The National Learning Network
Adult and Community Learning
Information and Learning Technology Strategy

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national learning network

Contents

Foreword

The development of the information and learning technology (ILT) plan for adult and community learning (ACL) has involved the efforts of many people over nearly two years.

The National Learning Network (NLN) sub-committee has had to change its remit and membership three times during this period as the need to move from strategy to implementation and finally to steering committee has occurred. This demonstrates the nature of the plan in that flexibility is required to ensure that the objectives of the plan can be achieved. In order to achieve the plan's demanding objectives requires the active co-operation of many people and organisations. It also needs a flexible approach which will almost certainly mean that the plan will evolve and develop with experience. Quite deliberately we have published the original strategy and implementation plans so that you will be able to track changes and judge the achievements of the plan.

Alan Clarke, Chairman, the NLN Adult and Community Learning sub-committee

8 June 2003

Introduction

On 1 April 2001 all education for those over age 16 in England (other than higher education) was brought into the control of one funding organisation – the Learning and Skills Council. This included responsibility for the ACL sector. This sector, which led the basic skills initiative 25 years ago operates within communities, and promotes the arts, citizenship and social integration in many different ways. It is usually identified as having a central role in improving the skills of those living in disadvantaged areas and promoting equal opportunities. It is making a substantial contribution to both UK online and learndirect centres.

The Government has identified the need to provide all of society with the skills they need to get involved with the information age. There is a significant risk that people without information and digital skills will not be able to take advantage of the benefits offered by new technology – employment, lifelong learning opportunities, access to information, competitive prices and opportunities to get involved with democracy.

ACL has already made significant contributions to overcoming the digital or information divide by taking technology into disadvantaged communities. However, the resources available to ACL are limited and are funded through a wide variety of different sources. As a result, there is a wide range of provision and technological infrastructures in this sector. Many situations do not take full advantage of ILT to deliver, support and manage learning opportunities across all curriculum areas. ILT could add considerable value to, and expand learning opportunities in, ACL.

To help with this, we have developed a national approach to ILT within the ACL sector. We set up a working group in January 2002 to help us develop an ILT strategy for the sector. The aims of the group were to:
- provide advice and guidance to help ACL institutions adopt a model ILT strategy for good practice;
- promote the need for a continuing programme of staff and professional development in using ILT in ACL institutions;
- provide advice and guidance on developing a programme of learning materials;
- provide advice and guidance on developing appropriate access for learners and staff to worldwide electronic resources;
- decide how appropriate the ACL institutions were as part of the NLN;
- monitor the development of the products and services of the NLN to reflect the needs of the ACL institutions;
- help develop a programme of spending so ACL institutions can bring local area networks up to minimum standards in terms of ability and strength;
- help develop a programme which will provide support, information and advice to ACL institutions in all areas of ILT; and
- advise on the issues of funding of e-learning provision within ACL programmes.

One of the main factors in considering the strategy for ILT in ACL is the background against which it will be developed. A range of other related initiatives are underway which will affect ACL. The recommendations of this report need to be put into practice after considering these initiatives. These include:
- People's network;
- UK online;
- regeneration strategies;
- policy action team activities;
- learndirect;
- parents online;
- community grids for learning; and
- e-government.

The strategic working group included the following members.

Alastair Clark, Becta
Alan Noble, Buckinghamshire County Council, LEA
Alan Clarke, NIACE
Andrew Dyson, Walsall College
Angela Wood, Oxfordshire County Council
Ann Walker, Swathmore Education Centre
Barry Phillips, Department of Education and Skills
Bernard Godding, Education Centres Association
Chris Swaine, UK online Centre, Reading
Ian Harford, Workers Education Association
Jackie Marsh, Learning and Skills Council
Keith Duckitt, Learning and Skills Council
Liam Flynn, Department of Education and Skills
Natasha Johnston, CU – IT
Patsy Cummins, CALTEC
Rachael Corrie, JISC
Robert Raven, Leicester Adult Education College
Sue Yeomans, Learning and Skills Council
Sue Rigby, Learning and Skills Council

Executive summary (Recommendations)

1 Infrastructure

The infrastructure across ACL varies considerably but in general terms it does not:

- offer access to broadband connections;
- have enough personal computers for learners or teaching staff (tutors); and
- have a limited supply of learning materials.

The situation is made more complicated by learning opportunities being provided at a wide range of locations through many different organisations.

We recommend that:

- ACL providers should be encouraged to develop local ILT partnerships to produce strategies which cover all aspects of planning (this relates to partnership recommendations) and includes taking action;
- learners should be able to access technology, materials and support to a broadly similar standard across the whole sector which covers those over age 16; and
- access to SuperJANET (SuperJANET, provides broadband connectivity to all Further and higher Education Institutions) is provided across the sector using a mixture of existing, primary, sponsored, group and gateway links.

2 Content and learning materials

How ILT is used is currently limited in ACL because of a range of factors. However, this is mainly due to limited availability of equipment, facilities and materials, the skills to develop and use them effectively and channels for sharing experience.

We recommend that:

- access to materials, good practice and support should be provided as an online facility;
- effective authoring tools (Authoring tools are a computer software based products, which are used to create electronic learning materials), training in how they are used and how to design ILT materials should be made widely available;
- we should ask the NLN Programme Board to develop a national programme of ILT materials based on the NLN approach but following a survey of learning needs within ACL;
- materials should all meet agreed quality standards; and
- the NLN Programme Board should analyse the needs of the ACL sector in terms of Managed Learning Environments (MLEs) and Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) to make recommendations for how they are used.

3 Staff Development

The experience of ILT across ACL varies considerably. However, most staff and organisations have had relatively little knowledge and understanding of ILT. The staff of ACL includes paid employees and volunteers. It is important that we include both in all training programmes.

We recommend that:

- we develop a wide-ranging programme of ILT training for all staff including volunteers in ACL as part of the Standards fund; and
- ILT champions can play a central role in motivating and training staff. As a result, we should encourage and support their use in ACL. We need to develop management and tutor champions to cover all providers.

4 Information and advice

Information and advice are very important in an area where many learners are returning to learning after a long period and have frequently had poor early experiences of education. ILT can improve the existing efforts to provide information and advice.

We recommend that:

- we explore, with the Guidance Council, how they can develop a way for students to access services, resources and help; and
- we should consider using ILT to provide information and advice in training and qualifications for adult tutors.

5 Equal access to ICT

One of the main principles is that all learners should be entitled to access similar services, basic structure and materials across the whole sector.

We recommend the following.

- We need to develop two routes of access to technology. The ratio of personal computers to learners and the average distance or time travelled to access the technology. We could possibly measure both through regular surveys.
- A national scheme to improve access to modern computer technology is put in place based on providing banks of computers and other appropriate equipment held by organisations that is available for staff and volunteers to borrow.
- ILT training must consider the needs of learners. This includes learners with disabilities, outreach approaches and family learning.
- The resources available to part time ACL learners should be on the same basis as for full time students.

6 NLN

The NLN provides a valuable wealth of experience from which the ACL sector can benefit. It would be too easy to assume that every successful approach, method and strategy will directly transfer to ACL. However, equally, there is no point in doubling up on effort. We need to develop NLN to meet the needs of ACL .

We recommend that:

- the NLN should include the needs of adult and community learners, volunteers and staff to make sure everyone aged 16 and above has access to learning.

7 Partnerships and relationships

ACL has a long and effective experience of motivating, developing and maintaining partnerships. Developing ILT is a major role which many of the small organisations will find extremely demanding. We will need to set up partnerships based on local, regional and national links to make sure that everyone can benefit and play their role in ILT.

We recommend that:

- partnerships are encouraged on a local, regional and national basis aimed at providing support in developing ILT which obviously will take time; and
- we pass the responsibility for fostering and evaluating partnerships to the local LSCs (local LSCs).

8 Funding

There are two main parts to funding ILT which are:

1 capacity building (for example, staff development, infrastructure, materials and so on); and
2 mode-free learning (for example, delivering learning programmes).

These recommendations look at the first part of funding.

The correct approach to funding ILT in ACL is essential.

Funding should acknowledge the real costs of delivering provision and should recognise the need for maintaining this over the long term.

Public funding always means people have to answer for their decisions. However, traditional monitoring approaches are sometimes not appropriate in ACL. A quality standard approach would be more appropriate.

