package – face-to-face, paper-based or web-based – be tested further.

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2 Introduction

In November 2006, Innovations in Dementia CIC approached Housing 21 - Dementia Voice with a proposal for a pilot study to set up computer clubs for people with dementia at their day centres.

The proposal highlighted the fact that, although computer work with people with dementia is still in its infancy, Innovations in Dementia CIC had the expertise and experience of enabling individuals with dementia to learn or re-learn computer skills. The proposal was to pilot a method Innovations in Dementia had developed of disseminating this experience to day care staff who work with older people who have dementia.

Housing 21 - Dementia Voice accepted the proposal and it was agreed that funding should be sought.

In November 2007, Housing 21 - Dementia Voice submitted a bid to the NESTA 'Innovations in Mental Health' programme and successfully secured funding.

The project aimed to:

- Set up pilot computer projects in two dementia specialist Housing 21 Day Centres to test out the model developed by Innovations in Dementia and investigate the best ways of supporting people with dementia to use computers.
- Provide training and support to staff to enable them to carry out this work.
- Evaluate this process and assess outcomes for people with dementia, staff and Housing 21.
- Develop evaluation tools that are appropriate for use with people with dementia.
- Develop accessible training materials for use with people with dementia.

Possible outcomes of the project were identified as:

- Benefits for people with dementia including:
 - satisfaction and pleasure from learning or re-learning a new skill
 - increased sense of self-worth

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- increased conversation and engagement
- increased willingness to try new things
- resumed connections with distant family members (via email and webcams)
- those involved in the project will act as role models, providing encouragement to other people with dementia who currently have very few positive examples to draw on.
- Benefits for day centre staff include:
 - seeing people with dementia in a new light
 - having the opportunity to talk to people individually
 - gaining satisfaction with a new activity with which to engage with people with dementia
 - increased confidence with their own computer skills; enjoyment at learning a new skill.
- Evidence about the best ways to support staff to set up and run computer projects for people with dementia.
- A training and support package based on this evidence to guide and encourage others to provide and support computer activities for older people with dementia.

3 What we did

3.1 The Settings

Two Housing 21 dementia specialist day centres were chosen for the project: Tresham day centre based in Westminster, London, and Wilshaw House based in Ashton under Lyne near Manchester.

The accommodation and layout of the buildings are different. At Tresham there is a main lounge, a small art room, a dining room and kitchen. At Wilshaw House, there is a dining room and main kitchen, a small lounge room, and a large activities room with a table for arts and craft work and a kitchen area for baking.

Both day centres offer a wide range of activities including arts and crafts, cooking and reminiscence.

3.1.1.1 In practice

3.1.1.2 There were differences in perceptions of the staff between the two day centres. At Tresham the staff could see few problems with the project and reported a generally high level of computer skills before the project. Wilshaw House staff were more wary of the idea behind the project, and had less confidence in their own computer skills.

3.1.1.3 There was also a perception at Wilshaw House that their staffing levels were lower than at Tresham and that their service users were not from such diverse backgrounds as the clients in London.

3.2 Project structure

The project plan initially consisted of four three-month phases:

- Preparation phase.
- Training phase.
- Support phase.
- Evaluation phase.

3.3 Initial preparation phase

The preparation phase consisted of:

- Planning meetings with day centre staff.
- Finalisation of detailed project plan.

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- Agreement of working relationship, processes and responsibilities between different parties.
- Promotion of start of project and aims to relevant audiences.
- Finalisation of specification for, and ordering of, computer equipment, software and internet connections; agreement with Housing 21 IT department policy and protocols.
- Production of preparatory information and materials.
- Setting up of support systems.
- Identification and 'recruitment' of service users; seek consent.
- Identification of evaluation tools.
- Creation of web space for service users and staff.
- Set up and test equipment at two pilot sites.

3.4 Equipment

The project budget allowed for £5000 to be spent on ICT equipment, and software.

3.4.1.1 In practice

3.4.1.2 The day centres had to have dedicated telephone lines and separate internet access from the main Housing 21 systems. Due to the costs of these, the quality and quantity of hardware and software needed to be reduced.

Innovations in Dementia recommended purchase of the following equipment per site:

- 1 x laptop computer – 15" with add-on touch screen.
- 1 x desktop computer – with large screen with big keys and joystick mouse.
- 1 x colour printer (networked).
- Internet access.
- 1 x installation/service agreement.

With the following recommendations:

Laptop

- The laptop should be light and small so that someone with dementia could use it on their lap or on a small table.
- The laptop could also be used for training purposes.
- Using an add-on touch screen on a laptop would enable people with dementia with less interest in computers or less ability to use the computer casually for artwork or surfing the internet, etc.
- The laptop would need to be locked away when not in use.
- To check before purchase that any add-on touchscreen that is purchased is compatible with the laptop – especially as most new laptops have widescreens.

Desktop

- The desktop computer would be kept in a suitable permanent location eg the art room at the Tresham centre.
- As, the desktop computer would be used by people with dementia who are more interested in computers or more able, an easy to use keyboard and mouse would be sufficient as input devices.
- A large screen will enable more than one person to view the screen at once – the computer should be situated to make this possible.

Printers

- A printer which also acts as a scanner and photocopier may be useful – especially for life history work.
- Although a better quality printer might be important for artwork, we recommend purchasing a cheaper printer initially.

Installation and maintenance

- Use a professional service to install the computers and network.
- Purchase a maintenance service (eg the Tech Guys) and seek advice from them before purchasing.

The phone lines, internet access, computer equipment and software were purchased by Housing 21 - Dementia Voice.

3.5 Creation of web space for service users and staff

A commercial social networking site (Ning.com) was used to create a web space that would enable staff to share experiences and ask questions.

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The site was accessible at www.treshamandwilshaw.ning.com and was customised by Innovations in Dementia to remove unnecessary links and options and to provide a friendly interface.

This was a private website. Participants needed to be invited to join by email and would need that email address and their password to access the site.

It was planned that the site would be used by staff to:

- Create a 'blog' or online diary about what their participation in the project each day/week.
- Create and respond to conversations on issues/problems/tips that may arise during the project.
- Add photos from the project or pieces of work produced by service users.

The site also has a facility through which staff could ask private questions to Nada Savitch or other staff participating in the project.

3.6 Production of preparatory information and materials

Handouts were produced about the project aims, the 'Before we start' day and the skills sharing sessions.

Factsheets about accessibility issues from AbilityNet were used. These included:

- Changing colours in Windows
- Making text easier to see in Word
- Making text easier to see in Windows
- Making text easier to see in your browser
- Mouse – enlarging the pointer
- Mouse – Locating the pointer
- Mouse pointer options in Windows XP
- Screen display options in Windows XP
- Windows Vista – access centre
- XP accessibility options.

Additional handouts were produced during the training phase, including:

- Feedback and record keeping
- Getting support and leaving feedback online
- What is a computer?
- Computer jargon
- What does the mouse pointer do?
- Some useful websites
- Creating a list of favourite websites
- Viewing your browsing 'history'
- Electronic identity books
- Electronic identity books – ideas for content
- Organising files, documents and images
- Power Point tips
- Tips for using Microsoft Word
- WordArt.

