

Pro Bono IT for the voluntary sector  
UKUUG AGM 25 September 2008

# iT4Communities

**Introducing Volunteer IT Professionals to Charities needing IT help**

All about iT4Communities

John I Davies

## The Menu for Tonight

- Who we are and what we do
- Why you should get involved
- How you can get involved
- Our track record
- How we commissioned our core system

## Pro Bono IT Support

- Pro Bono IT Support for small / medium voluntary organisations and charities
- iT4Communities launched by the Information Technologists' Company in November 2002
- There are 1 million UK IT professionals – 5,000+ have registered with iT4C

- Charity registration
- Volunteer registration
- Sign in
- About us
- Information for Charities
- Information for Volunteers
- Information for Companies
- Help
- IT Volunteer Awards
- Case Studies
- Example Opportunities
- IT4C in the Press
- Research
- Publications

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## Introducing Volunteer IT Professionals to Charities Needing IT Help

SHARE (opens new window)

Welcome to iT4Communities. We are the UK's leading national IT volunteering programme. Our main areas of activity are:

- Helping charities and community/voluntary groups to find volunteers to help with their IT needs
- Helping IT professionals to find suitable IT volunteering opportunities
- Providing support for volunteering projects from project definition to project completion

iT4Communities can help **charities, community groups and social enterprises** access free IT support from IT professional volunteers and make substantial savings - [Read about our services for charities.](#)

Volunteering allows **IT professionals** to support their special cause, give something back to the community and improve their skills - [Find out how to volunteer.](#)

**For Companies** employee volunteering improves staff morale, generates positive PR and is a key element of Corporate Social Responsibility programmes - [Learn how we can work together to promote volunteering.](#)

Latest site updates

### The Latest Volunteer Opportunities



[Subscribe to this RSS Feed](#)  
[Find out How to Use iT4C Feed](#)

### Quick links

- New volunteers [register here](#)
- Can a volunteer help [your organisation?](#)
- iT4Communities [contact details](#)

## From launch to present

- 2002 – the idea – Information Technologists Company, British Computer Society, Computer Weekly and Intellect (IT Industry body)
- November 2002 – launch
- late 2005 – ICT Hub funding from UK Gov agency Capacity Builders
- November 2006 – first IT Volunteering Awards
- March 2008 – ICT Hub funding ends and 5000<sup>th</sup> volunteer registered
- June 2008 – major overseas interest – Australia
- July 2008 - £3,000,000 value delivered

### i4Communities Provides:

- Pro Bono Professional IT Support for charities needing IT help
- IT volunteering opportunities for IT Professionals to enhance their skills and get them out the office

### Volunteers help with:

- IT Strategy
- Websites
- Servers & Networks
- IT Buying Advice
- Database Development
- Telephone Systems
- Training
- ...and more!

## Who are i4C's Volunteers?



**Our volunteers are all IT Professionals from all over the UK (and Australia & Canada)**

We ask that they have:

- One year's IT experience with relevant IT qualifications OR
- Three years' IT experience without relevant qualifications
- All have different skills and different reasons for sharing their time and talent
- **Virtual Volunteering** means geography can be irrelevant

## From First Contact to 'Job Done'

### How it Happens

1. Charities and Volunteers **register** on our website



2. We help the **charities define their needs**

- Our unique Project Definition process means both the charities and IT professionals know exactly what is required

3. We **publish the opportunities** on our website and our RSS feed

4. We offer '**Start to Finish**' support

- iT4C staff are available throughout the project as an independent source of advice and guidance

5. **Volunteer contacts** charity

6. **Charity assesses volunteer** suitability and they both agree to work with each other

7. **Project starts** and is **completed** leaving charity with a brand new sustainable and professional IT resource

8. We write up a **case study and press release** to promote the charity locally

## How can Industry Engage?

- Employee IT Volunteering
  - Engaging IT staff in your CSR objectives
- Corporate Sponsorship
  - Providing IT-related Charitable Investment Opportunities
- Cause Related Marketing
  - Aligning corporate marketing goals with iT4C outcomes

## What's in it for me?

- Engagement in something you want to support –
  - Greenpeace to Little Snoring Village Hall
- Chance to stretch your technical talents
  - but don't jump in to something too challenging
- Chance to widen your horizons
  - Get out of the cube farm – meet the nitty gritty inner city (or not)

## How to get involved – toe in the water

- Look at our RSS feed
- Register with iT4C – one page registration
- Read our monthly newsletter
- Search our opportunities
- Filter our RSS

## How to get involved – choosing an opportunity

- Local or virtual?
- What sort of charity?
- Comfort zone or extending your skills?
- Short task or longer commitment?