We recommend the following.
- Funding for capacity developments should be automatic entitlement once those organisations involved hadhave achieved an agreed quality standard.
- We need to follow procedures below for all funding.
  1 Funding should emphasise the ability to deliver learning rather than placing too much reliance on new and different approaches.
  2 Funding applications should be simple at first so they do not overburden organisations.
  3 We should map applications when we receive expressions of interest so we can make the most of the range of applications; and
  4 we should consider priority groups of learners.
- We should work towards co-ordinating activities with other funders. This could have a real effect on how funds are distributed, so it will prevent the duplication of funding in some areas at the expense of others
- We should work with other funders towards a degree of standardisation. Most funders want similar information, but want it presented in a slightly different way. As a result, many versions of 'identified needs' have been produced for individual communities when there is so much professionally produced statistical evidence already available.

9 Managing how the programme is put into practice

To make sure that the ILT programme is put into practice efficiently and effectively, it is important that ACL organisations are involved from the beginning. The programme is likely to need at least three years to achieve the effect we want and we will need to develop a plan to do this.

We recommend the following.
- An advisory group is drawn from the ACL sector to advise the NLN programme board on putting the ILT plan into practice.
- We should change the strategy into a plan which includes:
  – timescales;
  – costings;
  – delivery responsibilities;
  – evaluation of outcomes; and
  – measurable targets.
- This plan should consider actions over a three year period.

10 Passing on information

Passing on the information in this strategy will give us a way of helping practitioners and managers to develop their knowledge of ILT and the benefits that technology can bring to learning. A great deal of the strategy depends on the goodwill and understanding of local managers and tutors. As a result, it is vital for them to know the reasoning in the strategy.

We recommend that:
- This report is published in a way which aids understanding of the issues (including short case studies to illustrate the benefits of ILT and a presentation style which assumes little previous knowledge of ILT);
- the report is passed on through a series of regional conferences; and
- the advisory group develops the timetable for passing on the information in the report at its first meeting.

ACL – Today

The phrase ACL is fairly loose in that it has been traditionally used to describe:

- a sector (distinct from further or higher education);
- types of learning programme delivered by some providers (local authorities, the Workers Education Association (WEA) and other voluntary sector organisations);
- many forms of non-accredited adult education;
- a particular (informal and flexible) approach to learning for adults;
- informal, community based learning activities;
- learning after a long break after negative educational experiences; and
- providing many part-time learning opportunities.

Some of the boundaries between ACL and other forms of post-16 learning are blurred. This makes telling the difference between them problematic. There is a tendency to define ACL as a distinct sector, to distinguish it from further education, higher education and the workplace. However, this creates problems because it implies that colleges and other education institutions do not provide ACL, when many do.

ACL has come forward after a long period of reduced resources and strong outside pressures which left few public resources available for work often seen as recreational and so not a priority. However, the emphasis on lifelong learning in Europe has created a background for maintaining and supporting all forms of adult learning including those not directly economically – or based on skills. The findings of a number of high profile reports (Kennedy, 1997; NAGCELL, 1997; the Social Exclusion Unit, 1999) recognised the fact that learning could help to achieve certain policy goals – economic competitiveness, social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal. As a result, there has been a lot of new interest in locally-based learning in order to contribute to active citizenship, renewing the community and widening involvement in London.

The main characteristic of ACL is diversity. Learners are from many varied backgrounds in terms of age, social and ethnic background, experience and ability. Their purposes in learning are many and include:

- looking for new life or career directions;
- exploring new interests;
- meeting other people;
- getting a qualification;
- dealing with life transitions or crises;
- keeping fit, active and alert;
- helping or keeping up with children;
- finding out about new technology; and
- looking for skills to use in a situation.

Many courses are still delivered in dedicated education centres or institutions. However, ACL is usually delivered in a huge variety of locations – community centres, libraries, church or village halls, shopping centres, clubs and public houses, schools and pre-school playgroups, social services settings such as family centres, community settings visited by a particular target group (for example mosques and day centres), or settings linked to the focus of learning (for example recording studios, sports venues and workplaces).

Learning providers of ACL include local authorities, further education (FE) institutions, higher education (HE) institutions, the WEA, voluntary organisations such as tenants' and housing associations and groups working with the elderly, ethnic minority organisations, social, health and youth services, trades unions, community development organisations and religious groups.

ACL involves a huge variety of learning arrangements, styles and learning methods. It is not always based on courses and can include events such as open days and celebrations, activities involving learning such as producing a video, a community newspaper or a play, and local, issue based learning. The curriculum is as broad as the student population.

Both accredited and non-accredited courses, depending on the needs and ambitions of learners, are part of ACL. They are usually part time, although they do include some full time and residential programmes.

ACL is paid for using a range of funding sources including us, the Single Regeneration Budget, the European Social Fund, local authorities, the Employment Service, charitable trusts, New Deal for Communities and other regeneration funding streams. It can also be offered on a self-financing or not-for-profit basis. However, some disadvantaged adults may qualify to get their fees back. Support such as help with childcare and travel, providing information and advice, and practical help for people with disabilities or learning difficulties, is sometimes provided.

Other characteristics of successful ACL are:
- widening involvement and dealing with disadvantage;
- partnerships in planning and providing local learning opportunities;
- a wide provider base;
- a wide curriculum including personal development, recreational activities, developing skills, literacy, numeracy, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Family Learning, ICT, environmental issues, the arts, citizenship and skills for community development and involvement;
- access, equal opportunities, and focusing on the learner;
- working with and valuing volunteers to support learning;
- involving individuals, groups and communities;
- making sure that learning is relevant to people's circumstances, needs, interests and ambitions;
- negotiating how courses are provided and their outcomes;
- involving learners in evaluating courses;
- recognising and valuing the experience people bring to learning;
- delivering learning where target groups are and when they are available;
- providing part time learning opportunities; and
- paying attention to all aspects of learning.

ACL is sometimes only seen as a stepping stone to higher level programmes rather than as learning that is valuable in its own right. Evidence suggests that by providing satisfaction, fulfilment and enjoyment as well as increased skills, knowledge and understanding, ACL can have a positive and long term effect on individuals, families and communities. In some cases, limited financial support and short term funding is currently restricting the flexibility of responses to identified needs as it is difficult to support non-formal learning opportunities. This is because these are usually seen as effective in involving those people most at risk of exclusion.

The many different approaches, curriculums, locations, communities and learners makes ACL very suitable for using information learning technologies, which offer many different ways of meeting the complicated needs of ACL. However, the current understanding of ILT is extremely limited.

Information learning technology needs

The Department for Education and Skills laptop initiative and other developments have shown that providing technology with enough support can bring about change in ACL. ILT can be a significant catalyst. However, in order to make best use of this, we need to overcome a series of barriers. The main issues are shown below. We expand on these in a later section.

Learners
ILT strategies must take account of the different backgrounds of ACL learners (for example, older learners, people with learning difficulties, family learning, limited basic skills, underdeveloped learning skills and so on). It is likely that ILT content alone will not be enough for many learners. They will need help to develop their wider skills as well as ILT.

Infrastructure
Access to the computer and related equipment is very limited for everyone. In particular, access is often restricted to a 'dial-up' connection (in other words a phone line) if it is available at all. VLE and MLEs are extremely rare in ACL and there is little understanding of their purpose.

Technical support
Technical support is very limited in ACL and this is made worse because of the many different main locations where it is provided, outreach sites, the range of equipment and delivery times.

Learning materials
ILT learning materials specifically designed for ACL are rare and we need to see more provided. It is unlikely that professionally developed ILT learning materials will be enough, so providers will need to produce the content for their own or colleagues' use. Currently, few tutors are able to develop ILT materials and content. There are good examples of new materials being created and these can be built on across the whole curriculum.

Staff development
Many staff do not understand ILT in ACL and we need to see significant staff development for tutors, managers, volunteers and everyone else who is involved. This is a complicated issue due to the part time nature of the staff, their limited experience of ICT and the large number of locations at which ACL is provided.

Support
Experience of using ILT is very limited within ACL. We need a system to share experience and identify good practice. However, we will also need to adapt our practice to meet the specific needs of ACL.

Management
ILT methods will change how learning is provided (for example, how learning centres are managed). The need for ILT management systems with effective links to other management systems is a high priority. By registering online, there is the potential to significantly improve how learning is managed.

ACL – tomorrow

ACL involves the statutory and voluntary sector. Developing ILT must take account of the differences and unique features of each.

ILT will improve the way education is provided via many different places as long as venues are able to provide good quality facilities for ILT (in other words, accessible premises, hardware, software, good connections and technical support). Support workers (including volunteers) will need new skills which will include using equipment while curriculum-specific tutors will have the skills to make best use of ILT techniques and approaches such as tutoring online.

Staff delivering ACL will be able to choose from a wide range of resources, including e-learning materials, to offer 'blended' learning experiences to improve their teaching.