3.6.1.1 In practice

Handouts were given to staff at Tresham at the beginning of each relevant session. At Wilshaw House, staff requested a high level of handouts so the majority were given to each participating staff member in a folder at the introductory day (see below).

3.7 Identification of evaluation tools

In order to get the most feedback from the project as possible, different evaluation tools were used and at different times.

It was agreed that the following would be used in the evaluation process:

- Questionnaires and interviews with staff.
- Analysis of support questions from staff.
- Interviews with people with dementia.
- Observations of staff working with people with dementia.

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- Feedback from staff and people with dementia in skills sharing sessions.
- Staff notes.
- Analysis any saved files of work with people with dementia.

3.8 Staff

The project planned to work with 4-5 staff at each day centre.

Managers identified four staff at Tresham and six staff at Wilshaw House to take part in the project.

3.8.1.1 In practice

3.8.1.2 Two members of staff dropped out of the project. They did not have a negative view of the project but felt that their own skills/interests were not relevant. A staff member at Tresham dropped out of the project after the first training session. She had found the first session hard going and wanted to concentrate on art work with service users. Similarly, a staff member at Wilshaw House found working with PowerPoint frustrating. She also expressed a preference for doing art work with service users. She was interested in working with the Dazzle package and the touchscreen only.

3.8.1.3 In addition, there were problems due to staff turnover - one member of staff at each of the sites left before the end of the project. Also, one of the care staff at Wilshaw House was not able to attend many of the skills sharing sessions as she worked part-time and the timing of the sessions did not fit with her shifts.

3.8.1.4 Many staff were enthusiastic about the project, but others thought that there would not be enough time for the project. They were worried about fitting in the training sessions with their workload and having enough time to work individually with services users and the computer. Enthusiasm for the project with the remaining staff has generally increased as the project as gone on.

3.8.2 *Planning meeting with day care staff - introduction to the project*

In order to help the project to succeed it was felt valuable to try to ensure the support, commitment and understanding from the managers and all staff involved in the project.

Steve Milton and Nada Savitch visited each day centre to meet different people and to introduce the project.

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The aims of this 'setting the scene' day were to:

- Provide an opportunity for Housing 21 staff to meet with Innovations in Dementia staff
- Discuss expectations of the project
- Assess and test the computer equipment
- Find out about the IT skills and interests of care staff
- Introduce the project to service users
- Introduce and discuss the consent process
- Finalise dates for training days and agree the outline of the content of the training sessions
- Generate commitment from Housing 21 staff to the project, attendance at training days, work outside the training days with people with dementia, and to giving feedback
- Provide an introduction to feedback and support mechanisms.

These introductory days took place on 26 March 2008 at Tresham and on 29 May 2008 at Wilshaw House.

3.8.2.1 In practice - Introductory day – Tresham

3.8.2.2 The desktop computer was situated on a large desk in the small art room along with the printer and wireless internet router. The laptop was kept in a draw of the desk along with the touchscreen. Internet access was available throughout the day centre including the art room and in the lounge area via a wireless router.

3.8.2.3 Four staff were identified to take part in the project and Wednesday afternoons were identified as the most appropriate day for training (after the service users had gone home, or the hour before they left if the service users were taking part). Dates for the skills sharing sessions were agreed.

3.8.2.4 As many staff as possible were introduced to the project and what we wanted it to achieve. All staff were generally supportive of the project.

3.8.2.5 The proposed consent process (which was necessary because it was hoped that service users would participate in the evaluation of the project) was discussed. All staff were happy with the process, but requested that the Innovations in Dementia logo was removed as they were concerned that some service users did not recognise their

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diagnosis. It was agreed that it was appropriate for Tresham staff to gain consent from service users.

3.8.2.6 Steve Milton carried out some initial interviews with staff around their computer skills and attitudes to the project.

3.8.2.7 In practice - Introductory day – Wilshaw House

3.8.2.8 The equipment and internet access had been partially set up. However, there were problems. Therefore much of the day was spent making sure that the wireless router worked and reinstalling the operating system on the laptop.

3.8.2.9 The desk top computer was situated on a very small desk in the main activities room next to the art table. The laptop and touchscreen could be kept in the art cupboards. Internet access was available in the smaller lounge room via the wireless router.

3.8.2.10 Nada Savitch talked to staff in small groups, and Steve Milton interviewed staff individually. Six staff were identified as possible participants. Identifying suitable times for the skills sharing sessions was difficult. It was agreed that Nada would attend for one full afternoon and staff would come to the sessions where possible.

3.8.2.11 At this day centre there was some resistance to the idea of the project. Some staff had thought that the project was about brain training games. There had been a computer at the day centre in the past that had not been used widely.

3.9 Consent process

Innovations in Dementia have developed a consent process which was used in this project.

The consent process used was developed for with people with dementia who possess sufficient capacity to:

- Understand what the project is about, and consent to being involved.
- Consent to the products of their work and quotes from observation sessions and interviews being used in the dissemination of the project outcomes.

The consent materials included:

- An information sheet for people with dementia
- The consent form

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- A sheet explaining the process to staff.

It was agreed that staff from the day centres should be the ones to seek consent, as they know the people involved. It was also agreed that consent should be sought from those service users when they became actively engaged in the project, particularly when they started to produce computer files etc that might be used for publicity or promotion of the project.

Consent was seen as an ongoing process. Therefore people with dementia were asked at regular intervals if they agreed to quotes from them or work they had created being used as part of evaluation and dissemination activities. For example, consent was confirmed when people with dementia from Tresham were asked to attend the NESTA Innovation Live conference in November 2008 and to work with staff to produce individual presentations to show delegates.

It was also important that staff stress that it is OK for people with dementia to refuse consent.

3.9.1.1 In practice

3.9.1.2 Staff at both day centres sought consent from their service users.

3.9.1.3 At Tresham consent was first gained as soon as service users became engaged in the project.

3.9.1.4 At Wilshaw House it was agreed that consent would be sought at the point when quotes or artwork were being used.

3.10 Training phase

The training phase included:

- Finalise evaluation tools and process.
- Training of day centre staff.
- Run pilots with service users at two sites.
- Provision of support through support meetings, email groups and distance contact.
- Monitor and evaluate process and assess outcomes.

3.10.1 Skills sharing training sessions

Seven 'skills sharing sessions' were designed to work with staff to introduce ways of working with computers and people with dementia.

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Staff were expected to have some prior knowledge and experience of using computers.

The sessions were focused on giving care staff the confidence in their computer skills to be able to pass these on to people with dementia

These sessions were intended to:

- Offer ideas for ways in which people with dementia can use computers.
- Identify potential stumbling blocks in software and how to overcome or prevent them.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss these ideas and how best to work with service users.
- Give care staff confidence in their computer skills around MS PowerPoint, MS Word and MS Internet Explorer to work with service users.
- Allow staff and service users to give feedback on how these ideas do or do not work .

3.10.2 Session schedule and content

Each of the seven skills sharing sessions were designed to last about 2 hours and be attended by 4-5 care staff.

