

Connecting Remote Workers

UCISA Advisory and Support Staff Symposium 2009
(#ucisaads09)

Wednesday 8th July 2009

Marieke Guy
Research Officer



UKOLN is supported by: **JISC** **MLA**
MUSEUM LIBRARIES ARCHIVES COUNCIL

 This work is licensed under a Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 licence



www.ukoln.ac.uk

A centre of expertise in digital information management

Introduction to UKOLN

- UKOLN is a National centre of expertise in digital information management
- Library and cataloguing background
- Located at the University of Bath
- Funded by JISC and MLA to advise UK HE and FE communities and the cultural heritage sector
- Many areas of work including:
 - Digital preservation: DCC
 - Metadata, registry work
 - Repositories: eBank, Intute, SWORD, DRIVER
 - Dissemination: Ariadne, International Journal of Digital Curation
 - eScience: eCrystals....etc.



www.ukoln.ac.uk

A centre of expertise in digital information management

Introduction to Me

- Been at UKOLN 9 years
- Now a remote worker
- Member of the Community & Outreach Team
- Currently working on:
 - Chair of the Institutional Web Management Workshop
 - Cultural heritage work
- Previous roles/projects include:
 - Good APIs project, JISC-PoWR, JISC Standards Catalogue, QA Focus, SPP Project Manager, ePrints UK project manager, Public Library Focus work, NOF-digitise, Web Magazines
- Disclaimer: I'm not support staff, I'm a user!



www.ukoln.ac.uk

A centre of expertise in digital information management

So What About You?

- Are you from HE/FE?
- Are you from IT services?
- Do you currently support remote workers?
- If so, how many? (1-5) (5-10) (10-100), more?
- Are you a remote worker?
- Have you ever had a go at working remotely?



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Workshop Programme

- Presentation: Connecting Remote Workers
 - 30 minutes
- Discussion/Question Time: What do you do for Remote Workers?
 - 15 minutes



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

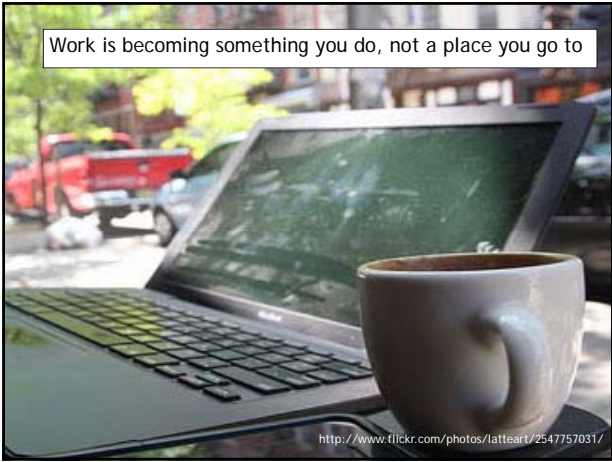
Workshop Resources

- All resources (and more) linked with Delicious tag: <http://delicious.com/mariekeguy/ucisaads09>
- All ppts etc will be available from:
 - my blog <http://remoteworker.wordpress.com/>
 - slideshare <http://www.slideshare.net/MariekeGuy>
- Feel free to email me (m.guy@ukoln.ac.uk) or follow me on Twitter ([mariekeguy](https://twitter.com/mariekeguy))



www.ukoln.ac.uk


UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management



What's a Remote Worker?

- Anyone who works from home (occasionally or full-time)
- Anyone who works *beyond the office*
- Anyone who works in a virtual team


- Esther Schindler's four ways in which a RW can operate:
 - At a fixed location at the employee's home
 - At different offices
 - At a client site
 - As a true nomad or 'road warrior'



www.ukoln.ac.uk
UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Why Remote Working?

- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
 - Work on the go
 - Separate sites
- Loyalty and reduced absenteeism, staff retention
- Ability to recruit from anywhere
- Productivity
 - Work continuity
- Environment
- Reduction of overheads



www.ukoln.ac.uk
UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Remote Working on the Rise

- Right to request flexible working extended (April 2009) - 4.5m parents eligible
- Currently one-fifth of the UK workforce does some work from home (UK Office for National Statistics records)
- 90% of these are in managerial, professional, technical and skilled trades
- Consider the effect of:
 - Recession - cutting overheads
 - Pandemic - swine flu, need for risk management strategy
 - Environment
 - Weather - snow



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management



The ideal solution for most employees who work remotely is for the set-up at home to replicate the set-up in the office

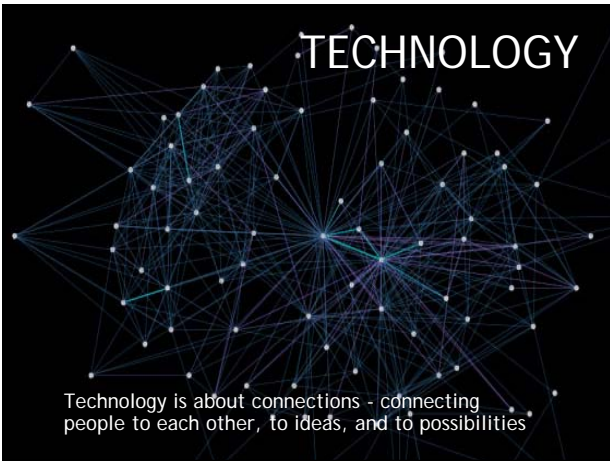
Getting a RW started

- Hardware
 - PC, monitor, printer, keyboard, laptop, DVD rewriters, scanners, audio & video equipment, headset, speakers, phone, etc.
- Software
 - All the programmes they have in the office, and more!
 - User accounts
 - Remote access to email, calendar etc.
- Broadband and Wireless
 - Offer options, reviews, support alternatives
- VPN (SSL)
- Introduction to the organisation
 - Overview of systems, servers, Web site and Intranet




