

The background of the entire page is a vertical rainbow spectrum, with horizontal bands of red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, purple, and magenta. The text is overlaid on these bands.

SPECTRUM NEWS

Website Launch Edition

July 2015

Edited By Lesley Long-Price

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From the Editor

Lesley Long-Price

Launch of the new SPECTRUM Website

As part of SPECTRUM's 30th Anniversary celebrations and as a result of the Business Development Plan, SPECTRUM committed to designing a new website to improve our on-line communications so that we could outreach more effectively. This Special Edition Launch Newsletter celebrates this achievement and takes us on a journey of discovery in the exciting world of all things Information Technology and website.

The articles:

There is a forward from SPECTRUM's Chief Executive. Then the Website Project Manager talks about the where, what and how of our website development strategy. We then explain how we built accessibility into the design of our website.

Then, most excitingly there is an article about SPECTRUM's joint venture with Diversity n Ability called **Your Way** an Information Technology and Assistive Technology Learning Centre that is to be launched alongside the website.

Following this, are articles showcasing our two new projects, highlighting how the website will be used to increase communications in these two new areas of work.

To celebrate the launch of our website! There are not one, not two, but three competitions you can enter with exciting prizes to be won (see photo competition on pages, 20-21; Treasure Hunt competition on pages 22-23 and a competition on page 30 to win a Tablet Computer).

As if all this was not enough, there is an article about the website launch on Tuesday 28th July at Unity 12. Those of you who have attended one of our events before will know how SPECTRUM has a unique approach to organising and hosting events.

Finally, SPECTRUM's Newsletter would not be the same without an article from the Marxist and he has excelled himself with his unique perspective on new technology.

Finally, finally.... for the first time we have an anonymous contributor which looks at a practical application of the use of technology in everyday life.

For those of you without computers or access to the internet, **please** contact us so that we can support you to explore the exciting world of IT and the World Wide Web.

Forward from SPECTRUM's Chief Executive

Researching the history of Disabled People last year for our 30th anniversary book 'SPECTRUM – Our History', it once again reminded me just how much Disabled People's empowerment has often been compromised due to a lack of basic accessible information. Information is power, and it is therefore one of our **12 Basic Rights**:

- ***Appropriate and Accessible INFORMATION***

Providing accessible information has always been a top priority for SPECTRUM, through verbal information, support & meetings, as well as printed information. However, over the last 20 years, SPECTRUM has increasingly focused more and more effort into developing digital forms of communication.

This Special Edition Newsletter celebrates our latest exciting step forward in providing 'Appropriate and Accessible Information':

The Launch of SPECTRUM's new website

SPECTRUM launched its first website in 1999, to celebrate our 15th anniversary. It was developed on a shoe-string. However, at the time it was a major advance for us.

But expectations and time moved on! - in 2010 we redesigned our website, to be more visual, and much easier to navigate.



Since then SPECTRUM has developed our internet provision further, making use of social media and other technology advances. By 2014, we had the following online resources:

- **Website, FaceBook, Twitter, a Blog and a YouTube Channel**

However, despite all of this, our website continued to have limited reach and our social media and blog were not receiving the quantity of followers that we wanted, or expected.

In terms of demographics, our online information reached more women (56%) than men (44%). As for age, we reached less people aged below 35 (9% against an expected 19%) or over 65 (8% against an expected 24%). In truth, a massive 83% of our internet viewers were aged 35-64 years!

Forward from SPECTRUM's Chief Executive continued

Whilst our website was reasonably accessible – there was so much more that could be done - using initiative – and modern technology.

So, SPECTRUM realised something had to be done.

Otherwise, the limitations of our current online presence would clearly restrict our scope for effective 'digital' engagement with our members, service users and other stakeholders.

We decided that if we wanted to market our services effectively we needed to improve the design and content significantly.

Doing nothing was not an option - as it would obviously hinder our service development plans.