Between the sessions staff were expected to work with service users and the computers in order to be able to provide feedback for the next session.

Session 1 – week 1

- Introduction to working with people with dementia and computers
- Discussion of different applications/resources that could be used with people with dementia
- Use of games and drawing packages
- Introduction of different input devices – eg touchscreen, joystick mouse
- Introduction to accessibility issues with people with dementia
- Practical ways to make the computer easier to use – eg changing font size, etc
- Highlighting any problems that may arise

Session 2 – week 2

- Introduction of using the internet – web and email – with people with dementia

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- Discussion of suitable websites and ways of using the internet to promote conversation or re-activate hobbies etc.
- Discussion of copyright issues

Session 3 – week 4 (with some service users)

- Discussion of first sessions with people with dementia using the internet
- What worked or didn't work

Session 4 – week 5

- Introduction to using PowerPoint to create life history or identity 'books'
- Inserting text and pictures
- Linking between pages
- Re-look at drawing packages and using the internet to create content.

Session 5 – week 7 (with some service users)

- Presentation of work done since the last session on creating identity books
- What worked and what didn't work

Session 6 – week 8

- Introduction to using MS Word to 'making thing', such as cards or calendars
- Setting up and working with templates
- Using graphics

Session 7 – week 10 (with some service users)

- Presentation of examples of work started since the last session
- Discussion of what worked and what didn't
- Plans for the next 10 weeks – need for additional training sessions, mechanism for support and feedback.

The project plan was for the pilots (training of staff and working with service users) at the two day centres to run concurrently.

3.10.2.1 In practice

3.10.2.2 Concurrent sessions at the two day centres were not possible due to unavoidable delays in setting up internet access and computer equipment at the sites, and then staff availability.

Consequently, the actual dates of the sessions were:

Tresham	Wilshaw House
2 April 2008	4 June 2008
9 April 2008	9 June 2008
16 April 2008	23 June 2008
14 May 2008	30 June 2008
11 June 2008	23 July 2008
25 June 2008	28 July 2008
9 July 2008	11 August 2008

Skills sharing training sessions at Tresham followed the above pattern on Wednesday afternoons with all four staff members present. Sessions involving staff only started when the service users had left for the day. Sessions which involved service users as well as staff started earlier and continued after they had left.

It was intended that sessions should run at Wilshaw House in the same way.

3.10.2.3 In practice

3.10.2.4 The sessions at Wilshaw House had to be more flexible because of staffing arrangements at the day centre. It was not possible at Wilshaw House for all staff participating in the project to be available at the same time. Staff attended the sessions in between their normal duties.

3.10.2.5 All the above topics were covered, but in a more flexible way. For example, it was not possible to work with all the staff at the same time so sessions had to be repeated, and topics were introduced as they cropped up with staff and service users, rather than following the fixed pattern outlined above.

3.10.2.6 In particular, some staff at Tresham found the first session on accessibility issues heavy and difficult to follow. Therefore, the first session at Wilshaw House covered PowerPoint rather than accessibility issues.

3.11 Involving people with dementia in the staff training days

The staff training days were designed to include feedback from service users. The rationale was to:

- Allow people with dementia to have a voice in the process.
- To allow observation of staff working with people with dementia.
- To encourage staff to work with people with dementia in between the skills sharing sessions.

3.11.1.1 In practice

3.11.1.2 People with dementia were involved in the skills sharing sessions in different ways at the two centres. Sessions at Wilshaw House took place in the main activity room while service users were present, while sessions at Tresham took place at the end of the day. Sessions at Wilshaw House were on different days of the week, whereas sessions at Tresham were always on Wednesdays. These differences resulted in people with dementia being involved in slightly different ways.

3.11.1.3 At Tresham day centre the first session including people with dementia was around using the internet and was well attended. However the following sessions which covered PowerPoint and Word

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were not so well attended. The PowerPoint feedback session included one woman with dementia, and the Word feedback session had none. . The staff explained that service users who had used the internet as part of the project did not always attend the centre on Wednesdays. Also, people with dementia have good and bad days and were not necessarily interested in attending the computer sessions at that time.

3.11.1.4 At Wilshaw House, involving people with dementia in the training sessions was a much more ad hoc exercise. We took advantage of any interest shown by service users and involved them in whatever activity they wanted. Involving people with dementia in this way was easier at Wilshaw House because of the desktop computer was located in the main activity room where service users were taking part in discussions, baking or art activities.

3.12 Support phase

The support phase was intended as a three month period where staff could experiment with using computers and during which time computer use would become an integrated everyday activity at the day centres.

This phase involved:

- Continued support through email groups and telephone as necessary
- Six month follow-up.

3.12.1.1 In practice

3.12.1.2 Because of the delay in starting the project and the slightly lengthened training phase, the support phase and evaluation phases were truncated and merged.

3.12.2 Use of support website

A commercial social networking site (Ning.com) was used to create a web space that would enable staff to share experiences and ask questions.

3.12.2.1 In practice

3.12.2.2 The peer support website was not used.

3.12.2.3 Staff at Wilshaw House did not have individual email accounts that they used regularly and so the usefulness of the site was limited.

3.12.2.4 Staff at Tresham were keen to use the site, but found it easier to communicate with each other face to face.

3.12.3 Telephone support

Staff were encouraged to call Nada at any time.

3.12.3.1 In practice

3.12.3.2 Staff did not make use of the telephone support. Staff at Wilshaw House explained that they needed instant support when something was going wrong – especially when they encountered problems when they were working with service users.

3.12.4 Follow-up

Steve carried out follow-up interviews with staff at Tresham and Wilshaw House after the skills sharing session had been completed. These interviews were designed to establish whether the training phase had been effective and to inform further face-to-face support sessions from Nada.

3.13 Evaluation

Various methods of evaluation were used throughout the project and included:

- Structured interviews with staff

Staff were interviewed before the project started, after the training phase was complete and at the end of the project.

- Feedback from staff, managers and service users

Staff were encouraged to feedback their comments and views during the training sessions and outside the sessions.

3.13.1.1 In practice

3.13.1.2 The peer support website where staff had the opportunity to post feedback was not used after the first few weeks of the training phase

at Tresham day centre. It had been hoped that this peer support facility would have highlighted problems encountered by staff.

3.13.1.3 However, staff were encouraged to feedback their thoughts and experiences during each skills sharing session.

- Observation of staff working with people with dementia

People with dementia using computers with staff were observed throughout the training phase, and during the evaluation.

Techniques used by staff and problems they encountered were recorded and fed into the training sessions where appropriate.

- Notes kept by staff

Staff at both day centres were encouraged to keep records of times and activities when they used the computers with people with dementia.

3.13.1.4 In practice

3.13.1.5 Many sessions were not recorded due to lack of staff time. Also staff were hesitant to record sessions where the computer was used as an incidental part of another activity or when sessions (such as using the internet for reminiscence) were repeated.

