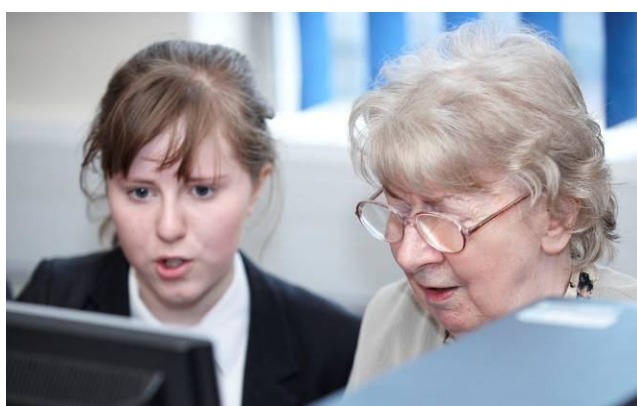


Evolving the 'SCHOOLS FOR SILVER SURFERS' initiative



A summary of Digital Unite's work promoting digital literacy for older people in sheltered housing through partnership working with local schools

Author: Gill Adams, Information Manager, Digital Unite

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OVERVIEW

Digital Unite has been evolving a strategy for engaging **Britain's schools** with the digital participation for older people agenda. We believe local schools could play a key role in promoting and sustaining digital literacy activities for older people in their communities. We believe that school children and the school community can reap learning and other civic and community-orientated benefits from this work. We believe that communities of older people such as those in sheltered housing stand to gain far more than digital skills learning support from this partnership working – they are reconnected to other parts of their community through the learning activity. This summary document outlines our experiences and observations to date.

Broadgreen School in Liverpool

In its annual Silver Surfer of the Year Awards, 2007, Digital Unite had a category 'Event Holder of the Year'. This was won by a **community school in Liverpool**, called Broadgreen. In 2008, one of DU's **Silver Surfers of the Year**, turned out to be **Les Nicholls, 88**, also of Liverpool. He lives in sheltered housing and routinely spent time every week at Broadgreen School learning how to use his computer, send email, create a blog, etc. The School and Les were presented their awards, in 2007 and 2008, at a ceremony at the Houses of Parliament by MP Stephen Timms. Mr Timms (October 2009) is the Minister for Digital Britain.

The Chesham High School Experience

In 2008, DU was working at a sheltered home with landlord **Paradigm Housing** in **Buckinghamshire** and thinking about sustainability issues; it's a key concern – how do you make sure that the learners continue using their new-found skills once the tutor has left? We routinely train **computer caretakers, mentors, digital ambassadors**, we encourage **scheme managers** to take part; but this isn't always enough to keep people going. Quite independently, the landlords had made a link with Chesham High School, nearby, where the Community Development Manager, Siobhan Bygate was keen to foster an intergenerational project within the wider community. A relationship was born and has gone from strength to strength.

Continuous digital skills training for the older people was identified as a need. There have been difficulties to solve; for the school it was important that there were personnel available to devote **time to set-up**, to look at issues of **insurance**, **CRB** checks, in order to make it safe for 14-16 year olds to help the older people during **weekly 'clinics'** when they visit the sheltered accommodation to give their assistance. But the results have been encouraging.

As Siobhan Bygate reports: 'Computer skills are second nature to today's generation but **intergenerational contact** is something that is often missing from their lives. Chris Morris, a CHS **sixth former** and Chesham resident, runs the **Computer Surgeries** at Cromwell House, a sheltered home near to the school, with three other students. He says almost the only contact he has with the older generation is once a year at Christmas with grandparents. So this has made a big impact on his life experience.'

Revelation

For the youngsters, it can be a revelation to spend time with people who'd been born pre-NHS, lived through a time of War and witnessed the technological revolution from **gas lamps** to **space-flight**; from **valve radios** to **HD television**. These two generations have much to offer each other and due to the foresight of Chesham school – a truly '21st century facing' establishment – and the housing provider Paradigm Housing Group, these relationships have been allowed to develop.