Therefore, in the late summer of 2014, SPECTRUM committed significant resources to develop a new website and internet strategy. I setup a Project Delivery Group tasked with co-ordinating the

redesign and refresh of our website / social media platforms. The group was given responsibility for sourcing, appointing and briefing external consultants to undertake the construction and testing of our new website.

The key messages we wanted our new website to resolve were:

- What do we want people to know about SPECTRUM?
- What do we want people to understand about SPECTRUM?
- What do we want people to do as a result of using our website?

We set ourselves the goal of aiming our website at:

- Individual Disabled People and other potential service users
- Other User Led Organisations / Disabled People's Organisations
- Public sector bodies and professionals

Finally, we resolved to invest in making our new website a model of accessibility – as close to 100% accessibility as is possible.

Have we achieved these ambitious aims? Well – we will leave that for you to decide?



View from the Project Manager

By Gerry Zarb,



Where it all started

Developing a new SPECTRUM web site was one of the aims that came out of the recent strategic review of our operations and the resulting Business Development Plan to expand our range of services and user base, and to market and promote our existing services more effectively. We also wanted to improve our on-line communications so that we can inform and engage with Disabled People and other users in the most effective way.

The review confirmed what we probably already knew - that our current web site would not be up to the job of meeting these objectives. The content on our current web site is fairly static and only updated infrequently. As a result there is little to encourage people to return to the site so traffic is much lower than we would like. The web site is not particularly well designed, the structure is unclear and inconsistent - having been put together piecemeal over a period of time. Most importantly, we felt that the web site does not give a clear sense of who we are and what SPECTRUM does - especially the range of services that we offer.

Consequently we felt that we needed to commission a completely new professionally designed website to help us meet our business development and communications objectives.

What we wanted to achieve

Given our experiences with developing the old web site, it was clear that designing and building a new one was going to need careful planning and some serious thinking about the 'bigger picture' before we got too far into the nuts and bolts detail.

We realised that the actual physical design should only be started once we had a very clear idea on what we want the finished product to do; who it is aimed at and what their information needs are; our key communication messages; and how we expect the web site to be used. The answers to these questions would then help to inform the detail of how we wanted the web site to work, what we wanted it to look like, and so on.

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View from the Project Manager

Continued

A draft set of suggestions and key issues were then drawn up for discussion with staff and Management Committee. This process was very informative and highlighted a number of important issues and challenges.

For example, while it is clear that SPECTRUM's primary audience is - and always will be - Disabled People, we have at least three other audiences who either already use our web site, or who we would like to use it. These include Public Sector organisations (particularly in the care and support sector) who are potential clients for our consultancy and support services; employers and employment support agencies – who we need to promote our employment support and training services to; and, students/researchers and professionals wanting to learn more about Disability Issues or who work with Disabled People.

So, while maintaining a clear focus on Disabled People's support and information needs, we needed to try to make sure that our new web site was also relevant to these other audiences. This remains the case, although it has proved to be quite a challenge as the information needs of these diverse groups are often quite different.

Another critical issue that was highlighted very early on was the need to focus on accessibility and prioritise having much more content in alternative formats (Easy Read, Audio, and BSL video) to make the site as close as possible to being universally accessible (see article pages 12-13). Again, given the diversity of Disabled People's communication and access needs, this has also been quite a tall order in practice - but we hope we have gone quite some way to achieving this aim.

Finally, there was general agreement that our new web site needed to communicate "in a nutshell" who we are and what SPECTRUM is all about. This too has been harder to do than you might imagine - but hopefully we have got there in the end.

Please turn over.....

View from the Project Manager

Continued

So, let's get building that new web site then

We set up a Project Delivery Group to oversee and manage the process of commissioning our new web site. We spent three months on a detailed examination of our specific requirements and evaluating a wide range of web site design and functional features. We have also carried out some audience research to learn more about users' preferences in terms of design, functional features and, in particular, accessibility.