Staff will have access to a range of quality online learning packages to offer flexible online learning. Students will be able to work online using both chat and video conferencing, e-mail, conferencing and bulletin boards. A central source of information on e-learning materials will provide for the specific needs of the sector.

We will train providers to produce their own e-learning resources to add to the centrally developed or commercial products.

We will extend existing partnership activities so that facilities are available through social landlords, community organisations and voluntary organisations. The ACL sector will provide programmes to encourage e-citizenship, involvement in the democratic processes and understanding of wider issues (for example, Europe and international issues). We will also extend shared staff development and collaborative working between the voluntary and statutory organisations. And, we will support this using ILT.

The course provider will co-ordinate learning provided at home, community locations or more formal sites. This will allow learners to fit their learning around modern family lifestyles and complicated working patterns. They will be able to learn in bite sized chunks and dip in and out of programmes to meet their learning needs.

We will develop strong and effective partnerships with media and digital broadcasters by using their e-publishing resources to back up individualised learning. We will market the new developments through specialist and mainstream broadcasting to widen involvement.

ILT will improve provision for specific groups such as ex-offenders. This is because learning will be able to continue after the offenders are released and there will be continuity of contact. Computer systems will allow planning to be improved so that better childcare and transport arrangements can be co-ordinated.

Information and learning technology strategy

The main features of the ILT strategy are based on the need to carry out a wide range of action while achieving the aims of the sector. These features include:

- a large number of part time staff;
- the important role played by volunteers;
- a whole diverse range of locations to deliver outreach activities;
- partners who are funded by a wide range of sources and we may not provide funding to them;
- little experience of ILT in the sector;
- many tutors with limited ICT skills;
- few learning resources;
- an underdeveloped ICT infrastructure;
- a strategy which should be based on existing good practice in ACL and ILT; and
- introducing ILT but not at the expense of existing good practice.

The main activities are shown below.

Research and preparation
- We need to carry out a detailed survey of the availability of e-learning materials to meet the needs of ACL.
- We must consider using the existing infrastructure.
- We must develop pilot projects to evaluate approaches including changes in staff roles and learner progression and pass on good practice.

Content
- We must create a programme of high quality materials to respond to the needs identified in the survey.
- We will encourage the use of existing NLN and other ILT materials.
- We will set up a programme of training and development to encourage e-learning resources to be used across all curriculum areas.
- We will develop partnerships and consortiums to develop materials and also to develop ICT infrastructure with funding for staff time.
- We will set up a clear definition of learning content standards which will be used including:
  1 accessibility;
  2 usability;
  3 flexibility to allow for different learning styles; and
  4 using effective metadata schema. (Metadata is definitional data that provides information about, or documentation of, other data managed within an application or environment.)
- Tools for creating content for learners will be highly motivating.
- Access to publicly funded e-resources should be provided equitably for all organisations providing ACL Learning who can ensure their proper use.

Online support
- We will extend existing central online resources (for example, FERL, Help is @ Hand and NLN) to meet the needs of ACL. This will include links to resources, good practice and an online forum for practitioners.

Support for learners with disabilities
- We will provide access to appropriate links and on-screen facilities by providing training on advice and guidance and other workers operating within the partnerships.

Assessing learning outcomes
- We should give online assessments equal value to other forms of assessment.

Staff Development

- ILT is often most effective when included in learning programmes which use a mix of methods.
- Training needs to be provided to help tutors, volunteers and other staff to improve new and existing learning programmes with ILT.
- Outreach activities are a significant part of the sector. Because of this, we need to provide ILT materials, staff training and other developments to support these approaches.
- To use ILT you need to be competent and confident in using information communication and technology. Many tutors, volunteers and other staff lack ICT skills. We need to improve training and access to ICT resources.
- There is a national shortage of tutors with ICT and ILT skills. We need to put staff development programmes in place to tackle these needs.
- There are a number of different models of ILT and no single approach is likely to be right for everyone. Because of this, staff development needs to be broad and aim to develop an understanding of ILT, and how to judge its quality and suitability.
- The role of the tutor will change with ILT so we need to provide training to help with the process (for example, facilitation, choosing the content of learning, preparation, developing content and so on).
- Many part time tutors will need to be trained. ILT will provide a way of delivering training in order to overcome the barriers of time and where education is provided.

- We need to identify standards for developing staff to make sure there are national levels of training.
- We will need to consider the role of volunteers in ILT based and supported programmes. As a result, volunteers will need to be trained in ILT.
- Experience of ILT is currently very limited in ACL so we need a system to share experience and identify good practice.
- ILT methods will change the nature of how learning provision is managed (for example, how learning centres are managed). Training will be needed to help make this change.
- We need to use the range of activities offered by the ILT staff development of the NLN.

Access to technology

- We need to set up ICT loan schemes for staff and volunteers to allow access to ICT equipment and the Internet.
- Technical support is vital to the success of ILT. We must develop ways of providing support at all locations including outreach sites – possibly at antisocial times.
- ILT strategies must take account of ACL learners (for example, older learners, those with learning difficulties, basic skills, returners to learning and so on).
- Few people have experienced virtual learning environments and managed learning environments in ACL. Training and access to advice is important to make sure ACL benefits from the experience of further education.
- Broadband access to the Internet is a very important part of using ILT in ACL over the long term. However, we can do a great deal with limited resources to include ILT in the curriculum.
- Consortiums and partnerships are central to providing broadband links.

Partnership

- Partnerships can help the many small organisations and locations to put ILT into practice. However, it is important that we recognise their expertise in community work and that they can exchange their specific skills with partners bringing technical expertise.

This list is essentially an outline plan for putting ITL into practice in ACL. However, there must be a formal evaluation process to help shape and develop the programme.

Infrastructure

Many organisations have begun to invest in ICT. However, there has been no overall co-ordinated strategy either nationally or locally in most cases. The availability of technology can vary considerably from newly opened UK online centres to organisations operating with second hand equipment and very few connections. ACL has a long and effective experience of motivating, developing and maintaining partnerships. As a result, partnerships have the ability to develop local infrastructure to benefit the whole ACL community. This may also help to overcome the problem of small organisations not having the ability to develop their own interactive learning strategies.

Recommendation
We should encourage local ILT partnerships to produce strategies covering how ACL is planned and put into practice.

The whole ACL sector needs a large amount of investment in ICT and ILT to make sure all learners in the post-16 sector have equal access to opportunities. Learners should be able to access technology, learning materials and support of similar standards.

Recommendation
Learners should have access to broadly similar technology, materials and support across the whole post-16 sector.

A very important factor in developing how ILT is used across ACL is access to the Internet. Currently access is partial. In many outreach locations and other small venues, there is no link except for dial-up links over a phone line. This severely limits how learners can use ILT. The cost of instantly providing SuperJANET across the whole sector is too high and not practical over a short time frame. Because of this, we are suggesting the 'art of the achievable'. We would suggest developing an approach which is:
- attractive;
- affordable;
- able to add value;
- adaptable; and
- able to build on the current foundation.

Figure 1 gives an illustration of our recommendations in that:
1 some ACL providers already have access to JANET through regional broadband consortiums (RBC);
2 some local authorities are considering gaining access through regional broadband consortiums;
3 large groups of educational providers could form consortiums to gain primary or sponsored links to SuperJANET (local authorities could also co-ordinate sponsored links to SuperJANET);
4 we could encourage other providers to join consortiums to gain access; and
5 a third-party gateway managed by UKERNA could be provided for those who cannot join consortiums.

Figure 1 Potential Solution
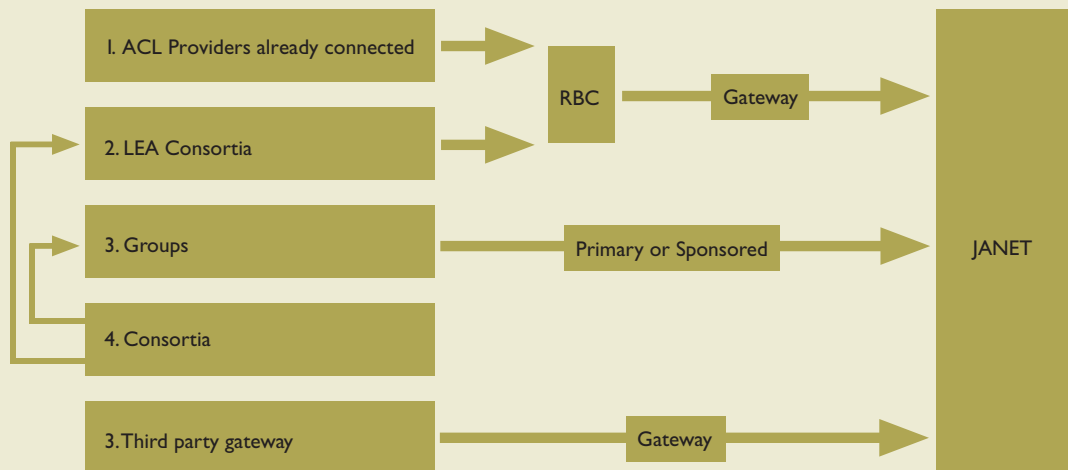
This mixture of approaches should reach all providers and give the whole sector access. In order to bring about these recommendations we suggest:

- we must carry out mapping exercise to find the different consortiums;
- we put pilot schemes in place to test the approach;
- we develop support mechanisms; and
- we investigate how we can maintain this approach.