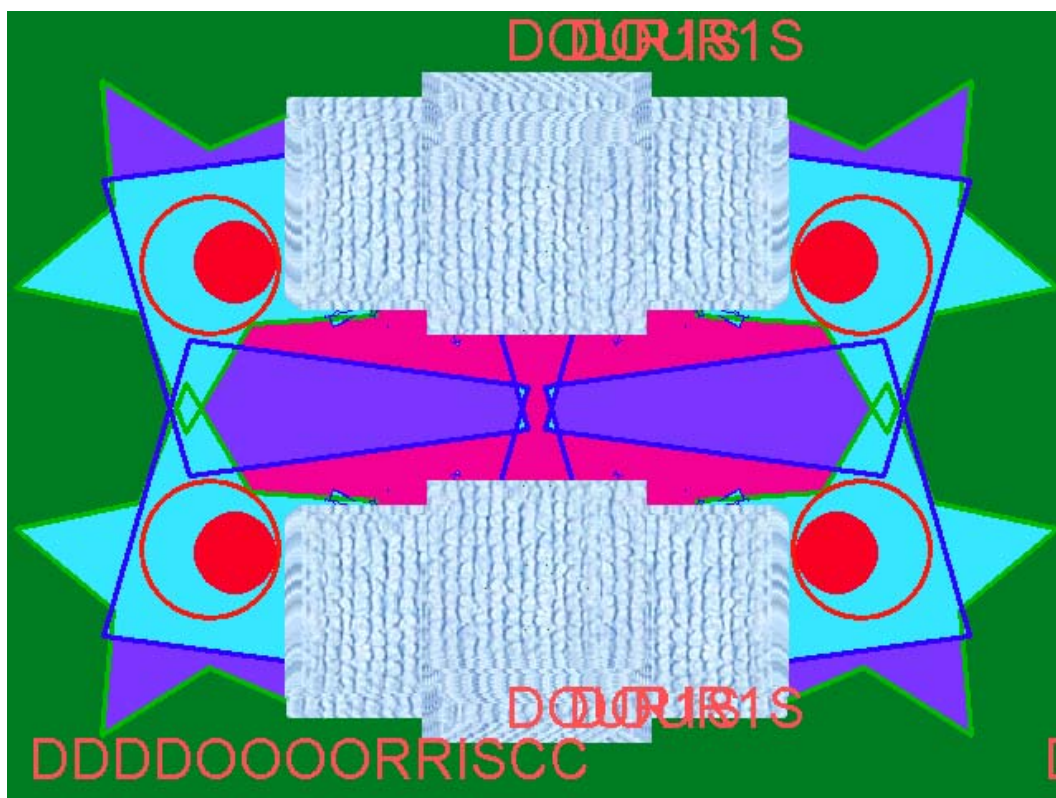
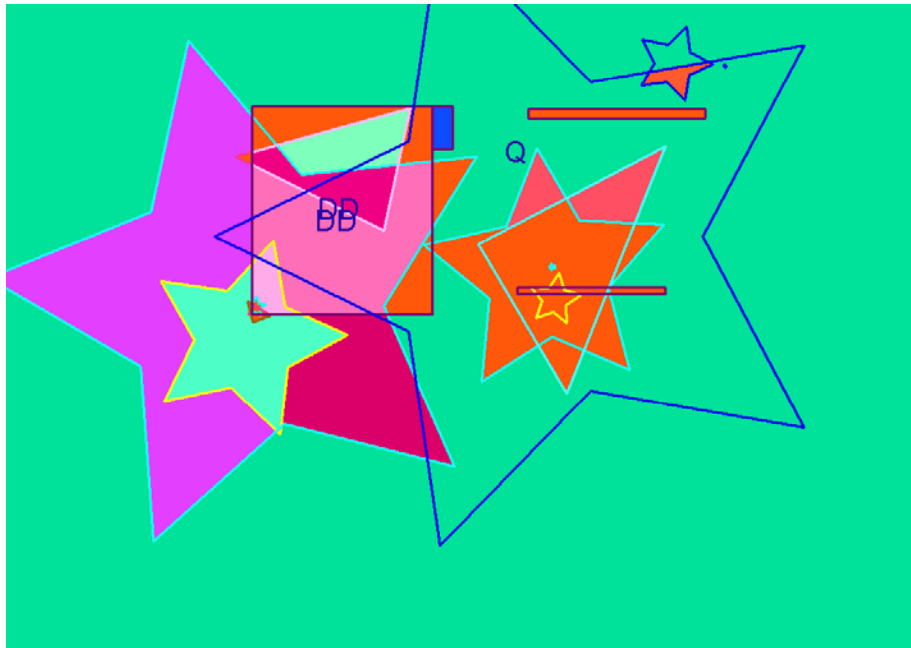
- Interviews with people with dementia

Semi-structured interviews with people with dementia who had taken part in the project were conducted at both day centres.

4 What people did

4.1 Touchscreen and Dazzle

The touchscreen was useful as an easy way of introducing the idea that what you do has an impact on what you see on the screen. A simple art package called Dazzle was used to enable people to draw quick pictures.



By D from Tresham

4.2 PowerPoint

PowerPoint was used to create identity or life history books. People were able to scan in pictures from their past or incorporate pictures taken at the day centre.

At work



I used to
work at a
hospital in
London.
This is me
and my
colleagues

Taken from a presentation by S at Tresham

PowerPoint was also used to generate slide shows about activities such as a trip out (Wilshaw House)

Outing to Holland Park on sunny day.



Taken from a presentation by E at Tresham

Our baking group



Taken from a presentation by E at Tresham

4.3 Word

Word was used to make cards and to record events such as baking. Tresham have also started a newsletter, created by staff with help from service users.

The Tresham Chronicle

Issue 1

October 2008

Tresham Activities

At Tresham day centre we do lots of activities every week. Our panel has listed the most common activities and gives us feedback about them.

- **News letter group - a new activity that provides good information about the day centre.**
- **Exercise – At the moment we do stretching and exercise a few times per week. This is very good for all of us. We wish to have a bit of exercise every day.**
- **Cross words, word games and quizzes – Many people enjoy these groups, as they make us think and keep our brains active.**
- **Active games – These groups keep us active and mobile.**

New members



We interviewed Mohamed, who started working at Tresham Day Centre in August. He is English, born in Hammersmith in London, but he has Moroccan roots.

Mohamed is in his thirties. He likes to play bingo, as long as he wins. In his spare time Mohamed likes to work with illustrative art. He is very keen to study calligraphy, which is the art of beautiful writing. Mohamed is a bit of an artist and he enjoys life drawing, although he prefers clothed models.

Realistic films in colour or black & white are also on Mohamed's list of interests. He finds it important that the films make sense. Mohamed thinks Tresham Day Centre is a fantastic place to work in. Our staff and members are very friendly.



Full Screen
Close Full Screen

Issue 1 of the Tresham Chronicle.

4.4 Internet

The internet has been used in a variety of ways.

For example, the internet has been used at both sites for both reminiscence work and to augment other activities such as poster designing and singing sessions. Both sites have reported that using the internet has enabled staff to personalise reminiscence work with both groups and individuals – eg at Tresham one service user (from a Spanish background) has found old Spanish songs and performers and at Wilshaw House they have used YouTube to allow people to request songs.