We then drew up a detailed design brief for prospective web designers. The key features of the brief that we gave them was to design and build a web site that was:

- **Fully accessible** to all users
- **Easy** to use and navigate
- **Consistent** in style, layout and content
- **Uncluttered**, clear and logical in design
- **Flexible** and easily updateable

We received a total of seven tender proposals, which we eventually narrowed down to a shortlist of two and both companies were invited to interview. Both were excellent in terms of their track record and design skills but the company we chose - Surface Impression, based in Brighton - edged it mainly on the basis of their commitment to accessibility.

The process of building the web site has been very collaborative - which is just how we wanted it to be. The designers spent a lot of time at the start getting to understand who we are and what we do so that they could design a web site that reflected what SPECTRUM is all about. At every stage we have always been given a range of options - for things like layout, colour schemes, accessibility features, links and functions - with the information and advice we needed to help us to choose what works best for SPECTRUM. Attention to detail has been high, but without ever losing sight of the bigger picture.

View from the Project Manager

Continued

They have also given us plenty of good advice about developing the content, which has been very helpful in enabling us to produce a polished end product.

The design and build process also included two phases of user testing, using a panel of Disabled People with different kinds of access needs. This has been especially helpful in ironing out a whole range of issues around design, content and accessibility. It has also been very enlightening in terms of how people understand what SPECTRUM is about and how we communicate our message to the outside world. It has also helped us to increase our understanding of accessible communication - which will be useful in other areas of our work too.

Finally, the designers are also providing staff training on the web site's basic features and how to carry out routine updating and editing so that we can maintain and add to the web site over time.

Show me the money

Designing and building a professional web site from scratch does not come cheap. It has required a significant financial investment for an organisation of our size - in the region of £20,000. Of course, we could have chosen to just redesign the web site ourselves and save a lot of money. But, we have tried to do this before with our old web site and it is clear we have neither the skills nor the capacity to do this effectively.

We decided very early on that, if we were going to produce a professional web site that meets our needs then we needed to bring in expert outside help. We believe that the investment is both necessary and worthwhile as it will greatly improve our communications and provide many benefits both for SPECTRUM and for Disabled People and the other groups and organisations we work with. We already have a new name and an exciting set of development plans to help SPECTRUM succeed in challenging times. We are proud of who we are and what we do and now we have a new website that matches our ambitions which we launch on 28th July (see article pages 24-25).

Website Accessibility Options

By Jennie Musson



Accessibility options

When the Project Delivery Group started looking at the new website, it was clear that we would need a wide range of accessibility options to enable people with diverse impairments to use it; after all, it would be pretty embarrassing for a Disabled People's organisation not to adhere to its own policy!

Lesley and I were tasked with looking into accessibility options for the new website and after several discussions, came to the conclusion that there were several groups we would have to cater for. They were: people with visual impairments, people with hearing impairments, people with Learning Difficulties and people who are unable to use a mouse.

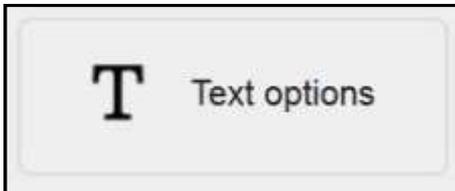
Lesley started to research having some text on the website translated into British Sign Language or BSL. She soon realised, however, that if we were to get all of our web content translated, the cost would be prohibitive. After consulting with other web group members, and consulting with an Organisation of Deaf People we work with, we decided to have the main pages translated, which would help people with hearing impairments use the website, but would not prove a huge expenditure.

Lesley also looked into colour schemes and font size options as part of her research.

I started looking into text-to-speech readers and trialled different ones. I also asked people to feed back their experiences with the different readers. We experienced a variety of issues, including the readers clashing with other screen reader software that was already being used, readers starting from the start of a sentence, when users wanted part of a sentence, cost and so on. I drew up a document detailing the pros and cons of each reader and the web group came to the consensus to use GSpeech, which is a plugin for WordPress, which would be compatible with our new website and which had all the features we needed.