Recommendation
We should provide access to SuperJANET across the sector using a mixture of existing, primary, sponsored, group and gateway links.

Content and learning materials

There is relatively little ILT specifically developed within or for ACL. However, there are some materials such as the Reading Disk, the Number Disk, Affinity Direct (C&G) and BBC Becoming WebWise. And, the availability of learndirect centres and courses and the emergence of a network of community grids for learning are also having an increasing effect. However, there are major needs for ILT learning materials in ACL. This includes:

- professionally developed resources;
- locally prepared resources by individual staff mainly for their own courses;
- a content ranging from learning objects to online courses with support from tutors; and
- opportunities for learners and tutors to interact online.

There is a strong tradition of creating paper based learning materials in ACL as well as some pioneering examples of locally produced e-learning materials. These innovations are often associated with ICT based projects such as UK online centres. We should take advantage of this tradition to encourage providers to develop ILT content. This will mean we must make authoring tools available, and train people in how to use them and to design interactive materials.

This approach should provide many examples of ILT materials which will need to be shared. However, this is wider than simply sharing materials because it would also be useful to include links to other resources including learner development materials, good practice and an online forum for practitioners to support each other.

Recommendation

We should provide access to materials, good practice and mutual support as an online facility.

Effective authoring tools, training in how to use them and how to design ILT materials should be made widely available.

Although developing grassroots materials will have a significant effect on ACL, we still need to produce high quality resources centrally. We should use the experience of NLN in developing partnerships between professional design companies and providers to produce content in ACL. However, the first thing we need to do initial step is to survey the needs of the sector to identify priorities.

We will need to consider a range of developments while carrying out the survey of ACL needs. These include:

- learndirect;
- Community Grids for Learning;
- UK online centres;
- materials produced by broadcasters;
- the DfES Laptop Computer Initiative;
- LEAs who have invested in managed learning environments;
- the City and Guilds Affinity Direct Carers' Programme
- the New Opportunities Fund Digitisation programme
- the Metadata in Education Group (MEG).

We should not just be looking at the content of learning materials. Global communications offer exciting and cost-effective opportunities for adult learners (including staff and volunteers) to develop and improve on a wide range of study skills. This includes research and critical analysis of existing resources published on the Internet. People using search engines to find out information for themselves is as fundamental to the learning process as library skills are to students who are carrying out book based research. Materials produced for use in ACL will provide the best value if they promote general, transferable learning skills rather than focusing just on highly structured, subject related content.

Recommendation

We should ask the NLN to develop a national programme of producing ILT materials using the NLN approach but following a survey of learning needs within ACL.

To make sure we maintain the quality of learning materials produced, it is important to set quality standards. These will include materials that:

- allow learners to use a range of learning styles;
- respond to the particular needs of adults with disabilities, learning difficulties and sensory impairments;
- reflect the many different cultures of the UK;
- are accessible;
- provide a flexible and varied learning experience and are adaptable; and
- employ appropriate metadata schemas for community learning and are VLE compliant.

Recommendation

Materials should keep to agreed quality standards.

ACL has little experience of MLE and VLE. However, there is a lot of interest for tracking learners, delivering learning and reducing the burden of collecting monitoring data. However, no analysis of the needs or suitability of particular MLEs or VLEs has taken place in ACL.

Recommendation

We should ask the NLN Programme Board to analyse the needs of the ACL sector in terms of MLEs and VLEs and make recommendations for how we use them.

Staff Development

Tutors and staff working in ACL are highly skilled but their experience of ILT varies a great deal. However, most staff and organisations have had relatively little knowledge and understanding of ILT. There has been far more effort in terms of ICT skills and knowledge but we need to see a great deal more. The whole sector employs volunteers as community mentors or support workers in courses and we must cater for their training needs as well as paid staff. Although the obvious group to concentrate on is tutors, we must provide training for all staff (for example, managers, volunteers, governors, trustees, administrators and technical staff).

The main staff development needs include:
- ICT skills for administration including using VLEs and MLEs;
- basic ICT skills to at least Level 2;
- ILT skills to support and deliver adult learning (for example, online tutoring skills, including ILT with traditional approaches);
- ILT skills for monitoring and tracking learning;
- ILT and design skills to create learning materials;
- management of ILT;
- ILT in outreach activities and programmes; and
- skills to include ILT into existing provision (for example, basic skills).

We should tackle these needs by:
- using appropriate standards;
- using flexible delivery – distance learning;
- holding showcase events for delivering ILT in learning;
- holding regional and local events – to reflect the fact that some staff in ACL work for more than one employer;
- sharing best practice (for example, good practice guides);
- working with partners (joint training);
- using peer mentoring schemes;
- using ILT champions;
- creating partnerships between providers; and
- holding short courses with accreditation.

There is a range of issues that we need to consider, especially in relation to part time staff.
- We need to fund staff development centrally so we can overcome the problem of many small organisations having tiny budgets.
- Tutors often have to attend training in their own time and delivery organisations need to support this and fund the cost of providing cover.
- The cost of evaluations.
- Staff will need to pass on training to their colleagues (in other words, cascade training).
- Staff will often work in remote settings so transport, childcare and time to go on courses are all issues.
- Staff are not based at a central site – so the training must reflect this.
- Personal access to IT equipment is often very limited.
- Part time staff often have many employers in the post-16 sector so some economies may be possible.

Recommendation

We should develop a thorough programme of ILT training for all staff and volunteers in ACL as part of the Standards fund.

ILT champions can play a central role in motivating and training staff so we should encourage their use and support this in ACL. We should develop management and tutor champions to cover all providers.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Information and advice are very important in an area where many learners are returning to learning after a long period and have frequently had poor early experiences of education. ILT can improve the existing efforts to provide information and advice through a range of services, resources and help. Currently many ACL organisations offer information and advice. However, it is usual that specially trained staff provide the guidance. The relationship between information and advice and a successful return or progression is well established.

The UK online centres branding standard means they must provide information and advice to learners so they can make informed choices about progression. The centres' network (in other words, website, mail group and so on) has been shown to support centres with many of their activities. We should follow this good practice.

Recommendation

We should ask the NLN Programme Board to explore, with the Guidance Council, how they can develop ways to access services, resources and help.

Adult tutors often have to provide information and advice. ILT is likely to improve the way tutors offer this service. This emphasises the need for accredited courses of study and possibly an online course.

Recommendation

We should include using ILT to provide information and advice in training and qualifications for adult tutors.

Equal opportunities

The growth in the number of people who own PCs and who have access to the Internet has been consistent and rapid. However, it tends to hide the critical fact that ownership depends on factors such as income, geography and age. Essentially, ownership of a computer and having access to the Internet is severely restricted for people who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

In terms of ILT, socially or economically disadvantaged adults are likely to be at a disadvantage because they have:
- underdeveloped ICT skills and confidence; and
- few opportunities to use ILT materials and resources outside of more formal sessions.

These people are going to heavily depend on public facilities. We have made a large investment to improve access to information and communication technology over the last four years (for example, UK online centres and the People's Network). However, currently the number of public Internet access points lags behind countries such as Finland, Ireland, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands and Germany (E-Envoy, 2002). ACL staff and learners depend on public provision and this has been shown to be an effective bridge to disadvantaged learners.

Within the ACL sector, equipment and connections are limited. As a matter of principle, learners we fund should be able to access the same levels of resource across the post-16 sector. As a result, we must develop access to technology and reduce the distance travelled to use the resources. It is a significant factor in providing learning opportunities to disadvantaged groups that the locations used must be within the community. This is often measured as a short journey for those taking part.

Recommendation

We recommend that we develop two measures of access to technology:
- **the ratio of personal computers to learners; and**
- **the distance or time travelled to access this technology.**

We could measure both of these by carrying out regular surveys.