Development

There have been various outcomes which continue to develop. For instance, the intergenerational group web-cammed a school in Ghana and another in Paris, during Silver Surfers' Day (May 15th, 2009); the older learners were helped to produce presentations about their lives, set to music to encourage others to join in. Other local schools were invited in to see what Chesham High has done.

The Chailey School/Sheltered Housing Charity/ Specialist Schools link-up

DU was introduced by **ERoSH** (forward-looking sheltered housing charity) to Trudi Hamer, a community development worker at **Chailey School** in **Sussex**; Trudi had previously worked in sheltered housing. She brought together her two sets of experience and helped convene a meeting between Linda Milton of **ERoSH**, DU and herself. DU then approached **SSAT** (The Specialist Schools and

Academies Trust) and they set to with a will, and involved and lobbied their schools to tell them how to participate in Silver Surfers' Day 2009, and the concept of Schools for Silver Surfers, in general.

DU convenes a Round Table, hosted by Government

In January 2009, DU convened a Round Table event in London, generously hosted by **Ewen McKinnon of the Digiteam at CLG**. **Government officials** from various departments, including CLG, DCSF, DWP and luminaries from **BECTA**, **IBM**, and **Beth Johnson Foundation** were presented with DU's work in this area, and Siobhan Bygate and one of her students from Chesham High School also addressed the event.

Silver Surfers' Day 2009 'push'

The immediate result from that Round Table was a concerted effort by DU to promote the schools:sheltered housing model through Silver Surfers' Day. Silver Surfers' Day has been run annually by DU since 2002. It is a day of mass digital participation for older people, and is the Friday of Adult Learners' Week in May. Silver Surfers' Day brings together over a thousand **organisations UK-wide**, from libraries to bingo halls, solicitors' offices to football clubs, pubs to sheltered housing lounges – and supports them to hold IT taster events for older people. In 2009, DU made special efforts to get schools on the 'Silver Surfers' bandwagon' by supporting events in sheltered housing. New guidance was written to help local sheltered housing scheme managers to partner with their local schools, and to help schools partner with their local sheltered housing. Sheltered housing can often be 'invisible' in its own neighbourhood – but a website yields a postcode search so that schools could find their older neighbours.

The result was the **Schools for Silver Surfers** initiative, through which a most pleasing 66 schools took up the opportunity to invite people from their local sheltered housing provider into their schools for a day.

EROSH lobbied its 200+ housing-provider members to inspire them to get involved. See their website's call to action here:

<http://eroshschoolslink.notlong.com> .

Glan Afan, a Port Talbot Community school

In South Wales, this school was a great example. Fourteen-year-olds were Skyping DU staff at 9pm on a Thursday in early May, asking for advice. 'We've got room for 80 people in our IT suite,' they tapped away, 'and we've got 80 pupils interested in tutoring; I think we'd better put out some leaflets in the shopping centre.' So they did and the results were a triumph.

There are many more stories. Some are recorded on the DNC (Does Not Compute), DU-hosted blog, here: <http://dnc.digitalunite.com/category/silver-surfers/schools/> . A list of schools that participated in Silver Surfers' Day in 2009 is appended here (applaud, with us, the huge turn-out from Hampshire, as ever the County Council there is our front-running council in terms of its activities around silver surfers), as is one of the Quick Guides developed for sheltered housing scheme managers.

Salcey Cluster of Schools, Northants

In South Northants, so successful was the Roade School College link-up with South Northants Homes (SNH) sheltered housing tenants on Silver Surfers' Day on May 15th, 2009, that they teamed up again in September 2009 to offer a six-week course to 19 of the residents of the sheltered housing.