Website Accessibility Options

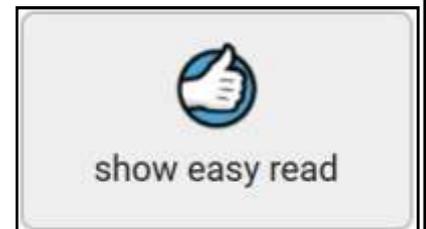
Continued



I also canvassed some people with visual impairments as to what they found helpful and what created problems for them online. In the past Jeff has expressed a heartfelt wish that all computers perish in a solar Armageddon and

there have been many occasions when I silently agreed, but he and the other people I asked gave me some extremely useful feedback. This included the fact that, for some people, plain text was best, with no fancy graphics or dancing kittens in sight. Also that scrolling image displays, while they might look very fancy, can be a nightmare for some people with visual impairments. All of this feedback was extremely helpful in drafting the design brief for the new website.

One of the final (but for me, largest!) pieces of work was translating various web pages into Easy Read for people whose first language is not English and people with Learning Difficulties. It was an



interesting process and one which I thoroughly enjoyed, although if anybody asks me to undertake anything similar in the future, you may see me, suitcase in hand, rushing to catch a one-way plane to the Outer Hebrides!

In a more general sense, we decided that access to all drop down menus and all features should be easy for the user to operate and that the website should be easy to navigate.

We hope that we have succeeded in making the new website as accessible as it can be and that it will be well used (hint, hint!) and serve SPECTRUM for many years to come.

Your Way: A journey to enablement

By Adam Hyland



‘Enabling services for the way you learn, work and live’

YOUR WAY:
A journey to enablement

Your way is a new and exciting joint venture created and developed by Diversity and Ability (DnA) and SPECTRUM for people in the local community.

This joint venture is looking to enable people in the local community to access Information Technology (IT) and Assistive Technology; learn new skills, gain confidence to access and thrive in the workplace; and, to enable independence in daily living.

Workshops, training programmes and mentoring services are all being developed in keeping with the Your Way concept: **Learning Your Way**, **Living Your Way**, **Working Your Way**.

Learning Your Way

Learning Your Way offers two newly developed training courses that aim to increase access to IT and the World Wide Web.

We are offering a beginner course, for those who wish to gain skills in the basics of personal computing. This includes an introduction to Microsoft Word and social media. This is a six week course.

There is also an intermediate course available for people who want to gain a more in-depth understanding, covering the Microsoft Office package, including PowerPoint and Excel. This course also covers using Skype. This is an eight week course.

Small groups of up to eight people will be able to attend each course in our new fully accessible IT suite. Being taught in small groups will ensure high quality learning. Participants who complete the course will receive a certificate to contribute to their continuing personal development and enhance their employment potential.

Your Way: A journey to enablement

Continued

Living Your Way

Along with supporting the local community by providing high quality IT training, **Your Way** are also leaders in training on Assistive Technology.

Living Your Way works closely with assistive software providers and have a community of end users that are able to share their lived experience and enablement strategies.

Living Your Way is able to provide consultation and demonstrations on using software and equipment that can assist in the use of IT and daily living, including Text to Speech and Speech to Text software, note taking programmes, and much more.

We can assist in building a tailored package to suit your needs, budget and timeframe. Our aim is to enable confidence and independence in learning, living and working.

Working Your Way

Workshops

Working Your Way provides a range of personalised employment related support for Disabled People of all ages, both job seekers and people in work or training. This includes training on job search skills, CV preparation, interview skills and much more.

Working Your Way has a team of staff who offer coaching and mentoring to people in the workplace and members of the community who are on the journey to gaining employment.

We are also delivering Ergonomics training, Autism Awareness workshops and Mental Health First Aid courses.

If you are interested in accessing any of our services, whether to brush up your IT skills, find out what Assistive Technology is available, or to help you increase your employability please get in touch and we will be happy to help.