In a similar way ACL staff and volunteers are often not able to access ICT to develop their skills and knowledge. This is due to a number of factors such as part time working, using many locations and limited resources within ACL. To make best use of ILT, we need to tackle these inequalities of access. We have used several possible solutions in ACL or other sectors including:
- helping people buy home computers;
- providing loan schemes;
- providing access to resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and
- setting up partnerships with schools to use their ICT out of hours.

Recommendation

We recommend that a national scheme to improve access to modern computer technology be put in place. This will be based on providing banks of computers and other appropriate equipment held by ACL organisations that is available for staff and volunteers to borrow.

We already accept that ICT and ILT can contribute to overcoming the barriers many adults with disabilities face. Equally, understanding among tutors of the practical solutions is limited. This need for staff development is made more complicated by the fact that the Disabilities and Discrimination Act 1995 puts particularly demanding pressures on organisations when operating in community locations.

Outreach activities are good at reaching communities and particular disadvantaged groups who are often not willing to take part in learning activities at formal institutions but are pleased to take part in their own communities. Including ILT in outreach centres needs to take account of the culture and community needs of the learners.

Family learning is an important approach in ACL and can have a number of implications for ILT including:
- are the children classed as adults for funding purposes?
- what about the health and safety of the children?
- what are the limitations placed on adults by using protective software for children?
- how many computers are there (for example, one for each person, or one for each family)?

We clearly need to consider this approach and other related ones to identify effective practice between family learning and ILT.

Recommendation

ILT training must consider the needs of learners and approaches used in ACL including learners with disabilities, outreach approaches and family learning.

NLN

The NLN in Further Education provides a valuable fund of experience from which the ACL sector can benefit. However, it is important to acknowledge the many differences between the two sectors as well as the similarities. It would be too easy to assume that every successful approach, method and strategy will directly transfer to ACL. However, there is equally no point in duplicating effort.

Some of the main experiences that we will need to explore are:
- the effect of ILT on tutors, managers and technical staff in FE;
- the process of developing professional and tutor-written learning materials;
- how virtual and managed learning environments are used, managed and bought;
- how ILT will be included in the curriculum;
- how ILT will be included in learning methods;
- how the regional support centres are used to provide technical help;
- the effect of broadband connections on delivering and supporting learning;
- the staff development needed to make the best use of the opportunities provided by access to broadband;
- how effective staff development approaches are which are used within NLN;
- how learning champions are used;
- the range of JISC services; and
- how third party resources are used.

The significant issue is to learn from NLN and try to transfer the best and most appropriate parts over to ACL.

Recommendation

The NLN should include the needs of ACL, volunteers and staff to make sure a total approach is used in meeting the needs of the post-16 sector.

Partnerships

ACL has a long and effective experience of motivating, developing and maintaining partnerships. Developing ILT is a major undertaking which many of the small organisations will find extremely demanding. Partnerships based on local, regional and national links will be needed to make sure that everyone can benefit and play their role in ILT. There are two main principles. These are that:
- the partnerships are genuine and we acknowledge the ranges of expertise; and
- the needs of the learner are the main concern of any ILT partnership.

ILT partnerships need to operate within an overall strategic framework and must take account of existing groups (for example, local learning partnerships, local strategic partnerships, widening participation partnerships, broadband consortiums, learndirect hubs and so on). These existing partnerships may form the basis for ILT ones in the ACL sector. Supporting these partnerships will help to make sure that there will be joined-up responses to the complexities communities face in developing ILT strategies.

Partnership may mean working together between voluntary organisations, community groups, district and county services, colleges and other education institutions. It also includes the partnership between learners and the providers. Involving learners and potential learners is crucial. Involving learners in a dialogue with providers will help clarify their needs, discuss the curriculum, consider and develop appropriate ways of delivering the provision and explore progression routes.

ILT partnerships will need:
- committed leadership;
- to use ILT to help operate the partnership effectively;
- clear goals, purposes and a strategy for the long term development of the partnerships;
- checklists and guidelines for developing ILT partnerships;
- mutual recognition of the specialist contributions made by all partners, no matter what their size and sector;
- details of the roles and responsibilities; and
- a clear idea of associated costs and timescales of any schedule agreements.

ILT partnerships can look at:
- identifying ILT needs in ACL together with supported training;
- designing and developing ILT processes;
- developing ILT resources;
- the ILT infrastructure;
- funding applications;
- ILT in outreach activities;
- staff development;
- developing a learning culture – promoting change;
- the role of ILT champions;
- pooling ILT resources and expertise in an effective way of meeting learners' needs; and
- providing practical advice.

Recommendation (Relationship with infrastructure)

We should encourage partnerships on a local, regional and national basis. The partnerships should be aimed at providing mutual support in developing ILT. We know that effective and efficient partnerships take time.

The responsibility for supporting and evaluating partnerships should be clearly passed to the local LSCs.

Funding

There are two points to funding ILT which are:
1 capacity-building, for example, developing staff, infrastructure, materials and so on; and
2 ways of delivering learning, for example, by delivering learning programmes.

This section looks at the first point.

The correct approach to funding ILT in ACT is essential.

Funding should acknowledge the real costs of delivering quality assured ILT in ACL. It should recognise the need to maintain this over the long term. Table 1 shows the costs of community based ILT. This includes items which we would fund as part of capacity building and delivering learning.

Public funding always needs to be carefully monitored. However, traditional monitoring approaches are sometimes not appropriate in ACL. Working with homeless women or those living in a refuge means that gathering information such as names and addresses is almost impossible. This makes it very difficult to get funding for these groups if standard monitoring processes are used.

Taster events have been shown to be an effective way of interesting people who may return to learning by showing them they can be successful. It is likely that ILT will also be effective if introduced through tasters and other bite sized chunks of learning. However, if funding is accounted for using traditional monitoring means, these methods will be limited in community learning. This is because if participants have to provide their name and address and other personal information, they will be discouraged from taking part.

Equally there are many practical problems in offering a short taster which lasts perhaps less than 20 minutes. Tutors would have difficulty in collecting data from learners as part of this limited time.

We would suggest that a perfectly good approach to accounting for public funds could be based on defining quality standards and accrediting organisations. An audit process similar to that Investors in People could make sure we maintain a rigorous standard. The UK online standard may be a useful one on which to base the ILT approach.

The quality standard needs to consider:
● staff training;
● support for learners;
● the delivery including outreach;
● the learning environment (for example, if the learner feels comfortable);
● health and safety, including the personal safety of the tutors;
● management (for example, the ability to organise outreach work);
● equal opportunities; and
● monitoring and evaluation.

Table 1: Costs of community based ILT

Capital (major items)	Revenue spending
● Accessible learning environment ● Hardware (computers, printers and so on) ● Loss in value and replacement costs ● Infrastructure (networking, installation and so on) ● Furniture (workstations, chairs and so on) ● Adaptations to meet individual needs ● Security ● Storage ● Applications software	● Running costs (ADSL, ISDN and dial-up costs) ● Learning materials ● Facilitators, tutors and learning support ● Technical support ● Community outreach and development work ● Advice and guidance ● Accreditation (if appropriate) ● Administration ● Caretaking and cleaning ● Promotion and publicity ● Childcare support ● Staff development ● Insurance ● Transport for delivering laptops in many areas ● Management

Recommendation

Funding for ILT capacity developments should be an automatic entitlement once those organisations involved have achieved an agreed quality standard.

Within the principle of funding based on an organisational quality standard there are some central factors.

- We must be able to tell the difference between general access to ICT and using ICT specifically for learning activities.
- Our funds must be monitored within a framework of cross-cutting government themes and priorities, including promoting social inclusion, community regeneration and lifelong learning.
- We need to reduce the confusion at community level about funding sources for ILT and work with other funding agencies to produce blueprints to simplify planning. We must have a clear strategic approach:
  – between us and government departments, sections and projects funding ICT and ILT (for example, Cabinet Office, Home Office, Connexions, UK online, Ufi, learndirect and so on);
  – between us and non-governmental agencies, through negotiation (for example, National Lottery and New Opportunities Fund, European Social Fund, Single Regeneration Fund and national training organisations); and
  – at neighbourhood and community level, by negotiating with local LSCs, Learning Partnerships, the Council for Voluntary Service, local forums and so on.

- We must reduce any unnecessary paperwork as far as possible.
- We will keep existing provision which has a proven track record of responding effectively to identified needs rather than setting up new provision.
- Any funding must aim to produce fair access to ILT (within pram-pushing distance of everyone's home).
- Any funding should help to put ILT into practice over the whole period (in other words, three years).
- Any funding should recognise that many learners aim to learn specific skills and reward proven 'value added' as well as formal accreditation.
- Any funding should be fair and equal for all providers.

