

Introduction to the ICT newsletter

A slightly belated Happy New Year to you all and welcome to the January 2009 edition of the ICT newsletter. Please can I encourage all of you, with an interest in the use of ICT to promote childrens' learning, to read on, as this issue contains information and many useful updates that will give you an up to date picture of educational ICT in the East Riding. Of particular note is the establishment of the Learning Platform Executive Group (LPEG) which has been constituted to make the decision taking concerning ICT in the county much more democratic and hence representative of the views of our schools.

The role of the LPEG is explained, in detail, in the article below but I would like to emphasise this new approach as the Learning Platform (LP) is becoming embedded in the procedures across many of our schools and is now in a position to be shaped and moulded to more fully meet the needs of our schools. The LPEG's scope will clearly start with the LP but will extend to a range of other related ICT issues as the LP is one of the tools that will help true developments in education be achieved. Please use this channel of communication so that the decisions reached about the direction of ICT investment and development will mean that a system evolves that is fit for your needs.



John Janulewski
ICT Strategy Manager
East Riding Digital Learning Community / School Improvement Service

Staffing changes at the wider DLC

There have been a number of recent staffing changes as well as some changes happening in the near future:

Nicola Salmon has moved to become Deputy Head at Riccall School in North Yorkshire.

Jan Stainforth is moving to become a Learning Consultant with Hull City Council from 1st April 2009.

Leah Class is joining the team from Driffild School, from February half-term, to develop KS3/4 resources and modes of delivery to address "hard to reach" secondary school students.

As a consequence of this there will have to be some readjustment of responsibilities within the team to fulfil existing team

commitments:

Mary Janulewski will move back into a teaching role within the DLC from 1 April as, by then, her role in organising the RM Learning Platform training will have come to a natural end, and Lynn Kelsey will then be the main initial point of contact for all matters relating to the LP.

All other responsibilities remain as before.



Nicola Salmon, Deputy Head at Riccall School in North Yorkshire.



Jan Stainforth is moving to become a Learning Consultant with Hull City Council.

Contact the DLC

The main contact for all queries other than the specialist ones listed below is the DLC **(01482) 638501** or dlc@eastriding.gov.uk where the telephone will be answered by our administrator Jo Mennell.

Learning Platform:

East Riding Learning Platform installations and RM training programme: Mary Janulewski **(01482) 638501** or email mary.janulewski@eastriding.gov.uk

CPD, Consultant Advice and School Support on the Implementation of the Learning Platform:

Lynn Kelsey **(01482) 392497** or email lynn.kelsey@eastriding.gov.uk

LP Support from RM:

The RM Support Online service has three technicians dealing with queries related to the Learning Platform and will usually respond within four hours during the working day. Log a call online at www.rm.com/Support/

Alternatively phone RM Technical Support on **0845 404 0000** (available Mon-Fri 08.00-18.00)

Cluster support for the Learning Platform:

Each cluster has a Learning Platform Coordinator in the secondary school. Primaries, please liaise directly with your secondary school for cluster related issues.

Other:

Technical queries - Andy Nunn **(01482) 392473** andy.nunn@eastriding.gov.uk
Budgeting, planning and strategic development - John Janulewski, john.janulewski@eastriding.gov.uk or **(01482) 392404 / 638502**

Please note that, apart from the DLC contact, due to the roving nature of the above roles, a first approach by e-mail would be the simplest method to ensure a successful outcome.

Main contact for all queries except specialist ones:

01482 638501

Connectivity improvements for schools

We are pleased to announce a central government funded programme of capital improvements to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council network infrastructure and services.

The targets for this programme are:

- links of 100 Mb/s for all secondaries by 31 March 2009 (Howden may be delayed slightly if a long dig time is needed);
- links of 10 Mb/s for all other settings with 75% completed by 31 March 2009 and all completed by summer 2009;
- ISP scalable from 200 to 500 Mb/s

according to need, monitored by traffic flow measurements;

- a reduction in charges to schools to a maximum of 70% of current levels, averaged over a 3 to 5 year period.

It is hoped that this programme will be well received as it promises a more sustainable solution for the upcoming 3 years than the present arrangements. It will leave a legacy system that will be able to take advantage of new and emerging developments for the next 3 year cycle.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council technical support

The DLC is currently finalising arrangements for a limited technician service to assist schools with the technical provision of ICT in their schools.