To contact us for a consultation or to find out more information please contact:

Your Way

**Unity 12
9-19 Rose Road
Southampton
SO14 6TE**

Tel: [023 8020 2941](tel:02380202941)

Email: yourway@dnamatters.co.uk

Journey to Employment (J2E)

By Ian Loynes

SPECTRUM has recently been successful in gaining funding from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to run a 12 month pilot programme to enable Disabled People to gain employment.



We have employed Ross Smith, a Disabled Person to develop a peer-support based 'Job Club' for Disabled People. We hope to demonstrate that by doing things "the SPECTRUM way" we can be far more effective at helping people to gain, and retain, employment than the various 'Work Choice' programmes currently funded by the DWP. The DWP is funding SPECTRUM to run this pilot, alongside other pilots run by other User-Led Organisations across the country.



Two years ago, SPECTRUM worked with a number of Disabled People who were made unemployed by Remploy, to help them find new jobs. This project will enable SPECTRUM to build on this experience and support many more Disabled People into employment.

This pilot, which will be entirely optional for Disabled People to join, is aimed at people who want to work but who need support to do so.

This project is an important development for SPECTRUM, and will work well alongside the development of our new IT Training Suite called **Your Way** which will help people to become more confident and skilful in using computers. **Your Way** will also enable Disabled People to discover how Assistive Technology can help them overcome the barriers they experience in using computer technology. (see article pages 14-15)

This project will also use our brand new SPECTRUM website to its full, to enable Disabled People to learn what other support we can provide, and help employers and other organisations to see how SPECTRUM can help them become more accessible to Disabled People – both as employees and also customers.

Journey to Employment (J2E)

Continued

The objectives of J2E are to deliver a range of activities that provide 'person centred' approaches towards employment, as follows:

- **Employment ready** - To break down the barriers to employment, set clear and realistic personal goals for the future and provide the support and advice to achieve them.
- **Development** – To provide personal development opportunities and work towards developing plans to achieve individual's aspirations.
- **Changing attitudes** - To actively engage with local employers, bridging the gap between Disabled People and employment by facilitating work placement opportunities and job tasters.
- **Working together** - To provide a friendly environment that encourages individuals to come together to support each other and work together, using the principles of peer-support that has been pioneered by organisations like SPECTRUM.
- **In work support** – To provide mentoring for Disabled People who they support to enter employment, to enable them to manage and address worries or concerns that develop.

If you would like to know more please contact Ross Smith:

Telephone him on: 023 8020 2639

Mobile Number: 07501 143339

Email him at: Ross.Smith@SpectrumCIL.co.uk



Community Navigator Pilot

By Ian Loynes

SPECTRUM has recently gained funding from Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCCG) to establish a Community Navigator pilot in the City of Southampton.

To help us develop the pilot, we have set up a project steering group of partners in Southampton City Council & SCCC and local third sector organisations (see photo below).



The initiative will be important in enabling health and social care to work in a more 'person centred' way, and enable individuals to explore different ways and methods to meet their needs.

The areas that SPECTRUM's pilot will cover are:

- Shirley and Freemantle
- Woolston and Western

Why is SPECTRUM developing Community Navigation?:

The concept of the Community Navigator function has proved to be an invaluable aid to enabling people to use the many different community services that exist, but are often not well publicised.

With the Government's Better Care initiative, the National Health Service (NHS) and local authorities have recognised the potential benefits of this function for individuals, professionals and the wider health and social care economy; we also hope that our pilot will show that peer-based Community Navigation will enable the NHS and Social Services to save precious resources, whilst at the same time producing better outcomes for service users.

Community Navigator Pilot

Continued

Our Community Navigation pilot will deliver the following outcomes:

- Empower people to take control of their health and wellbeing
- To build and maximise community opportunities
- To reduce pressure on health and social care services
- To challenge services to become more person centred
- To help people who can't help themselves
- Identifying gaps and building on what already exists
- Try to invest in the future, not just on short term benefits

The target groups will be:

- People who are frequent attendees of primary care or urgent care services
- People, who are not receiving intensive case management from a health or social care professional, but have been identified as having significant unmet need

This project will use our brand new SPECTRUM website to direct people to use the various information directories that exist (i.e. SID and Placebook) to find services that might be able to support them more effectively than just relying on health and social care services.