www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management




Communications Tools

- Email
- Telephony
- VOIP
 - Skype, vontage
- Online Chat
 - AIM, Skype, SMS, IRC, Jabber,
- Social Networking - Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing,
- Microblogging -Twitter, Yammer, Jaiku
- RSS - Google reader
- Recommendation services - Friend Feed
- Blogs

 www.ukoln.ac.uk
UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Collaborative Working Tools

- Wikis
- Shared applications
 - Google docs
- Project management tools
- Bookmarking tools
 - Delicious, Connotea
- File transfer
- Calendars

 www.ukoln.ac.uk
UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Virtual Meetings

- Access Grid
- Virtual Room Videoconferencing System (VRVS)
- Skype
- Tokbox
- Webinars



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Mobile Devices

- Smartphones, PDAs, Blackberries, laptops
- Make sure they are added in a structured way - record all devices - ID number
- Handset envy?
- Maintain all devices
- Making your data (Intranet etc.) available on mobile devices
- Mobile unified communications - bringing data back
- Mobile broadband - dongles, 3G
- Security issues - both data (encryption?) and actual devices (locks)



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Technical Support

- Tracking system
 - Logging support calls, detailed audit trails
- Create online documentation
 - FAQs, self-help tools
- Remote assistance/access (windows/LINUX), remote PC diagnostic tools
 - Problems tend to cover connectivity, access rights, equipment support and application software
- Availability of staff
- Give RWs freedom to support themselves, feedback
- Security - anti-malware, firewall, data encryption software
- Security of data (greater risk of loss or theft?), Laptop encryption



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

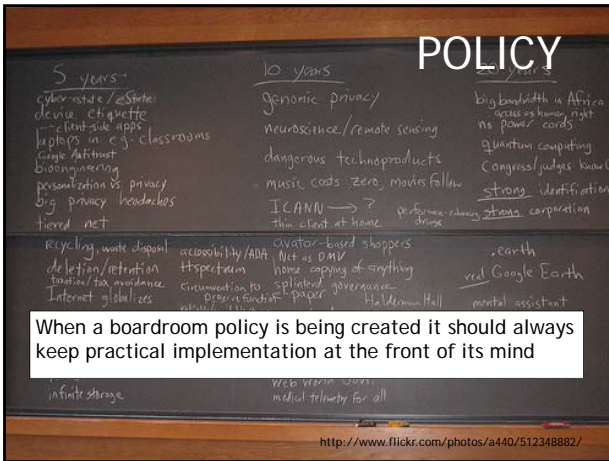
Amplified Conferences

- Video Streaming
- Assigning a tag
- Creative Commons
- Sharing available resources
 - PPTs - Slideshare
 - Photos - Flickr
 - Video - YouTube
 - Podcasts - Podomatic
- Promote your resources



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management



Policies

- Set them up in advance
- Make them clear and transparent
- But also make them flexible
- Cover:
 - Eligibility, availability, contact procedures, workspace requirements, equipment and usage, expenses, training, ownership, etc.
- Questions for consideration:
 - Can they use their own PC if they chose?
 - Can they use their work PC for home use?
 - Can other people use their PC?
- Observe the development of effective patterns of usage rather than dictate



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

A Support Framework

- UKOLN
 - Iterative process
 - RW community
 - RW champion
- JISC project Location Independent Working
 - 40 staff
 - Training and handbook
- Support Framework =
 - Technology +
 - Policies and Procedures +
 - Commitment +
 - Feedback



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Case Study BT

- 70,000 + home & nomadic workers empowered
- 6,000 part time workers
- Over £220m in property costs saved in 10 years
- Absenteeism reduced 3.1% (UK ave. 8.5%)
- e-learning saves 40% training costs
- Home-workers 7% happier, enhanced skills, less stress
- 1,800 tonnes less CO2. 1.2m litres less fuel used.
- Transport cost savings £9.7m pa

- From <http://www.slideshare.net/jackies/presentation-remote-workforce-v2>



www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Challenges for IT Services

- Blurred boundaries
- Reduced interaction time
- Security
- Bandwidth issues, managing VPN
- Supporting from a distance - being quick
- Supporting so many technologies
- Users who don't do what they are supposed to!
- Getting user feedback
- Budget
- RW issues
 - connection with the team
 - Morale
 - perceptions
- Cloud computing and SaaS




www.ukoln.ac.uk

UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management




Conclusions

- Much of your support structure is already in place
- Much of what you learn can also be applied to those working on-site and other dispersed users (students)
- Remote working is on the up, so you will need to tackle this as some point
- Support a portfolios of Tools
- Communication and community are key
 - Inclusion and support
 - Shared goals
 - Encourage constructive feedback
 - Policies and procedures


www.ukoln.ac.uk
 UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Discussion

- What do you currently do for remote workers?
- How can you face the challenges?
- How can you better support remote workers?


www.ukoln.ac.uk
 UKOLN A centre of expertise in digital information management

Questions?



UKOLN

www.ukoln.ac.uk

A centre of expertise in digital information management