**“I read the advice and tips on the iT4Communities website and sold myself to the charity without simply assuming they wanted me.”**

## How to get involved – contacting a charity

- Request contact via iT4C system
- Call or email - Chase them if required
- Report back to iT4C if you can't reach them
- Discuss the requirement – are they still keen?
- Expect to be treated as a professional – CV and references
- Move on (and tell iT4C) if it doesn't fit
- Agree a plan

“If I met an organisation where there wasn't a match I stepped back“

“I was able to apply my technical and management skills in a new field”

## How to get involved – working with a charity

- Apply (usually simple) project management
- Treat charity a professional client
- But remember the voluntary sector is different
  - Manage their expectations
  - Typically enthusiastic, even entrepreneurial, but lack IT skills
  - Beware requirements creep
- Move to clear wrap-up of the project
- Celebrate when its done!
- Tell i4C

“..team effort by all the hospice staff and a willingness to share concerns... made my role both productive and supportive”

And remember – i4C will help if you have problems

## Our achievement in numbers since 2002

- Value delivered £3m by July 2008
  - based on independent research & voluntary sector fee rates
  - Return On Investment (ROI) about 4 to 1
- 2500 charities and voluntary organisations registered (Sep 08)
- 5,500 volunteers registered (Sep 08)
- 28 case studies show outcomes –  
[www.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/home/casestudies.jsp](http://www.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/home/casestudies.jsp)

## Challenges faced

- Under-reporting of project results
- Culture gap – IT professionals and voluntary sector
- The Digital Divide
- Individual vs. corporate volunteering
- Quality assurance
- Outcomes – Social Return on Investment (SROI)
  - and, of course, continuity of funding

## Why it Works So Well



### **Benefits to Charities**

- Better end-IT resource thanks to help from an IT Professional
- More time & money to dedicate to their front line
- iT4C lowers the scary 'techie' barrier
- No worries as iT4C team are always on hand for support & guidance

### **Benefits to Volunteers**

- Feel good factor from making a difference
- Increased business & communications skills
- Broaden technology experience
- See life beyond the cube farm!

## It Worked For Us!



### Learning Through Action

- Learning Through Action - charity addressing personal issues with children & young people
- They came to it4C as they needed a new, engaging and fully accessible website
- Volunteer Ian Cooper enjoyed working with LTA so much that he became their long-term webmaster
- Ian now volunteers as a Director-Trustee and continues to add new features to the website



## It Worked For Us!



### Depression Alliance London

- DA - UK's lead depression information & support charity
- Had a "funding predicament" and came to iT4C to help get them back on their feet
- Charity (and its server) are back from the brink of collapse
- Volunteer Ian Rumford completed a full IT audit and trained staff in the new software
- Ian continues to act as the DA's IT Support when needed



## Development of the iT4C Core system

- Conclusions from –
  - “Continuity in development using multiple external developers - A Case Study of serial procurement using Open Source solutions”  
John I Davies & Anne E Donnelly
  - Presented to Centre for Community Networking Research, Caulfield School of Information Technology, Monash University, June 2008

## Scope - The Purchasers view

- Commissioning bespoke CRM system to support core functions i4C
  - Replaced expiring MS ASP based system
  - Launched May 2006
  - Second developer in early 2007
  - Several upgrade releases throughout 2007
- Reporting conclusions
- Initiating a debate about how best to conduct such an enterprise

## Evaluation

- Starting point for discussion of how to approach systems procurement–
  - small scale
  - serial
  - open source based
  - market insufficient for open source application?
  - bespoke
- published material relates to large scale procurement only

## Incremental delivery

- Stage payments tied to working releases and source outputs– **no source, no payment**
- Incremental delivery - project management reporting against increments **option to check source**
- Incremental delivery allows frequent testing - increasing purchaser workload but allowing **clearer sight of delivered quality**
- Incremental delivery of source - **purchaser more freedom to walk away)**

“RELEASE EARLY, RELEASE OFTEN”  
STRATEGY FROM THE BEGINNING?

## Management

- Appoint purchaser-side project manager – **don't rely on vendor**
- If project failure looms, consider accepting an incomplete system - **source makes even a partial implementation re-usable**
- Evaluate the portability of the completed system - **source allows portability / re-usability to be checked more easily**
- Warranty period should allow for time for in-service bugs to appear. 90 days for a small system worked well

## Developer selection

- Broadcasting an ITT
  - more shortlisting
  - more work
  - but less initial research
- existing system source yields wider choice of suppliers
- Source creates "level playing field"

## **IPR, supplier lock-in & source access**

- Source access enforces transparency
- Source access minimises supplier lock-in effect
- Source access makes external consultation easy (e.g. evaluating portability)
- Core IPR retained by supplier not a problem for fully bespoke requirement

## What we learned

- Bespoke systems for small enterprises often best provided using open source-based approach
- But -
  - This has either been done -
    - very rarely
    - has not been documented

So, how can the open source community help?