If you would like to know more about Community Navigation, please contact our team, as follows:

Jeremy Long-Price, Senior Navigator:

Telephone: 023 8020 2940

Email: Jeremy.Long-Price@SpectrumCIL.co.uk

Angie Shirley, Community Navigator:

Angela.Shirley@SpectrumCIL.co.uk

Samia Stubbs, Community Navigator:

Samia.Stubbs@SpectrumCIL.co.uk

Kaye Barnett, Administration Assistant:

Kaye.Barnett@SpectrumCIL.co.uk

Photo Competition

By Michael Grimmett



The photo competition

To coincide with the launch of our new website, SPECTRUM is running a photo competition. We are inviting all of our members and readers to send us their photos, which will be judged by the Website Project Delivery Group.

There are 3 prizes up for grabs for the winners:

First prize £50

Second prize £25

Third prize £10

More details on how to enter are given below.

Say it with pictures

As with all modern day websites, the SPECTRUM website needs photos that either break up the text or demonstrate the more cheery side of a subject. Apparently, we are now 94 per cent more likely to read an online article or website if it has a photo in it. I'm glad I'm not the only one who just likes pictures!

Pictures can speak for themselves. There are many stories that one can get from a picture. Because of that, it can also provoke reactions from the readers of our site, which is exactly what we need and want.

An audience could have different emotional reactions like being happy at seeing a funny photo, excited if they see a photo of something they look forward to, and many others.

Photo Competition

Continued

There are also people who find it easier to understand the text if there are images. They can learn by seeing photos, colour and other visual media.

Why we need your photos

We have been trawling through all of our SPECTRUM photo archives to find just the right photos for our new website and we would really like your assistance. We have quite a good selection already but want to add more, and to change them regularly to keep the website looking fresh. It hasn't been easy though - mainly because a very large proportion of our photos are of SPECTRUM staff holding a glass or bottles of alcohol and, not surprisingly, 'management' have decided this is not an ideal marketing tool moving forward. I know, I know, it's as scandalous as a FIFA 'election.' This is why we need your photos, why we need them NOW!

How to enter the competition

Our website will look more professional and appealing if we have more images on it especially if the images are of high quality and came from you. This will also help to encourage people to stay on our website for longer since they are original photos from yourselves!

So, why not showcase your creative photography skills to the world. SPECTRUM would like our members/readers to send in their photos based around the following themes: -

- Disability
- Holidays
- Work, rest and play
- Humour
- Politics
- The seasons (Winter, Autumn, etc..)

The photos do not necessarily have to be all about disability or Disabled People, but obviously disability is what we are about!

Please send photos before the closing date of Monday 20th July 2015:

Digital format (JPEG, TIFF, BMP) to: Michael.Grimmett@spectrumcil.co.uk

Photo prints to: Unity 12, 9-19 Rose Road, Southampton, SO14 6TE

The photos will be displayed at the launch event on 28th July 2015, and the three prize winning photos will go onto the website (with your permission).

Treasure Hunt

By Robert Droy

Will you be one of the winners of the SPECTRUM Treasure Hunt?



We all like looking for hidden treasure and here at SPECTRUM, we are no exception. That's why to help celebrate the launch of our new website, we are giving you the chance to hunt for buried treasure and be in with the chance to win some great prizes.

There are three great prizes:

First prize £50

Second prize £25

Third prize £10

Even better, you can take part from the comfort of your own home, using your computer, mobile or tablet.

That's right - when SPECTRUM first started developing our new website, we were determined to make sure people could access our website on a whole range of different devices. More and more people are using tablets and their mobile phones to go online. Not only is it more convenient for many people, it also means you can access information when and where you want it.