The internet was used in different ways. Search engines such as Google (and the specific image search on Google) were used to find sites of general interest to service users (such as pictures of place where they used live or had been on holiday). In addition, specialist sites were used such as BBC news (eg for news of the Olympics) and YouTube (to search for specific artists or tunes).

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We used computer and internet to find our favourite images.



Taken from a presentation by E at Tresham

At Wilshaw House staff have used the internet to find pictures for their displays (eg for the Olympics).

Google was most commonly used, but as staff become more aware of the websites which were of particular interest to service users, or which were more likely to provide a positive outcome, these were saved as 'favourites' and accessed directly. "You Tube" is a particularly good example of this, and was widely used at both sites.

4.4.1.1 In practice

4.4.1.2 Staff found that many websites identified through search engines were very complicated, with too much to look at for people with dementia. For example, newspaper sites that carry a lot of advertising.

4.5 Reviving old skills

Some service users have had past experience of using computers or keyboards. One lady at Wilshaw House was a shorthand typist and although she said she wouldn't remember, did in fact manage to type again.

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5 Findings from the evaluation

“The question we asked ourselves was if had been worth the effort.

“The proof of the pudding is in the eating,” Eileen said.”



Quote and picture taken from presentation by Tresham

A number of different tools have been used to provide information about the extent to which the project was producing its intended outcomes, as well as informing the on-going development of the project.

This section of the report will consider the extent to which the project has delivered its intended outcomes drawing on the following data sources:

- Structured interviews with staff at project start, mid-point and project end.
- Semi-structured conversations with service users at project end.
- Activity logs.
- Observations of people with dementia working with staff.
- Ongoing feedback through the project.

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A word about the activity logs

During the course of the project, 30 logs were filled out by staff, 15 at Tresham and 15 at Wilshaw House.

It is clear that

- this does not adequately represent the number of session undertaken
- these are skewed towards 1-1 work at the expense of group work
- they are likely to be skewed towards those sessions which resulted in a significant response from the service user.

Data from the logs should be viewed with these caveats in mind.

Analysis of the quantitative data from the logs shows:

- The average amount of time staff spent in planning before a session was 11 minutes.
- The average session with service user(s) was 35 minutes long.

Programmes accessed over the 30 logged sessions:

PowerPoint	9
Clipart	2
You-Tube	10
Google	12
Word	2
Dazzle	1

Content analysis of the qualitative data recorded in the logs, as well as observation of users and staff and interviews with staff and users will be considered below.

Evaluation of project outcomes

The original project brief identified a number of possible outcomes from the project, for people with dementia, for carers, and for the organisations involved.

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5.1 Outcomes for people with dementia

Outcome 1: Satisfaction and pleasure from learning or re-learning of a new skill

Log data

Content analysis of the qualitative data in the logs shows pleasure or satisfaction in 80% of the sessions recorded.

Comments included:

“X thinks the computer is wonderful – she really did enjoy this session”

“She said she would like to listen to “*with a song in my heart*” by Doris Day. Then sat with me close to the computer and said “*that was too good to be believed*””.

“I invited him to type anything he wanted to find out about into Google, which he did, and thought was ‘wonderful’”.

Interviews with staff

“He was able to find the music he loved so much (Zarzuela – Spanish opera) and hasn’t been able to hear all these years in England – he was dancing and crying with emotion” - Staff member M from Tresham

“It’s fantastic – seeing the look on people’s faces as see or hear something that had been forgotten for a long time.” – Staff member M from Wilshaw House.

Observation of users and staff

When observing service users working with staff on the computers, their enjoyment is evident. Steve observed two service users in Wilshaw House using You-Tube, with the assistance of staff. Both were directing the searches, with appropriate levels of prompting from staff.

L – who shifted between English and Italian during her conversation with the member of staff was engrossed in film footage of Mario Lanza on You-Tube. After being prompted for a few more of her favourites, she watched two more songs very attentively.

When they finished, they spoke about her birthplace in Italy, and she recalled seeing Mario Lanza on television and in the flesh..

Later in the day Steve met B, who also enjoyed watching classical music concerts through You-Tube.

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Initially B was not particularly forthcoming, and seemed a little anxious, perhaps at seeing an unfamiliar face. Having established and located a choice of video, (a performance of the 1812 overture), he became engrossed, and his body language shifted its focus to the music and his foot tapped along to the rhythm.

Conversations with people with dementia

Steve asked L what she thought of watching the videos. “Bravo” was her response

We are using computer for finding
our favourite music and videos.



Taken from a presentation by E at Tresham.

Outcome 2: Increased sense of self-worth

Log data

Content analysis of the qualitative data in the logs show an increase in feelings of self-worth in 33% of the sessions recorded.

Comments included

“Only when she saw her own photograph did she become animated and happy, and remained so till the end of the session, She was saying “Look! Look at me! Aren’t I beautiful!”

“She said she loved it because it was all about her”.

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Interviews with staff

“One lady was really struggling, she really lacked confidence, and it looked like she might have been placed in a care home, and stop coming here. I found out that she used to be a secretary, and asked her if she’d come and help me. It was amazing, she touch-typed, which I really didn’t expect her to be able to do. She said “the space bar is different on this”. It really seemed to lift her confidence and she’s still coming here. I can’t say it’s because of the computer – but at that point it really lifted her self-esteem. (Staff member S from Willshaw House)

Conversations with people with dementia

Steve spoke with E at Wilshaw House over lunch. E told Steve about her days working at a local cigarette factory, a large local employer in its day. She proudly told Steve how she had been good at her jobs, made the best friends of her life, and how they made the best cigarettes in the world – “I never smoked though” she laughed. She returned to this topic on a few more occasions – it clearly meant a great deal to her – as she told me repeatedly they were the best times of her life.

Steve suggested to her that we might be able to find some pictures of her factory using the computer. She didn’t think that would be something she would like to do.

Later in the day Steve learned that she had spent some time the day before doing just that – and recounted her story with the same degree of pride that Steve had experienced.

Ongoing feedback and observation

During one of the skills sharing sessions, Sue explained to the people with dementia at Wilshaw House that ‘we’re all learning together’. This is an example of how the attitude of staff can be changed during computer work. The skills sharing sessions at Wilshaw House which involved staff and service users showed staff and service users in a more ‘equal’ position as they both learned how to use the computers together.

During another session, IR was encouraged to use the computer, but said she couldn’t remember how to type. However, when she sat at the keyboard it was obvious that she did remember. Later in that session, IR encouraged M to type – showing her the letters and saying ‘you’ll get used to it’.

IR said “Computers were not like this in my office!” “It’s marvellous what they can do now”.

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From a presentation by H at Tresham

Outcome 3: Increased conversation and engagement

Log data

Content analysis of the qualitative data in the logs shows pleasure or satisfaction in 63% of the sessions recorded.