## Suggestions - a starting point for Open Source community?

- Guidelines for purchasers and suppliers including example contracts for -
  - from-scratch developments
  - developments based on existing open source code
- Principles for suppliers including
  - open source ethics (e.g. publication of code)
  - Guidelines for handover of code and documentation to purchaser
  - Guidelines for how subsequent developer expects to receive code to be further developed.
  - New license style for bespoke-but-open-source?
- Published advice on how to manage - aimed at the "non Open Source expert".

### Doing it again for iT4C – **system maintenance / enhancement**

- Retain existing supplier - maintain vigilance to avoid gradual lock-in
- Take it fully Open Source
  - Negotiate to remove IPR restriction on the existing system
  - Only be worthwhile if appetite for systems based upon it
- Find partners and form a consortium to exploit the existing system
- and make it available world wide

## Doing it again for iT4C – **Fresh start?**

"Plan to throw one away" - a better system based on what we learned on this one.

Based on -

- Generic open source, such as SugarCRM or XRMS to make the system more maintainable
  - perhaps with some loss of flexibility
- Build on Web 2.0 tools
  - developing rapidly - there may be something about to appear

## The iT4C team

- Based at The Information Technologists Company, City of London, our parent
  - Team of 3 plus part time administrator (John & Anne here, plus Josh and Nigel)
  - Programme of ITC Charitable Operations, registered charity
- Based in the Scottish Borders and Northumberland
  - Project Definer (Peter), Web maintainer & Project Definer (Anne – not here!)

## Funding

- From late 2005 to April 2008
  - Capacity Builders (government funding agency)
  - Information Technologists Company (our parent)
- Since April 2008
  - Information Technologists Company - entire funding
- From January 2009
  - Information Technologists Company – minority funding
  - Corporate sponsors – major sponsors still needed
  - Individual donations – just launched

And finally, some example volunteering opportunities from our RSS

## Simple website: Create Brochure -Type Website Including CMS, Rochford

- Create Brochure-Type Website Including CMS, Rochford
- 12 September 2008 09:44
- This charity based in Rochford, Essex provides a transport service run by volunteers for the less mobile and those who live in an area not served by public transport in Rochford and the surrounding area. They need a brochure-type website to promote their service, and help passengers feel as if they know the staff and trustees by showing their pictures online. They have ideas about the design, and most of the content is ready. They'll need various information pages, a contact form, and a form to book a journey. They want to be able to keep the site up to date, so they need you to implement a CMS and show them how to use it to update text and pictures. They have a domain name already, but they would value guidance about choosing a host.
- Skill type: Website
- Region: East of England
- Post Code: SS4
- Locality: Rochford
- Charity Types: Community, Disability, Elderly, Health, Rural
- Virtual: No
- Short Task: No
- Opportunity Name: Create Brochure-Type Website Including CMS
- Opportunity ID: 63313

## Virtual: Redesign website, Cardiff

- Redesign website, Cardiff
- 27 August 2008 14:00
- This long-established large Welsh charity based in Cardiff provides carers for the learning disabled and the elderly throughout Wales. They have a website which is in need of a revamp, and the design needs to use their new logo and branding. They would like you to redesign the site. They use Dreamweaver and Contribute to maintain the site.
- Skill type: Website
- Region: Wales
- Post Code: CF3
- Locality: Cardiff
- Charity Types: Disability
- Virtual: Yes
- Short Task: No
- Opportunity Name: Redesign website
- Opportunity ID: 62627

## Refurbished community centre needs hands on cabling help please, Lewisham

- refurbished community centre needs hands on cabling help please, Lewisham
- 08 September 2008 19:15
- This community centre delivers Children's Centre Services for Lewisham, hosting a nursery, toy library, family support services and after school club. The centre also runs a successful Elder people's Support Project and provides a valuable community resource for groups running arts projects, health and sport classes and support groups such as AA. They are just in the process of opening a much refurbished centre which includes dual cable trunking. Would you be able to spare a few hours in September to help get their IT cabled and set up? Both technical support knowledge and an appreciation of the need for neat cabling are required here! This is a vibrant community centre and we hope it will be a pleasure to help them re-open successfully.
- Skill type: Technical Support
- Region: London
- Post Code: SE23
- Locality: Lewisham
- Charity Types: Children, Community, Elderly, Youth
- Virtual: No
- Short Task: Yes
- Opportunity Name: refurbished community centre needs hands on cabling help please
- Opportunity ID: 63224