Successful projects need funding that:

- builds on existing good practice rather than simply funds new ideas;
- is stable – short term funds often lead to unpredictability and often raise false expectations in communities;
- encourages effective partnerships;
- focuses on organisations with the skills to deliver – the funding may otherwise be awarded to organisations that are skilled at writing bids, rather than those that are actually skilled in delivering the projects; and
- has a straightforward application process.

Recommendations

We should use the following procedures for all funding.
1 Funding should emphasise the ability to deliver learning rather than placing too much value on new ideas.
2 Funding applications should have a simple, basic expression of interest form in the first instance. They should not place too much of a burden on organisations in the first stages.
3 Applications should be mapped using expression of interest forms to make the most of the range of applications.
4 We should consider priority groups of learners.

Recommendation

We should work towards co-ordinating activities with other funders. This could have a real effect on distributing funds effectively, preventing the duplication of funding in some areas at the expense of others.

Recommendation

We should work with other funders towards a degree of standardisation. Most funders want similar information, but want it presented in a slightly different way. As a result, many versions of 'identified needs' have been produced for individual communities when there is a wealth of professionally produced statistical evidence already available.

Implementation Management

ILT can produce major change. It will have an effect across the whole of the ACL sector. To make sure that we target any investment in ILT effectively we must monitor how it is put into practice.

Recommendation

We need to set up an advisory group drawn from the ACL sector to advise the NLN Programme Board on putting the ILT plan into practice.

We need a detailed plan to carry out this strategy.

Recommendation

We should turn the strategy into a plan for putting ILT into practice complete with:
- **timescales;**
- **costings;**
- **delivery responsibilities;**
- **evaluation of outcomes;**
- **measurable targets; and**
- **ways of passing on good practice.**

To do this effectively, we will need to take action over several years.

Recommendation

The plan should consider action over a three year period.

Dissemination

Across ACL understanding of ILT is limited. Passing on the information in this strategy will provide a way for practitioners and managers to develop their knowledge of ILT and the benefits that technology can bring to learning. A great deal of the strategy depends on the goodwill and understanding of local managers and tutors. As a result, it is critical for them to know the reasoning in the strategy. For these reasons we propose that we carry out a programme to pass on this good practice.

Recommendation

We should publish this report in a form to aid understanding of the issues. This will mean including short case studies to illustrate the benefits of ILT and a presentation style which assumes little previous knowledge of ILT.

The information in the report should be passed on through a series of regional conferences.

The advisory group should develop the timetable for doing this at its first meeting.

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Plan for putting information and learning technology and ACL into practice 2003 to 2006

Introduction

During the financial year 2001-2002, a group drawn from ACL organisations developed a strategic plan to develop how ILT is used in ACL. The NLN programme board agreed the strategy and a new group was formed to produce a plan to put it into practice (the implementation plan). Between October 2002 and January 2003, the group have considered the process under three main headings:

- infrastructure;
- staff development; and
- content.

These issues are inter-related and we clearly need to look at them together and also with existing NLN structures. However, ACL is starting from a different point to other parts of the post-16 sector. The use of technology to support, manage and deliver learning is very limited. This is due to a number of factors including:

- a lack of investment;
- limited access to information and communication technology
- limited awareness, knowledge and skills of ILT.

The aim of the three year implementation plan is to allow ACL to achieve broadly similar levels in using ILT at the end of the period that will exist across further education. This does not mean identical practices since there are many differences in structures and approaches. However, there are probably more similarities than differences.

Size of the task

Our initial research has indicated the scale and complexity of the task. It is clear in many ways that a single approach will not work. To include ILT across ACL will involve a flexible approach. The group has identified that within local authorities there are six major groups of providers delivering adult learning. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the local authority providers.

The local authority part of ACL employs about 44,000 part time and 4400 full time staff. Only a very small number of these staff have had any experience or training using information and learning technology (see Table 1).

Developing staff

The implementation plan aims to create a wave of interest, enthusiasm and momentum across ACL to use ILT across the curriculum. To achieve this goal we need to see a significant development in awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes towards ILT. This is a huge task due to the low level of understanding that currently exists across ACL and the very large number of part time staff. The plan proposes the following.

- We will start to raise the awareness of ACL management and practitioners to the plan and also the potential of ILT.

- There should be a substantial staff development programme that is based on:
  1 a national analysis of training needs;
  2 developing training programmes and events based on national standards (to learn from and adapt existing NLN programmes);
  3 delivering training to managers and curriculum specialists;
  4 recruiting and developing the ACL equivalent of ILT champions; and
  5 passing on training in-house to reach the large number of part time staff.
- We will organise a programme of 120 development projects varying from small scale local programmes developing material to larger initiatives to develop and pass on good practice across ACL. These will motivate and generate enthusiasm in organisations and practitioners that is essential for the success of the plan. ACL has little experience of ILT so it is vital to start with concepts and practice that communities can directly identify with.

Content

The availability of all forms of e-learning materials is relatively rare across ACL. We need to create new content and the plan proposes that we follow two processes.
- We should encourage and support tutors to develop their own materials, which could be shared across the post-16 sector.
- We should set up a development programme to create professional e-learning materials – this could take the form of the next round of the NLN materials development programme concentrating on the needs of ACL. The implementation group saw the main difference was the need to provide materials, which could be used in outreach centres and similar locations.

Passing on advice and communication

To make sure we make best use of all parts of the implementation plan, we need to pass on the information in it and encourage communication across ACL. The plan aims to use websites, mail groups, provide advice and guidance and other methods (for example, reports, guides and newsletters) to make sure that all tutors know about developments and can take advantage of them. Tutors also need access to advice and guidance on the using ILT in ACL.

Infrastructure

Staff development and creating content, although important parts of the plan, will not achieve the aims we want unless developments in the access to technology are also made (for example, computers and connections). ACL is based on using many different locations and outreach methods. This makes developing access very challenging.

Table 1 Local authority providers

Type of provision	Number of providers	Student numbers AE2
Direct provision	66	690,230
Contracted-out	49	327,086
Direct with schools	14	289,896
Franchising	4	30,106
Through the community	6	66,088
Mixed economy	11	183,907
Total	150	1,587,313

The infrastructure parts of the plan include the following.

- Changing the ratio of computers to learners from the current 1 in 50 to 1 in 8 over the three year period.
- Changing the ratio of computers to tutors to 1 in 1 based on full time equivalents over the three year period.
- Creating a support network to provide technical and curriculum support across ACL so that help is available in each local LSC area. This is likely to be based on a range of processes and organisations depending on local needs and circumstances. This network needs to be linked to the regional support centres.
- Providing access to SuperJANET through sponsored or primary connections over the three years.

NLN

ACL is starting from a different position to other parts of the post-16 sector which have benefited from the NLN and earlier programmes. However, the whole of the post-16 sector shares the same long term aims in relation to ILT. It will take time for ACL to be able to play its full part in NLN. The plan should provide a way for ACL to become an equal partner in NLN. Over the plan's three year life we will include different aspects in the NLN programme at different times (for example, the professional materials could simply take the form of the next phase of the NLN materials programme focusing on ACL needs).

The implementation plan should take advantage of NLN experience (for example, ILT champions) and the starting point of many the different elements is to consider the NLN developments in relation to ACL.

Process

The process throughout the plan is based on the following.

- An initial assessment of need or from gathering evidence so that the plan is well informed. There is a general lack of evidence covering ACL. Several initiatives should help produce the plan (for example, mapping ICT resources, analysing training needs and reviewing e-learning materials).
- A regular review of progress.
- A step-by-step process to build interest, momentum and enthusiasm for ILT.

Managing the plan

The overall programme includes many inter-related initiatives and elements. We need to manage and co-ordinate them across ACL. The plan managers will take responsibility for raising awareness, marketing, encouragement and support across the plan to make sure it is successful. This will include managing many of the individual elements as well as the overall co-ordination of the plan. An important part of this will be to develop the plan's overall partnership.

Partnership

The plan will involve a partnership of many different organisations. These include:

- ACL providers;
- the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency;
- the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC);
- learndirect;
- LSC;
- the Learning Skills Development Agency;
- the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education;
- the National Information Learning Technology Association;
- the United Kingdom Education and Research Network Association; and
- UK online.