Comments included:

“When D searched for famous people on the internet she started to sing their songs, which got S involved”

“She was really proud of the work she had done and took delight in showing people”

“Service users then spent some time chatting about the artists they had seen singing on You-Tube”

“He said it was great to see Railway stations where he had worked. He was delighted, usually a quiet gentleman he chatted freely about the past working on the railways”

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Interviews with staff

“Another lady kept a picture from the outing we’d printed out for her on her fridge – her daughter tells us she says “look – there’s {staff member S}, there’s {staff member M}” – this might not seem much, but for her to remember our names, that’s a lovely feeling to have” (Staff member S from Wilshaw House)

“One lady was very shy. We had been trying to do some life history work, but we only had one page. Doesn’t seem much does it, for someone’s life? But then we started to look at a few pictures from her past on the internet, and before we knew it we had 12 more pages” (Staff member D from Tresham)

Conversations with people with dementia

B, the gentleman who had been rather reserved when we first met, become more communicative as the music played. Initially he had said that he been “no good” at playing violin, “no good at anything really”. He eventually told us that he was a chemist who had worked in the pharmaceutical industry. Staff member M asked him if he had ever worked abroad. “No” replied B, “not really – only really Europe. And the States,”

Ongoing observation and feedback from staff

In one session, M was working with staff member S to search for pictures of Melbourne where she went on holiday and has family. M – ‘It’s like going to Australia without paying the fare!’



Scene from an outing taken from a presentation by E at Tresham

Outcome 4: Increased willingness to try new things

Log data

Content analysis of the qualitative data in the logs shows increased willingness to try new things (aside from, of course, computers) in 36% of the sessions recorded.

Comments included:

“She said she couldn’t believe you could paint on a computer”

“As a former typist she had been used to putting pressure on the keys. She commented on how sensitive the keys seemed to be, but best of all how marvellous it was to be able to choose and change fonts whenever you liked”

Observation

During one session at Tresham, S picked her name out on the screen and used the touch screen to move the mouse. However, when staff tried to find pictures on the internet of places she had lived, she had problems recognising them. S said, “I can watch”, “People who use it are clever”, and “You need to be clever to use it – I was clever years ago”.

Resumed connections with distant family members (via email and webcams)

Although staff at Tresham were intending to persist with efforts to encourage users to try email, there have been no examples of this happening during the project.

During one of the skills sharing sessions, M at Wilshaw House told staff about talking to family in Australia, which from her description they assumed to be via a webcam. Without the project it is unlikely that the staff would have recognised from M’s description what was had happened.

Film making

We made a little film of the pictures.



Taken from a presentation by S from Tresham

Outcome 5 . Those involved in the project will act as role models, providing encouragement to other people with dementia who currently have very few positive examples to draw on

Interviews with staff suggest that when the laptop is used, and people can clearly see other people using the computer, it seems to spark their curiosity and make them less nervous of approaching the computer.

This seemed to happen more at Wilshaw than at Tresham, possibly because both the laptop and the desktop were in clear view in “public” areas.

People with dementia from Tresham attended the NESTA Innovations Live event at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre in London. With members of staff to help and encourage them, they talked to small groups of delegates about using computers and about their lives and experiences. There are very few opportunities for people with dementia to attend large events such as this. These participants in the computer project were great ambassadors for all people with dementia.

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5.2 Benefits for day centre staff

Outcome 5: Seeing people with dementia in a new light

Log data

Content analysis of the qualitative data in the logs suggest that 43% of sessions recorded enabled the staff member to see the person with dementia in a new light.

Comments included:

“Looking at the pictures she was happy to chat about her life and soon she started talking about her life in Vancouver”

Interviews with staff

“One lady was very shy. We had been trying to do some life history work, but we only had one page. Doesn't seem much does it, for someone's life? But then we started to look at a few pictures from her past on the internet, and before we knew it we had 12 more pages” (Staff member D from Tresham)

Ongoing feedback and observations

Staff at Tresham reported that J always said that he had difficulty with his sight, but he recognised people on You-Tube videos.

Staff member D used Dazzle with D and the touchscreen. D had remembered using the computer on a previous occasion. Staff member D reported that she had underestimated D's abilities [and information retention], “ She was excited at first, and then ‘got it’”.

Outcome 6: Having the opportunity to talk to people individually

Log data

Content analysis of the qualitative data in the logs shows that 63% of the logged session were one-to-one with the user.

Interviews with staff:

“He was able to find the music he loved so much and hasn't been able to hear all these years in England (Zarzuela – Spanish opera) – he was dancing and crying with emotion - he has the privacy, and it's just the two of them” Staff member M from Tresham

“One-to-one work is not a problem when we have a full staff group, but it's a problem if we're short” (Staff member D at Tresham)

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“What happens when we are short of staff is that Nada would show us something and it’s like “yeah – great!”, we’d get all excited and we were going to use it, but then we get short of staff, so for one, two months we can only do group work, not one-to-one, so I keep forgetting it” (Staff member A at Tresham)

Outcome 7: Gaining satisfaction with a new activity with which to engage with people with dementia

Log data

Content analysis of the qualitative data in the logs shows that 43% of the logged sessions included opportunities for new activity with the user.

Comments included:

“Service users seem accustomed to seeing the computer being used”.

“You-tube was used to look for music and dance for the party and this led to all service users and staff learning a dance together”

Interviews with staff:

“We have been able to bring things together and use the computer to be creative in lots of other areas. It’s been a process” (Staff member S at Wilshaw House)

“The computer has been part of lots of other activities – the newsletter, baking work – and using it to keep and make records of the day’s events, which helps to remind people what they have been doing”Just seeing people asking you for something they want to do with the computer is fantastic (Staff member D at Tresham)

Ongoing observation and feedback

During one of the final sessions at Tresham, staff member D commented that she didn’t know what they would do if they didn’t have the laptop and internet connection now. When there is a lull in activity in the lounge, the web is used to create a focus for conversation.

Outcome 7: Increased confidence with their own computer skills; enjoyment at learning a new skill

Staff interviews

Staff were asked to assess their overall level of competence with computers before the start of the project on a scale of 1-10.

At the end of the training phase, they were again asked to rate their level of competence over a range of areas on a scale of 1-10.

For reasons of staff turnover and dropout, only two members of staff at each location were assessed at both points of the project.

	Before the project	After training phase
D (Tresham)	7/10	8/10
K (Tresham)	8/10	8/10
S (Wilshaw House)	3/10	6.5/10
H (Wilshaw House)	4.5/10	6.4/10

Table: changes in self-assessed level of competence between project start and end of training phase.

“My confidence is much better, and I know now how to approach it” (staff member S – Wilshaw House).

Staff member K is keen to try new things and voice recognition software was introduced in one of the final support sessions with K.

Discussion

Staff at Tresham were already very computer literate, but have said that they have learnt new things from the project. They have learnt a lot about PowerPoint in particular – a programme which most people don't use out of an office environment, and which was largely unfamiliar to most.

Staff at Wilshaw House were generally less sure of using computers before the project. Both remaining staff members report an increase in confidence, as do those who joined the project after the start.

6 Evidence about the best ways to support staff to set up and run computer projects for people with dementia

The experience of running the project has shown a great deal about what works well and what works less well.

The following learning points are derived from all four stages of the project.