Becky Pavey, SNH Community Development Manager said: 'This is a great opportunity for community cohesion; bringing together the older and younger generations. The workshops are part of our **Intergeneration Project**, the outline idea is for the younger generation to help the older generation develop their IT skills and the older generation to reciprocate and help the younger generation with their reading skills. Hopefully student volunteers will be inspired to work towards one of Northamptonshire Voluntary Youth Action's accreditation schemes.' More here: <http://salceysilvers.notlong.com>

'InterGenEpsom' born from a Silver Surfers' Day event

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership (SLLP) saw the potential of Silver Surfers' Day. Rebecca Court of the SLLP used the opportunity well and has now launched InterGenEpsom which is mobilising schools, colleges, and community centres to bring IT to older neighbours. <http://sllpsilvers.notlong.com>

Schools for Silver Surfers - the future?

DU is currently curating Best Practice on linking sheltered housing with schools to promote and sustain digital literacy and digital participation. We want these liaisons to grow throughout the year, not just during the Silver Surfers' Day/Adult Learners' Week season (we were proud to report yet another increase, as happens year on year, in the number of event-holders taking part in Silver Surfers' Day 2009 – we had 1055 events recorded, in all sorts of venues including schools).

We'd like to see **permanent links** forged between sheltered housing and their local schools, so that benefits accrue far beyond those afforded by learning new skills and meeting 'interesting, older people'.

Bringing down bridges between the generations within a local population can be as simple as knowing a name, a face, enough to say '**Good morning**, how's it going with your email, your photography, your online shopping?'

We believe that digital literacy projects and learning collaborations between generations can enrich both the learners and the mentors; Schools for Silver Surfers is a model which is scalable, replicable and which can grow exponentially through the sharing of good practice. Schools for Silver Surfers will be actively promoted and supported through Silver Surfers' Day once again in 2010.

Silver Surfers' Day 2010 is Friday May 21st.

To keep up to date with Schools for Silver Surfers








- Subscribe to our e-zine here: <http://dnc.digitalunite.com>
- Email us for specific information here: du@digitalunite.net
- To browse our blog, ask to insert a post, or to add comments to our blog, go here: <http://dnc.digitalunite.com/category/silver-surfers/schools/>

APPENDIX 1:

For Sheltered Scheme Managers: Event Holders' Guide to Planning a Silver Surfer's Day (SSD) Event 2009

These two pages are an overview especially for **sheltered scheme managers**. They show you at a glance just how **easy** it can be to plan an **IT taster event for residents** in sheltered housing and reasons (overleaf) why you might want to **partner with a local school** to ease delivery.

The full 23-page 'Event Holders' Guide to Planning an SSD Event 2009' gives detailed information about every aspect of running an event. Download from here: <http://silversurfers.digitalunite.com/files/2009/02/eventholdersplanner.pdf>

	TO DO	Tick Box
1	Choose a Day If you can't do Friday, May 15 th , pick a day near it.	
2	Choose a Time An hour or two, a whole day, it's up to you.	
3	Get a Room... ...with a computer and internet access. Could be your communal lounge , Scheme Manager's office , landlords' Head Office training room , local library or even a local school (see overleaf).	
4	Get a Tutor Could this be you, or someone from your IT Dept or head office , or a volunteer in the scheme or from somewhere else? It's someone who can show your residents how to use a computer. We're talking basics here – switching it on, moving the mouse.	
5	Get the Learning Mini-Guides We publish free mini-guides that make it easy to teach people and explain computers. They're at http://learning.digitalunite.com/ .	
6	Get some participants You don't need hordes. Introduce three of your residents to the Net and you've opened three doors to a new world. Not bad for a day's work, eh?	
7	Enjoy the Day	

For More Help & Advice....

There's lots of help available on our site (<http://silversurfers.digitalunite.com>) and people you can 'chat' to online. All we ask in return is that you register your event on this website so we know you're taking part.

Schools for Silver Surfers

A Silver Surfers' Day initiative by Digital Unite

Digital Unite (DU) is working with **ERoSH** (Emerging Role of Sheltered Housing charity) to trial a new initiative to help sheltered scheme managers to link up with **local schools**.

This is so that the schools and sheltered schemes can combine to **deliver IT taster events** to help older people have a good first-taste of the Internet.