Outcomes

The outcome of putting the strategic plan into practice is likely to be little short of revolutionary in places. It has the potential to build on the existing strength such as reaching socially and economically disadvantaged learners by supporting new learning approaches and methods. The changes to the infrastructure will allow tutors to use ILT to support, manage and deliver learning while the staff development elements will reach all staff within ACL (about 49,000). New content in information learning technology will demonstrate the potential of ILT to help create local materials.

Monitoring

To monitor and advise on how the plan is put into practice we recommend that we improve the ACL sub-group of the NLN programme board.

Initial steps

For the plan to succeed, we need to create a surge of excitement early in the process so momentum will carry forward change. This means we will need to publish the ACL ILT strategy and implementation plan in April. The regional events for passing the information on should be able to explain the plan to the ACL organisations and managers.

Appendix 1

ACL ILT implementation plan – infrastructure – managing learning – Information, advice and guidance – publicity and passing on information

Evaluation
This ambitious programme will need careful evaluation, at first over three years. We will cover the nature of this evaluation and the associated costs in a later report.

Overall costs
The total costs are:
● staff development – £17,487,000
● local infrastructure – £47,640,000

The detailed plans are in appendices 1 and 2.

It is likely that the plan will need to be funded using resources from many sources and is not simply a NLN investment. The work of the Joint Implementation Group (JIG) is clearly relevant to the ACL plan in that many of their priorities overlap with parts of the plan (for example, support systems).

We have agreed to support this development programme by using £33 million through the NLN Programme or its successor.

Summary
The plan includes a range of related and co-ordinated action which takes account of the current limited use of ILT within ACL. It will need time to create change but the potential for a significant development in practice is clearly there. The group is confident that the three year plan will have a major effect on ILT used within ACL.

Introduction
1 From our initial research it is clear that in helping ACL to take an active part in delivering learning through ILT, a 'one size fits all' solution will not work. We feel that some of the new technology that is about to be released will help this sector to continue to provide learning at the heart of the community. The group has identified, with local authorities, six major groups of providers who are delivering adult learning. It is proposed that in prioritising the role out of the plan direct providers should be in priority group 1 with the rest of the sector prioritised after the detailed mapping has been carried out. The proposals in the report are the result of the group asking for views across the sector.

2 The current position across the local authority providers within ACL is shown below.
  a. Ratio of computers to learners – 1 in 50
  b. Computers linked to the Internet – 90%
  c. Number of full time staff – 4400
  d. Number of part time staff – 44,000
  e. Limited technical support for learners
  f. Limited development of ILT
  g. Mixed developments of Management Information Systems (MIS)

This is based on a survey which achieved a 50% return. It is likely that this is a more positive picture than actually exists because the providers who responded were the ones with the most to report.

3 The group has sought out expert witnesses and provided written evidence to help make sure that the report tackles the major issues affecting how the strategy is put into practice.

4 Initial signs are that the sector is starting from a very low base. However, there are examples of new work and investment taking place in some authorities.

5 The group recommends that before any substantial further investment is made in the sector, each provider should make sure, along with their local LSC, they have an ILT strategy for 2003 to 2006 within the development plan which we must receive by 31 July.

6 The other major factor that we will need to tackle at a national level is how we can bring the voluntary sector into the frame. We recommend that consortiums are developed and co-ordinated by local authorities.

7 Initial signs from the inspectorate show they are concerned about the lack of use of ICT as a way of improving on teaching and learning in the sector.

Infrastructure – hardware

Period   Years 1, 2 and 3
Start   Autumn 2003
Finish   July 2006

Aims

1 We are aiming for a ratio of computers and access devices to learners of 1 in 8.

2 To make sure ICT is available in many of the small locally based centres, wireless laptops should be available on a similar computer to learner ratio. (See the note at the bottom of the page.)

3 We should then decide on a ratio of the average distance to travel to access the technology.

4 We should develop a ratio of computers and access devices to teachers and support staff of 1 to 1 full time equivalent (FTE). We should make sure that resources are targeted for providing suitable hardware or software to overcome difficulties related to people with disabilities. This should be a clearly identified amount within the resources available.

How the aims will be achieved

1 To help produce a further strategy on the current status of connections and access to ICT, we should pay UKERNA to carry out some detailed mapping of current accessibility, including UK online, learndirect, FE and ACL. (This work needs to be linked with the mapping which local LSCs will be carrying out as part of their e-learning strategy development.)

2 Initial signs are that the current ratio is 1 in 50 and by 2006 an average of 1 in 8 should be available at centres where the provider has direct responsibility. We should give priority first to direct providers.

3 With a very high percentage of part time staff, the ratio should take into account courses provided within the 14 curriculum areas and the FTEs of teaching staff. Although this would be less than 1 in 1, it would help make sure staff have enough access to technology.

Cost
Total cost is £25,225,000.

Connections

Period   Years 1, 2 and 3
Start   Autumn 2003
Finish   July 2006

Aims

1 All local authority providers should have access to SuperJANET either via sponsored or primary connections.

How the aims will be achieved

1 In many cases where the provision is contracted to FE or schools, access is available already or will be shortly as the regional broadband consortiums link up. We will agree a three year roll out programme, starting with direct providers, with UKERNA.

2 The provision should include:
  – a 10 megabyte primary connection from a point of presence in the local authority to the JANET backbone;
  – a router with a firewall (we will pay the costs of the connection and the local authority will own the router);
  – web-filtering services – provided on the JANET core network with local management of filter settings;
  – web hosting;
  – e-mail services for all ACL staff and learners;
  – a technical help desk to manage the connection;
  – a multi-site advisory service;
  – access to all of JISC resources – Athens, learning materials and so on;
  – software bought by Chest;
  – JANET CERT services; and
  – TechDIS services.

(The local authority will be responsible for managing and providing resources for local area networks and wide area networks beyond the router.)

3 The local authorities will be responsible for creating their own virtual private network to connect to the POP. We recommend that the local authority discuss this with us to see what the possibility is of support for this development through Local Initiative Fund (LIF) funding.

Cost
Total cost is £14,300,000.

Support services – technical and curriculum

Period   Years 1, 2 and 3
Start   Autumn 2003
Finish   July 2006

Aims
1 We want to create a support structure providing technical and curriculum specialists.

2 We will investigate local, regional and national ways of buying technical support services for ACL.

3 The following services should be available for providers to use if they need them.
   a. E-mail services including student and staff e-mails.
   b. Co-hosting of servers – especially for MLE developments.
   c. Web hosting.
   d. Video conferencing.
   e. Access to JISC content.

All these services could be provided by JISC and UKERNA. Both have said they are willing to begin providing these services.

How the aims will be achieved
1 The sector should link into the support arrangements which JIG are currently developing.

2 Six pilots across the sector should explore the feasibility of working with partners including for example FE, Ufi, UK online, People's Network to create a technical support model.

3 JISC and UKERNA should make sure they check any investments in future and look towards new technological developments to help increase access to the services. They should pay particular attention to satellite access and electric power transmission.

Cost
Total cost is £3,810,000.

Managing learning

Period   Years 1,2 and 3
Start   Autumn 2003
Finish   July 2006

Aims
1 We want to make sure that the sector has the ability to deliver distributed electronic learning using MLE technology.

How the aims will be achieved
1 MLE is only just starting to be used within the sector. Advice and guidance to providers must form part of a package we need to further develop nine pilots or begin them to see how suitable the software and content is for the sector. Becta should evaluate this.

We do not think that all providers will need an MLE. As a result, we should develop a consortium approach for smaller providers.

2 Depending on the satisfactory outcomes of the pilots, we should give providers up to £20,000 to put the MLE into practice. We do realise that this money will only contribute to the development.

Cost
Total cost is £2,100,000.

Support services – practitioners

Period   Years 1, 2 and 3
Start   Autumn 2003
Finish   July 2006

Aims
1 We need to have a national practitioner support programme in place which the group recommends is co-ordinated by NIACE, but will also involve other NLN partners.

2 We will develop online support and evaluate progress in the sector.

3 We will encourage networking for all those involved in the post-16 sector.

4 We will create regional peer support groups.

How the aims will be achieved
1 NIACE will co-ordinate the support processes and help with the roll out and ongoing staff development (see management).

2 We will create access to suitable online programmes for staff development and we will develop training-the-trainer programme using Becta and LSDA.

3 We will create regional peer support groups to share best practice using NILTA.

4 We will launch the programme using nine regional road shows co-ordinated by NIACE (see management).

5 We will raise awareness of staff by giving examples of best practice.

Cost
Total cost is £1,908,000.

Appendix 2

Staff development and content

The group's research has shown that ACL is faced with a considerable challenge and a long journey before ILT becomes part of normal practice.

The plan proposes a substantial programme of staff development for managers and curriculum specialists to increase their skills, extend their understanding and change their attitudes.