We also realise that technology can be expensive to own so we hope some people will be able to join in our Treasure Hunt by using a computer in their local library or community centre. If you live in or near Southampton, you are also welcome to come into SPECTRUM to use one of our computers to take part in the Treasure Hunt. We will shortly be launching our new IT suite where people can brush up on their IT skills and get advice on what equipment may be available to help Disabled People use computers and the Internet, regardless of their impairments (see pages 14-15 for article)

Treasure Hunt

Continued

How to enter

The SPECTRUM treasure hunt will consist of a series of questions and clues. In order to solve the clues, you will have to hunt through our new website to find the answers. Once you have collected all the answers, you simply email your answers to us and all the correct entries will be entered into a prize draw where you can win some gift vouchers.

Don't worry the clues won't be too difficult and even if you can't find an answer, or one of your answers is wrong, all entries received by the closing date will be entered into a prize draw for a consolation prize. So there are plenty of chances to win!!

The SPECTRUM treasure hunt is just one of the fun ways we hope to encourage people to try out our new website. We are still in the final stages of getting our new website ready and all the details you need to enter the Treasure Hunt will be on the website when it is launched. Alternatively, you can always telephone SPECTRUM if you want the details posted to you.

Telephone: 023 8020 2635



Happy hunting and who knows you may be one of the winners of the SPECTRUM treasure chest.

Website Launch Event

By Lesley Long-Price

Invitation to SPECTRUM's Website Launch Event:

SPECTRUM is hosting an event to launch our new website and the opening of our new **Your Way** Learning Centre. The event will be on Tuesday 28th July 2015, from 12 noon to 2.30pm at Unity 12 where you will get the chance to share the excitement of viewing SPECTRUM's new website for the very first time.

Everything is still under wraps with only the Project Delivery Group having accessed the website so far. Not even our Chief Executive Officer is permitted to see the website until the Launch Event - we really hope he likes it?

At the Launch Event there will be guest speakers. You will get a chance to discuss the website design and build process with the Delivery Group. Have some light refreshments and network with others at the Launch

The other very exciting opportunity is to visit our **Your Way** Information Technology (IT), Assistive Technology (AT) Learning Centre (see article on pages 14-15).

We particularly welcome those accessing technology for the first time to come to the Launch Event and visit the Learning Centre. You can try out the new computers and of course surf our new website. There will be people around to assist you.

You can even enter the Treasure Hunt competition (see article, pages 22-23) whilst you are visiting **Your Way**.

Website Launch Event

Continued

If you entered the photo competition (see article, pages 20-21), you can see your picture displayed at the Launch Event. You might have even won a prize!

As this is a SPECTRUM event there will be a few surprises in store, it would not be a SPECTRUM event without them.

SPECTRUM are very aware that some of our members do not have access to the internet and information technology, we want this to be an opportunity for you to try out the world of technology with us. Or to brush up on your information technology skills.

We also appreciate that there are people out there like the Marxist (article on pages 26-27) who need some encouragement to use information technology. This event and new venture with **Your Way** is your chance to explore with us in a friendly and supportive way.

Come and give it a try!

If you would like to attend the Launch Event and **Your Way** Learning Centre, please contact Lesley by the deadline of Monday 20th July on:
Telephone: 023 8020 2635

Email: info@spectrumcil.co.uk

We will be sending out formal invites as well.

The Marxist and New Technology

By the Marxist

Yes reader, the Marxist has now signed up to the Technology Revolution. Well I have not quite entered into the concept of a new phone, as I still only use my mobile phone to make old fashioned telephone calls as I only want Apps that will do the washing or take out the dog.



Anyway, I watched a TV programme the other day that was about computer scams. Now reader, I have received the odd email offering me drugs that will increase the length of my nose, if you get my meaning. Well reader why would I need an extra two inches on my nose, as what would you do with a 22 inch nose?!