6.1 The value of the human interface

One member of staff was concerned that they had not been more successful in facilitating more people with dementia to interact with the computer directly.

“At first we thought it was going to be us teaching people with dementia to do it themselves, but mostly it is us doing it with them – some want to but mostly they say “can you do it for me” (Staff member A at Tresham)

This raises the question about the extent to which people with dementia exercise control where a member of staff is operating the computer for them.

Observations of staff in one-to-one sessions with people with dementia confirmed a high level of sensitivity and communication skills being exercised by staff. This is crucial if the person with dementia is to maximise their control of the session.

The human interface is the key to maximizing control for people with dementia who can't, or prefer not to, use existing mechanical interfaces.

“It's been fantastic – they have been talking – we have been writing – we use that to find more pictures for the session, this prompts more talking” (Staff member M at Tresham)

Learning points

It is important to encourage people with dementia to use the computers directly.

However, this project has taught us that people with dementia need to find their own level when engaging with computers and that staff should be there to sensitively facilitate rather than to lead.

6.2 Time

The biggest barrier to the project is staff time.

Time was widely reported as a significant barrier to one-to-one work, to training, and to the project in general.

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“One-to-one work is not a problem when we have a full staff group, but it’s a problem if we’re short” (Staff member D at Tresham)

“I think our training would have been better if we were all together when Nada came. She was so patient but we’d all be flying around, and it might be an hour before we sat down. I’d say that if we are having three people on training, then we need them covered on the floor. That’s been the biggest thing. Nada may have been here for four hours and we’ve only had one” (Staff member S at Wilshaw House)

Most staff have assumed that using the computer will be a one to one activity (and therefore time and resource heavy).

“What happens when we are short of staff is that Nada would show us something and it’s like “yeah – great!”, we’d get all excited and we were going to use it, but then we get short of staff, so for one, two months we can only do group work, not one-to-one, so I keep forgetting it” (Staff member A at Tresham)

All staff members at Wilshaw House said that they felt the pressure on colleagues when they attended training or were engaged in one-to-one work with users. “Guilt” and “cherry-picking” were words which were used again and again in interviews with staff.

Somewhat contrary to the data from the record logs, the most common application of the project has been through group and small group work– eg reminiscence with You-Tube, etc, and creating cards with two ladies at Wilshaw House (the shorthand typist helping the other to type).

Learning points

For future projects to succeed there needs to be a commitment from management that staff have the time both for effective training, but also for planning their work and using the computer.

Staff need to be encouraged to make decisions about the best way to support people with dementia. In other words, staff should be able to exercise discretion about whether to deliver group or one-to-one work as the most effective way of meeting user needs.

Group work has been successful in delivering many of the project outcomes, and is an enjoyable and cost-effective way of engaging service users. However, staff are likely to view it as a poor alternative to one-to-one work if the decision to engage in group work is driven by time constraints rather than the needs and wishes of service users.

6.3 Integration of computer use into other activities

At both locations there has been an emphasis on involving the computer as part of the general activities within the centre.

It is clear that the computer has been successfully integrated as a tool that can help in activities such as reminiscence and art, and for making records of activities such as outings and parties.

“It doesn’t usually mean a lot to someone in their 80s, but we now know the best way to approach it – there are ways of introducing people with dementia to computers, and one is *not* to say “do you want to join a computer club.....if I were to say to a person with dementia “do you want to use the computer” they would most likely say “oh no”, but if I asked them where they have been on holiday, and say “shall we look for some pictures” they are much more likely to say “oh yes please!” – (Staff member S at Wilshaw House)

“A no longer seems surprised at what the computer can do” (session log)

“Service users seem accustomed to seeing the computer being used” (session log)

Staff at Wilshaw House have presented the computer as something that staff and service users are ‘learning together’.

A number of staff commented on the need to keep the workings of the computer as invisible as possible to the service user (unless they are interested). Having to spend a lot of time searching for a file in mid session tends to de-emphasise the activity and focus on the computer and its processes instead, usually resulting in confusion, boredom or loss of concentration. It can also mean that the person with dementia loses their sense of ownership of the session as the staff member burrows away trying to solve a problem.

Good preparation is seen as the key, especially in the area of file management - getting everything in place that needs to be there for the session ahead.

Learning points

Staff should be encouraged to think about ways in which the computer can be used to augment and extend the creative possibilities of mainstream activity, both in group work, and in one-to-one activity.

Staff should be encouraged to promote the “activity” rather than “the computer” to people with dementia.

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The computer should be visible to staff and users, and become part of the furniture as much as possible. Privacy should also be available for one-to-one work.

Good preparation should make the computer, or rather its processes as invisible as possible to the service user.

6.4 Training issues

The main learning point around training is that the training should be flexible. It is important that staff are familiar with the same concepts of how to use the computer – for example that they have used the same websites. This is so that different staff can work with individual people with dementia and retain continuity of work.

However, staff had different interests and skills. For example, Staff member M at Wilshaw House was very interested in artwork and less in using the computer for reminiscence or life story/identity book work. She felt her computer skills were not sufficient to work successfully with PowerPoint. Therefore it is important that a facilitator is able to ensure that staff have an appropriate mix of skills before taking part. As noted above, time and staffing issues had a major impact on the training.

This was felt most keenly at Wilshaw House, where staff frequently needed to leave training to help out on the floor. One member of staff felt that it was likely that only 25% of the training time was used as staff were busy elsewhere.

At Tresham, D (who was team leader at the time of the project) took the lead and encouraged staff. She also attempted to make time for staff to meet and discuss computer use and exchange skills. She was also responsible for the staff rota at Tresham. At Wilshaw House, S (the activities co-ordinator) took the lead on the project in practice, although she expressed a wish not to be seen at the lead. Her role in having input into the staff rota and activities diary was important in trying to integrate computer use into the day to day activities in the centre.

Learning points

A leader/facilitator is essential for the project to succeed.

It is vital that during training sessions staff can concentrate on learning, and not be distracted external events.

6.5 Equipment

6.5.1 Interfaces – mechanical and human

This project did not set out to test different types of equipment/assistive technology. However a touchscreen and joy stick mouse were included in the equipment.

Some staff members felt that the potential of the touchscreen was let down by technical limitations.

The screen was felt to be unpredictable in it's response to users. Its response was felt to be imprecise, and was only really used consistently for the drawing package Dazzle.

It was also commented that the screen was too small, that users were pressing too hard, or not hard enough. Other users tried to use their fingernail rather than fingertip to control the screen, which meant that the screen did not respond.

Similarly, the joystick mouse was felt to be only partially successful. All staff felt it to be too complex, with eight buttons being too many. The printed legend on the base was felt to be too far from the actual buttons, leading to confusion about which button to press.

Two staff members felt that the response of the pointer to mouse movements was too slow, and bore little relation to the actual movement of the joystick. The feeling was that people had problems associating the action of their hand on the joystick with the movement on the screen, and the two quickly became disassociated.

Despite the disappointing performance of the mechanical interfaces, staff showed considerable ingenuity in working around the mechanical limitations:

- D at Tresham uses a 'dual control' method with her using one mouse/keyboard and the service user using another. This idea has been successfully introduced at Wilshaw House.
- Services users at both sites have been encouraged to type – again a dual control system has been used to correct mistakes, etc.