The service would not cover items that should be covered under a hardware maintenance scheme or dealt with by an in-school general maintenance technician, for example changing print cartridges.

It is aimed at the software-based support that sits between these two extremes and that is often difficult to source without purchasing new items.

We are currently testing a ticketing system to enable jobs to be tracked, and when this is successfully implemented we will give you further details on how to access this service.

RM Easy Mail update

RM Easy Mail is now available to East Riding Schools, and the first schools to take it up are now in operation.

One advantage of this system is that it can integrate with the Learning Platform. This means users can easily access their email from within the portal without going to a separate site or logging in again.

The mail system can also be accessed without logging in to the portal by using a separate URL. Initial impressions are that it is easy to use and to manage.

A substantial amount of licences are still available at no cost in the first instance, so any schools who wish to use the system are invited to request this by emailing Andy Nunn.

andy.nunn@eastriding.gov.uk

A note about Adobe Flash Player updates

Schools using the DLC Video Conferencing system

(info available at <http://vc.eastriding.net>)

should be aware that for the time being it is advisable not to upgrade their Adobe Flash Player to version 10.

A server upgrade is being planned for the near future, after which all recent versions of the player will function correctly.



eSafety

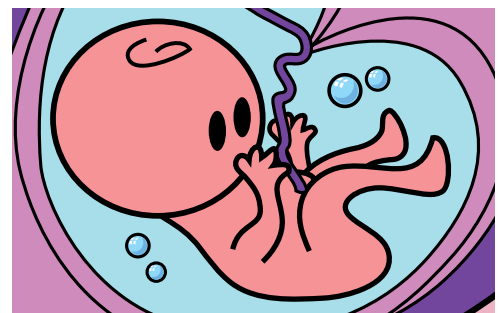
It's Safer Internet Day on February 10 and we have been developing a unique online and CD resource to support teachers in our primary schools with the difficult and sensitive task of teaching eSafety to young children. A series of interactive, pre-recorded lessons have been produced for both KSI and 2.



To ensure that all children in the East Riding will benefit from this resource, we have made the package available completely free of charge to schools (details have been circulated in a separate email). This will help to ensure that all our young children are equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to make safe use of the Internet and personal technologies such as mobile phones in their everyday lives.

Sex and Relationships Education

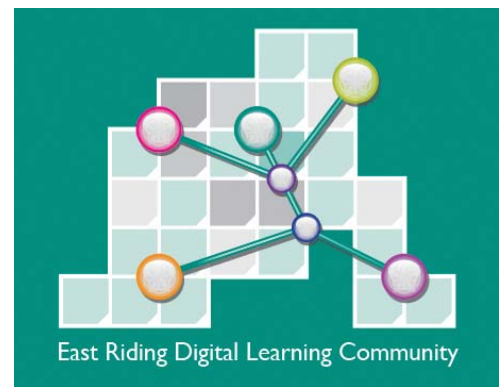
The issue of teaching Sex and Relationships Education to children in primary schools is a current hot-topic nationally, and in response to this we have created an online package of interactive, pre-recorded lessons to deliver SRE to



Y5 and Y6 pupils. Written by a primary teacher with specific expertise in Primary SRE, in conjunction with the East Riding's SIS team, it addresses SRE learning intentions in a sensitive, balanced and age-appropriate manner.

More details at <http://sre.eastriding.net>

East Riding Learning Platform News



Support from RM

The RM Support Online service has three technicians dealing with queries related to the Learning Platform and will respond within four hours during the working day.

Log a call online at www.rm.com/support or phone RM Technical Support on **0845 404 0000** (available Mon-Fri 08.00-18.00) Please have your school number ready when you ring, or the logged call reference number. The system works best when one person at the school end has ownership of the problem so that when emails are sent with information or requests for action, they go to the right person.

RM training

The RM training is nearing its completion. There are still option days available for primary schools covering both basic and advanced portal, and similarly basic and more advanced aspects of VLE use. These will be run at different venues across the East Riding depending on the numbers. Requests for places on these events should be made to Mary Janulewski.

East Riding Schools Learning Platform Executive Group (LPEG)

The Learning Platform Executive Group had its inaugural meeting on 2 December 2008 and will continue to meet on a termly basis to overview the progress

and implementation of the East Riding Learning Platform as well as make any strategic decisions on behalf of schools. The LPEG, due to its composition, very much represents the wider views of schools as the Learning Platform continues to be developed across the East Riding. It is comprised of three secondary head teachers, three primary head teachers and two LA representatives to provide an appropriate weighting towards the views of schools in any future decision-making.