## Short Task: Simple poster template online for innovative CIC, Herne Hill

- Simple poster template online for innovative CIC, Herne Hill
- 22 August 2008 11:44
- This Community Interest Company is a dynamic and innovative new way to help raise much needed income for charities. Working like any other established mortgage advisor, giving high quality financial advice and brokering mortgages, but with the one very big difference - they use their trading income to generate cash for mortgage client's chosen charities. Every mortgage or remortgage will generate £100s of a donation. Can you help get them to provide a poster template online? This can be used by the Charities that benefit from donations to advertise the service and spread the word. There is a very clear brief for this and although a small piece of technical work this will make a big impact on the all important advertising of this service.
- Skill type: Website
- Region: London
- Post Code: SE24
- Locality: Herne Hill
- Charity Types:
- Virtual: Yes
- Short Task: Yes
- Opportunity Name: Simple poster template online for innovative CIC
- Opportunity ID: 60406

## Analyse Options to Integrate Filemaker Pro Database with Website, Hackney

Analyse Options to Integrate Filemaker Pro Database with Website, Hackney

27 August 2008 15:01

This charity based near Bethnal Green tube station supports artistic production, widens participation in visual arts & media and fosters the creative potential of individuals and communities through providing affordable studio space and innovative artistic, educational, media & training programmes. They have a Filemaker Pro contact management system database with about 9000 contacts, and they want to integrate it effectively with an e-bulletin mailing list system run from their website, allow website visitors to subscribe to or unsubscribe from their electronic e-bulletins, and capture vital audience data or new audiences from their e-bulletins. Their website uses Joomla CMS. They want you to review the possible options available, identify the resource needs, and help them pick a solution, that is practical, effective and suits them, so that they can request one or more volunteers to achieve the solution.

Skill type: Consultancy

Region: London

Post Code: E8

Locality: Hackney

Charity Types: Arts

Virtual: Yes

Short Task: No

Opportunity Name: Analyse Options to Integrate Filemaker Pro Database with Website

Opportunity ID: 62938

## Human Rights: Implement DRUPAL for Replacement Website, Southwark

Implement DRUPAL for Replacement Website, Southwark

29 August 2008 09:45

This charity based near London Bridge tube station seeks to encourage responsible investment by pension funds in particular and the UK investment industry, campaigns in partnership with reputable charities to catalyse investor action on specific environmental or human rights issues, and raises public awareness. They have a website and they use a custom CMS to update it. They use Salesforce to maintain details of their members, supporters, funds, and fund managers; and it's integrated with their website, which allows visitors to contact their pension funds easily. They want to replace their website with one that incorporates the Drupal CMS, and change the design and a lot of the content at the same time. They're looking for a volunteer with good Drupal skills to implement Drupal, identify which of the existing components can be done by Drupal and configure them, which ones can't be done by Drupal and to help them by providing a solution, and to help with the integration of Salesforce into the new website. They're not expecting your help with the design, or the content, a lot of which is still to be written. They would prefer to meet you first, but would consider working entirely remotely.

Skill type: Website

Region: London

Post Code: SE1

Locality: Southwark

Charity Types: Environment, Human rights

Virtual: Yes

Short Task: No

Opportunity Name: Implement DRUPAL for Replacement Website

Opportunity ID: 62975

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## Overseas charity: Implement CMS for Existing Website, Bristol

- Implement CMS for Existing Website, Bristol
- 10 September 2008 11:00
- This small young charity based in Bristol provides sustainable health, education, and water development projects to and for people in Ethiopia. They have a website which they need to be able to update easily. They managed to install Joomla, and they've played around with it, but not managed to create a template, and are really struggling. They would like your help to implement a CMS (it doesn't need to be Joomla) and get them used to using it to update the website. They are generally IT competent, so they are not expecting face-to-face training.
- Skill type: Website
- Region: South West
- Post Code: BS16
- Locality: Bristol
- Charity Types: Overseas
- Virtual: No
- Short Task: No
- Opportunity Name: Implement CMS for Existing Website
- Opportunity ID: 61975

## Open Source CRM for refurbished Community Centre, Lewisham

- Open Source CRM for refurbished Community Centre, Lewisham
- 08 September 2008 19:14
- This community centre delivers Children's Centre Services for Lewisham, hosting a nursery, toy library, family support services and after school club. The centre also runs a successful Elder people's Support Project and provides a valuable community resource for groups running arts projects, health and sport classes and support groups such as AA. They are just in the process of opening a much refurbished centre and with it would like to refurbish their IT. The centre manager is IT savvy but would like support introducing an open source contact relationship management (CRM) database to record all of their service users and referral agencies. This a great project for an experienced database person who wishes to use open source to help this vibrant community resource centre.
- Skill type: Database
- Region: London
- Post Code: SE23
- Locality: Lewisham
- Charity Types: Children, Community, Elderly, Youth
- Virtual: Yes
- Short Task: No
- Opportunity Name: Open Source CRM for refurbished Community Centre
- Opportunity ID: 63223

# Questions and Discussion

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