Learning point

Although there were limitations in the mechanical interfaces, the interventions of staff show how important it is to value the role of staff both as problem solvers, and also as "human interfaces" to allow the person with dementia to use the computer.

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The training focused on both computer skills and the skills needed to work effectively with people with dementia. It is essential that this balance be maintained in future delivery.

6.5.2 Laptop / desktop

A laptop with wireless internet access and a desktop PC were provided at each location.

In Tresham, the desktop was situated in a separate room, with the laptop used throughout the building. In Wilshaw House, both laptop and desktop were situated in “public” areas.

The laptop was clearly popular for group work, especially as it could be moved around whenever and wherever it was needed.

“The laptop is definitely best for group work” (Staff member S at Wilshaw House)

“The laptop is better for some people. It can be moved to where they are, especially if they are more comfy where they are” (Staff member D at Tresham)

One disadvantage of the laptop is the fact that it can only be viewed properly by one user at a time.

It has been suggested by staff at both Wilshaw House and Tresham that a projector would help them with group work. Ideally the laptop would be connected wirelessly, which would enable everyone in the room to see the screen and allow for the laptop to be passed around as needed.

The advantage of the desktop at Tresham was that it was in a private space that affords some privacy to users for one-to-one or small group work:

“He was dancing and crying with emotion – it was just the two of them”

Staff at Wilshaw House commented that the lack of private space caused some problems for people trying to work with the computer on a one-to-one or small group basis. Activity nearby would often cause people to become distracted and lose focus.

“Distraction has been one of our biggest problems. Concentration levels are distracted the whole time”

Learning point

The laptop is by far the more flexible of the two options, and can be used for group or one-to-one work and can be easily moved.

Public and private space offer different opportunities for engagement

Both should be available whenever possible.

There are ongoing costs – internet access, anti-virus software, etc, computer maintenance and issues around backing up work etc.

6.6 Accessibility of the computer interface

Although much time and many handouts have been dedicated to change the settings for different accessibility needs, this was probably one of the most difficult concept and skill for staff to grasp and put into practice.

The first big keys keyboard was confusing because of the layout. The layout of the keys was not in a traditional QWERTY arrangement. The replacement seems to have clear enough lettering.

It is important to be able to match the movement of the cursor as much as possible to the movement of the hand on the joystick or touchscreen, as two staff members (at Tresham) have commented on the “disconnect” between hand movement and cursor and that it seems to throw people if the disconnect is too pronounced.

The most important accessibility changes identified by staff were:

- stopping keyboard sensitivity – filter keys
- making the mouse pointer bigger
- finding the mouse pointer
- making text bigger
- changing the contrast on the screen
- changing the appearance of text.

However, observation of staff using the computer appears to suggest that staff find it difficult to make accessibility changes easily when working with someone with dementia.

Learning point

It is important to tailor any special equipment to the individual person. Training around accessibility issues should focus on the key processes outlined above.

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7 Dissemination

The message from this project is that everyday computer software can be used in day centres for people with dementia. Therefore dissemination so far has been focussed on people who commission, manage or work in care settings.

7.1.1 Embracing the Challenge: Citizenship & Dementia, Belfast, May 2008

The idea behind the project was promoted at the Belfast Conference. Innovations in Dementia CIC had a stand in the 'Technology Room' at the conference. A poster was displayed on the stand featuring Doris and Diane from Tresham.

7.1.2 Paper at Celebrating Innovation & Excellence: Making Change Happen, Stirling, September 2008

Nada Savitch (Innovations in Dementia CIC) and Rachael Dutton (Housing 21) presented a paper at this conference organised by the Stirling Dementia Services Development Centre.

7.1.3 Poster at Dementia Congress, Bournemouth, October 2008

Nada Savitch and Rachael Dutton presented a poster at the Dementia Congress.

7.1.4 NESTA Innovation Live event, London, 12 November 2008

Three staff from Tresham day centre supported a person with dementia to present their individual presentations to small groups of delegates in the exhibition area.

Nada Savitch, Rachael Dutton and Diane Cole (Manager, Tresham) assisted in the support and planning of the day, which was extremely successful. Both the staff and the people with dementia enjoyed the day. Delegates who attended the presentations seemed to find them very interesting. It was very important to have people with dementia at the event as the most of the delegates were not involved in the dementia care field.

7.1.5 Articles for the Journal of Dementia Care and the journal Dementia are planned.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

This project has shown that people with dementia can engage in computer work and that both they and staff can gain many benefits from doing so.

8.1 People with dementia using computers

People with dementia need to be encouraged to engage with computers at a level, and with activities, that suits them.

The key to making sure that this happens is that staff be confident in their own computer skills and have ideas for how to use basic computer programs to produce engaging outputs for people with dementia.

It is important that people with dementia can understand that they can influence what appears on the screen. But it is not important that people with dementia are proficient in mouse or keyboard skills or that they understand how the computer works or is switched on.

If people with dementia cannot use the mechanical interface, the skills (both technical computer skills and support skills) of staff must be strong enough to maximise the potential for user control.

But staff must also have the ability to connect and engage with the person with dementia and communicate effectively to maximise their role as supporter and enabler, rather than leader.

Recommendation: training is equally focused both on computer skills and on the skills necessary to facilitate people with dementia engaging with computers at any level

8.2 Use of computers within the day centre

This project has provided the evidence that a computer work is a valuable addition to day care activities. The computer is most effective when used as a tool by staff as an integral part of everyday activities in the day centre.

Staff have been keen to stress the computer as a tool for doing other things rather than as an end in itself, and have shown great creativity in the ways in which they have integrated the computer work into the everyday life and activity of the centres.

This ability to think creatively about the potential for computers in work with people with dementia is one which has been carefully nurtured throughout the project.

Recommendation: training focuses on ensuring that computers are seen as a tool that can be used advantageously in a wide range of activities of the day care centre.

8.3 Training materials

It has been established that staff need training and support to ensure that any equipment is used to the full and that as many people with dementia as possible engage with computers and ICT at many levels.

Training materials were developed for use in the project. These have been refined through the learning from the project.

However, staff time for training and learning has been established as a barrier for this work to succeed, therefore it is unlikely that printed training materials alone be enough. It is unlikely that care staff would have the time or motivation to work through a paper manual. Demonstration and hands-on examples would be needed to inspire care staff to try this work. The next phase of this project would ideally be to develop high quality training tools and resources and test ways in which these could be best delivered flexibly, and disseminated.

To ensure that the tools and resources that we will develop have the widest impact, the training package would be aimed at facilitators who will then work directly with care staff. This 'training the trainers' approach will allow the knowledge, expertise and best practice examples to be cascaded effectively through the organisation.

Possible dissemination routes could be: a purely paper-based package, purely face to face training, a purely web-based package, or a mixture of website, plus paper, plus face to face training.

Recommendation: A full training package based on the learning from this project is developed by Innovations in Dementia and possible routes of dissemination tested.