Silver Surfers' Day is on May 15th, 2009 but events can be registered and held any time during May. Resources and advice are free (and available for free use throughout the year) from www.silversurfers.digitalunite.com .

Interested? Find a local **Specialist school** to partner with. Fill in as much of this online form as you can and **wait patiently (!)** till the information loads: <https://secure.ssatrust.org.uk/registration/schoolsearch.aspx> .

Schools that aren't Specialist schools may well also be interested in linking up. Google for 'Directgov' or 'Ofsted' for schools in the locality and then write to the head teacher or ring the school and ask to speak to the person who has responsibility for community engagement.

More information: Some sheltered scheme managers already deliver SSD Events annually to their residents but not usually in conjunction with schools. This initiative is to **widen knowledge** about this possibility, and for us all to learn how best to make it easier to plan and deliver.

The logic is that the **resources of the school** – teachers, pupils, equipment – can be made available to older people. The young people can gain experience of being tutors, with a little training and management by their teachers.

In practice, this might mean **older people** visiting their local school for tutoring, or it might mean **younger people** coming into sheltered lounges to help answer questions using a computer in the public lounge.

There is no 'set' way for this to happen – but Digital Unite has **examples** of both ways, notably at Broadgreen School in Liverpool; Chesham High School in Buckinghamshire and Ampney Crucis Primary in Gloucestershire (see a BBC film of the school children and grandparents at work here: <http://dnc.digitalunite.com/2009/03/17/quick-video-why-ssd-is-great-for-kids-and-grown-ups/>).

Why should sheltered housing get involved with schools?

There are the obvious benefits to older people of getting online (makes life easier and cheaper for them). But linking up with schools to do this helps housing to fulfil certain statutory obligations. For example, see these Supplementary Standards of the Quality Assessment Framework as applied to sheltered schemes:

- S1.1 Informing service-users; S1.2 Consulting and involving service-users
- S1.3 Empowerment and supporting independence; S1.4 Participation in the wider community
- S3.2 Choice, sensitivity and responsiveness; S4.1 Continuous improvement

Want to join the debate? Go here and add a comment:

<http://dnc.digitalunite.com/2009/03/17/schools-for-silver-surfers-the-plan-so-far/>

APPENDIX 2: SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATED IN SILVER SURFERS' DAY 2009

Hounslow School, Hants	Totton
Hellesdon High School	Norwich
Rugby High School	Rugby
Knightwood Primary school	Chandlers Ford
Fulston Manor School	Kent
Denefield School	Tilehurst
The Bridgemary Centre	Wych Lane
Harrison Primary School	Fareham
West Park School	Spondon – ran 4 sets of Events
Manor Infant School	Cove
Ringwood Junior School	Ringwood
Ringwood School	Ringwood
Brockenhurst College	Brockenhurst
Clevedon School	Clevedon
Weyford Junior School	Bordon – ran 3 sets of Events
Avenue Primary School	Sutton
Romsey Community School	Romsey
Magdalen College School	St. John's Site
St. Crispin's School	Wokingham,
Road School Sports College	Northants
ACE centre	Weeke
ACE centre	Weeke
Toynbee School	Chandlers Ford
Chipping Sodbury School	Chipping Sodbury
Brockenhurst Primary	Brockenhurst
Plume School	Essex
The Piggott School	Wargrave
Cherbourg School	Eastleigh,
Fleet school	Fleet
Farnborough grange	Farnborough
Romsey school	Romsey
Cams Hill School	Fareham
Horndean Technology	Horndean,
Frogmore Community	Yateley,
Frogmore Community	Yateley,
HenryCort Community	Fareham
Crestwood College	Eastleigh,
Crestwood College	Eastleigh,
Neville Lovett Community	Fareham
Buryfields Infant	Odiham,
Yateley School	Yateley,
Yateleys Community Learning	Hampshire
Cardonald College	Scotland
Northern Infant School	Portchester
Broadgreen International School	Liverpool
Glan Afan Comprehensive	Port Talbot
Chailey School	Sussex