Secondary views will be taken from secondary Heads' meetings and primary views derived from Heads' cluster meetings as well as the Primary Steering Group which meets termly and has teacher, teaching assistant and senior leadership representatives from a range of East Riding primary, infant and junior schools. The current LPEG chair is Phil Tibbetts from The Market Weighton School.

Volunteers for case study exemplars of good LP practice across the county, especially school-to-school collaboration

Some ideas for possible starting points for schools were shared at the Primary LP Coordinator meetings. These are now on the ERLP Development Interest Space and will be added to during the term. However, as schools continue to develop their LPs it will be very useful to

be able to offer colleagues further 'case studies' of good practice in real schools in a variety of contexts and with a variety of users. For example, leadership teams, governors, teams and extra curricular clubs, etc as well as pupils and teachers.

A number of schools have already offered to share the progress they have made and we would be delighted to hear about further examples of communication and collaboration through the Learning Platform taking place in other schools.

East Riding Learning Platform Development Interest Space

When teachers click on the 'Interest Spaces' tab from their portals and select 'Browse', they should all now be able to access an Interest Space called 'East Riding Learning Platform Development'. Updates and information relevant to East Riding schools are being posted here, together with links to useful websites, resources and materials. Links to a set of short video tutorials for different practical aspects of using the LP will soon be available in this Interest Space.

RM also provides its own 'Learning Platform Development' Interest Space which is open to all Kaleidos Learning Platform users. This should appear at the bottom of all 'Interest Space' drop down lists. RM manuals and information about RM updates can be located here.

continued...

East Riding Learning Platform News



New 2Simple LP resources

Over the last few months we have been actively looking for relevant software and resources to be integrated with the Learning Platform and, at the request of schools, have reviewed a wide range of commercial resources during the year. At the last meeting of the Primary Steering Group the new 2Simple LP online tools and VLE resources were demonstrated and it was unanimously agreed that these were high quality resources from a company already used by a large number of primary schools, and these would be purchased for integration with the Learning Platform.

These will be free to East Riding primary schools for a three year period from the time they are installed and working. Access to the new 2Simple online tools will be through a link on portals and a content pack of 2Simple resources will be installed in VLEs. This means that teachers and pupils can have anywhere, anytime access to these once they have logged on to the Learning Platform, unlike the current 2Simple software which is installed on, and can only be used at, individual computers in the school.

These do not replace 2Simple resources many schools already have, but offer an alternate way of access and delivery. If you need further clarification please contact philip@2simple.com and we hope to be able to demonstrate these

more fully in the next set of Primary LP Coordinator meetings. We expect these to be available for schools very soon.

VLE access for non-teaching staff

Following the latest RM Learning Platform upgrade, schools' portal administrators are now able to set permissions for non-teaching staff to access the VLE. Information on how to do this has been posted on the ERLP Development Interest Space and has also been sent to Learning Platform Managers. If schools have any problems please contact RM Support on **0845 404 0000** or www.rm.com/support and log a call.

Avatars on the Learning Platform

RM have scheduled the release of avatars for LP users for Monday 19 January and there is a link for schools to find out more about these on the 'coming soon' section of the RM 'Learning Platform Development' Interest Space. This feature can be turned on and off by portal administrators, and the avatar will be visible in a user's header bar, their profile and in discussion groups.

Primary LP Coordinators

Thanks to everyone who attended one of the four meetings across the county last term, and to those schools that hosted them. The main purpose of

these meetings is to provide a venue for those colleagues who have the role of driving the Learning Platform forward in their school where good practice can be shared, ideas developed and issues discussed. It was very good to see how different primary schools have made a start with the Learning Platform and to share further ideas about possible ways forward.

Looking at some of the positive work already done in schools was very valuable and it was agreed that it would be helpful to continue to provide opportunities for LP coordinators to reinforce practical skills and review some of the Learning Platform features available to staff and pupils. Opportunities for wider collaboration and communication through the LP will also feature in these events.

Dates for the next set of meetings are on the ERLP Interest Space and further information about venues and agendas will also be posted here as well as sent to schools nearer the time. If you have questions about the meetings, or suggestions for items to include, please contact:

lynn.kelsey@eastriding.gov.uk