Oh yes, I also know about computer dating, but I do not fully understand why one would date a desk top computer, at least with a laptop you could take it out for a drink or a meal.

The Marxist and New technology

Continued

Anyway I have discovered that one could have a meaningful relationship with a person one has met on the internet, in fact one person had had a meaningful relationship with a person they met on the internet which lasted for more than four years, although they had never actually met.

So what is good for the goose is fine with me. So I have decided to have a meaningful relationship with Barbarella, a person I once saw in a film, during my younger days. Now reader, one or two of you may have seen this film with Jane Fonda and if so you will understand and envy my chosen relationship, as I often fall to sleep recalling Barbarella and when I found it was now audio described I just danced with joy. Anyway I have been dating Barbarella now for four days, but she must be a little shy as I have had no response to my emails. Perhaps she also has Windows, which requires the skills and knowledge of Alan Turing to switch it on!

So reader, I am really delighted with our new website and cannot wait for the next thrilling instalment, but in the meantime I will get out my ink pot and quills and feed the pigeons.



Flirting with Skype and the Internet

By an Anonymous Contributor

"I must tell you what happened to me today, nothing like a bit of irony.

It's a bit lengthy but I hope you think it's worth reading!

I managed to get a stage further with the nice guy who I was texting.

He asked me if I had Skype so I proudly informed him that I had set it up yesterday, he added my name and after a bit of Luddite dramas on my part. We eventually started talking. We started chatting about IT, that's what he does, my impairment, how he felt about Disabled People etc.

At about exactly this point in the conversation I noticed my laptop needed plugging into the cable as I was running out of charge, trying to look very cool I said 'I just need to plug in a charger which is under the desk'.

I threw myself on the floor in a cool, un-abandoned kind of way, and then realised I could not get up. Suddenly this voice says 'are you still on the floor' yeah I said, 'I won't be long' knowing I would be there for a while! At which point he signed off I think.

It was a bit tricky, I was getting very tired, and could not get up, the airer fell on me, I couldn't reach my phone all I could think about was this guy on Skype and the comical side of the scenario I found myself in.



Like a jelly fish I managed to wriggle to the hall open a cupboard and find a box of josh sticks; lying on my side I made the box into a spear threw it at the desk above and miraculously down came my mobile phone.

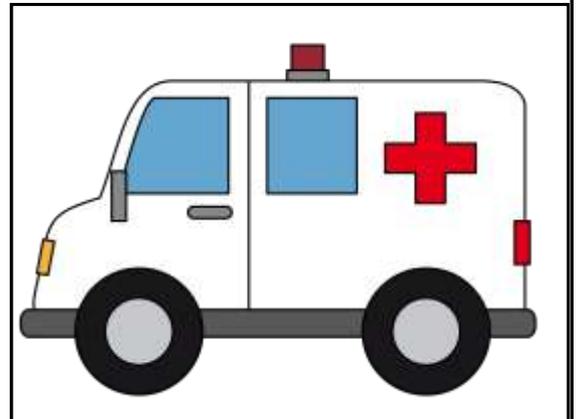
Flirting with Skype and the Internet

Continued

I Phoned my Personal Assistant so she could let the ambulance in to get me off the floor.

I texted the nice guy, who said he did wonder where I was! but he hoped I was ok. A second text followed to say 'he just did not realise he had that effect on women!' I confirmed he had. I was still on the floor waiting for the ambulance at this stage.

The ambulance man turns up - he asked me how it had happened to which I relayed the circumstances above. He was in hysterics, we both were. I'm still on the floor, he's checking me for injuries, and asking me if I had any carpet burns!?



He gets me up, we go into the lounge to complete the endless paperwork. He went on to tell me about his wife who has MS, so then we talked about Direct Payments, managing staff, etc. He talked to me about his wife and the care system for about half an hour. While we wait for my heart rate to settle down.



It was all great, I'm fine and chuffed that in it all I have met two nice people, as well as learned about Skype

This incident had nothing to do with alcohol, but a very large glass will follow.”

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