Developing and creating content will provide practical and working materials so ACL staff can include ILT in their teaching and learning practice. Significant developments have been carried out within the NLN and we plan to build on this work.

Managing the plan (includes infrastructure, staff development and content)

Including ILT in ACL needs to be co-ordinated, managed and communicated to the many organisations and staff that make up ACL.

Period   Years 1 to 3

Task
The implementation plan includes many different parts that need to be co-ordinated, managed and reviewed to make sure that the plan achieves its desired aims.

Aims
1 We must make sure that the managers and staff within ACL are aware of the strategy and implementation plans.

2 We will work with NLN partners and ACL stakeholders to make sure that the plan is being put in place effectively.

3 We will make sure that ACL providers can make informed decisions about ILT by developing a communication strategy and making sure that we will co-ordinate our partners' efforts properly.

How the aims will be achieved

1 Communication
The main factor in putting the strategy in place is to make sure there is effective communication between ACL providers, partners, us and other organisations. This is more than a simple one-way process. It is vital that ACL providers can influence the plan. To deliver an effective communication process will need a number of different activities including:
– setting up a central team which can act as a clearing point for information;

– regular forms of consultation (for example, an annual survey, events and so on);
– communication through devices such as CERL, newsletters and events;
– working with CERL, UKERNA, NILTA, LEFEA, us, local LSC, LSDA and other partners;
– passing on the outcomes of projects and making the links between them;
– producing a series of ACL good practice guides building on NLN;
– reporting to the NLN Programme board; and
– providing an advice and guidance service.

2 Working with others
To deliver the plan will need co-ordinated action from a range of organisations. We need to have a process where the partners can all contribute and work in a co-ordinated way to achieve the aims of the plan (for example, regular seminars to discuss progress).

3 Management
Management is concerned with all aspects of the plan. The managing agency will need to directly manage a number of individual developments and projects but also regularly review the overall effect of the plan on future action. The managing agency will also need to monitor those activities which have been subcontracted to other organisations. This needs to be combined with consultation across ACL to make sure that efforts are targeted.

Cost
Total cost is £1,663,000.

Who
NIACE.

ACL research

Period
April to October 2003
Year 1
Time involved – six months

Task
Any research should be linked to an awareness raising programme (for example, to improve survey returns, aid understanding of e-learning).

Aims
1 We will identify e-learning materials, tools, methods and approaches currently being used or available to ACL.

2 We will identify open and distance learning materials and other materials which we could convert into e-learning materials or approaches.

3 We will consider NLN and Ferl materials and tools so we can see how appropriate they are for using in ACL.

4 We will consider materials and digital content produced by other organisations to see how appropriate they are for using in ACL.

5 We will identify the needs of ACL and make recommendations for developing content and staff.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will hold a workshop or consultation with representatives of ACL to identify the needs.

2 We will survey ACL organisations (about 3,000 of them).

3 We will review NLN and FERL materials and tools.

4 We will review other content, tools and digital tools.

5 We will interview certain ACL organisations (for example, BSA, NIACE, WEA, and Local Adult Education Services).

Cost
Total cost is £75,000.

Who
NIACE in partnership with Becta and NILTA.

ACL projects

Period Years 1, 2 and 3
Start Autumn 2003
Finish March 2006

Aims
1 We will evaluate e-learning and blended learning approaches within ACL.

2 We will carry out a range of projects across ACL (for example, with local authorities, voluntary and community organisations).

3 We will pass on details of the outcomes of projects across ACL.

4 We will raise awareness of e-learning and blended learning across ACL.

5 We will encourage local organisations to develop materials.

6 We will develop plain language guides to the standards for learning, accessibility, usability, flexibility and metadata for anyone involved in providing ACL. This is so they can develop an understanding of the content of learning standards.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will fund projects across ACL in the following ways.

50 materials creation pilots: £2,000
50 (small) pilots: £5,000
20 (medium) pilots: £20,000
10 (large) pilots: £50,000

2 We will choose pilots after a bidding process which will take place every year according to the different types of organisations (in other words, adult education services, voluntary and community).

3 We will set aside an amount for management costs (about 10% of the total).

4 All pilots will actively pass on details of the outcomes of their pilots through seminars, visits, enquiries and publishing data on websites.

5 We will provide a support network fund for passing on extra information.

6 We will set aside funding for the plain language standards guide.

7 The overall evaluation of the programme will cost £50,000.

Costs
Total cost is £1,495,000.

Who
Managed by NIACE in partnership with LSDA.

ACL – manager training programme

Period
Phase 1 – the development – June 2003 to December 2003
Phase 2 – the delivery – April 2004 to March 2006

Task
ILT methods will change how learning provision is managed. How provision is delivered will change and infrastructure needs will also alter. A training programme for managers will mean that changes can be put in place effectively.

Aims
1 We will develop a national framework training programme with recommended standards. This should result in a range of modules that we can offer for example, VLEs, managing change and infrastructure management.

2 We will deliver a national training programme aimed at managers and curriculum specialists.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will consult practitioners to identify the main training needs for managers and develop a training framework including resources from existing manager training programmes where this is appropriate.

2 We will offer regional or sub regional training events with ongoing support provided online.

Costs
Total cost is £630,000.

Who
NIACE.

ACL – creating content

Period
April 2003 – March 2006

Task
Tools to help tutors create their own content will provide a highly motivating experience to, and contribute to the development of, community learning. We can help deliver this by providing funding to create software and access to content templates which CERL will host.

Aims
1 We will provide templates for online learning materials and hosting opportunities for these resources on CERL.

2 We will provide access to software which can help tutors create their own content.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will develop templates on CERL which can be made available for tutors to create their own content and which are hosted online.

2 We will provide funding for providers to buy content creation tools in year 2.

3 In year 1, projects can buy these tools as part of the pilot costs.

Cost
Total cost is £355,000.

Who
NIACE.

ACL – creating materials

Period
April 2003 to March 2006

Task
The programme of NLN material development should take account of the curriculum needs and how provision is delivered in adult community learning.

Aims
1 We will try to make sure that existing NLN learning materials can be made available to providers of ACL.

2 We will also aim to make sure that any programmes for buying materials in the future take account of the curriculum and delivery needs of ACL providers.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will give ACL providers information on how to download NLN materials.

2 We will provide access to NLN materials on CD-ROM for centres which do not have strong networks.

3 We will put together a round for producing materials which meets the curriculum needs of learners in ACL.

Costs
We will match details and timescales to existing budgets for NLN materials.
Total cost is £5,340,000.

Who
Becta.

Support for learners

Technology is changing the environment in which adults are learning and the process is fast-moving. ACL providers and their staff need practical help and guidance in developing a range of ways in which they can support learners in this moving landscape.

Task
We need to produce practice guidelines on how we can use ILT in a number of ways to increase the support that is provided for teaching and learning.

Aims
1 We will investigate current practice across the whole ACL sector.

2 We will identify examples of good practice to pass on to a wider audience.

3 We will explore how ILT and online leaning are creating new support roles and jobs, and redefining traditional teaching and volunteering roles.

4 We will review how VLEs in ACL and informal educational contexts.

5 We will create a series of practice guides to pass across the sector.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will carry out some initial desk research to identify the main developments and providers or projects which can offer new and high quality models.

2 We will identify appropriate themes for up to six practice guides.

3 Our initial thinking is that these should at least cover:
– staffing models;
– using volunteers;
– peer support (face-to-face and online)
– designing content; and
– creating and using VLEs.

4 Commission (using the tender process) for a company to write practice guides of up to 6000 words to a common framework which we will need by 1 February 2004.

5 We will deliver final edited versions of the practice guides to be published in electronic and printed versions by 15 April 2004.

Costs
Total cost is £29,000.

Support for learners with disabilities

People can gain access to appropriate support using specific devices and any on-screen facilities which are available. We need to create awareness of the opportunities offered in these ways through training programmes.

Task
We should provide as much support for learners with disabilities as possible by providing extra devices and using technology already built into PCs.

Aims
1 We will create awareness among advice and guidance and other support workers (AGSW) about the range of needs which learners with disabilities have.

2 We will create awareness among AGSW about assistive technologies [Assistive Technology is the application of technology to help people with learning, communication and access difficulties lead more independent and productive lives.] available within the PC (and other equipment) and extra devices.

3 We will make sure that a range of assistive technologies are made widely available to learners with disabilities in ICT centres, libraries, community and local authority facilities.

4 We will make sure that learners with disabilities know about the full range of devices which could help them.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will prepare a series of worksheets detailing the range of technology available within existing equipment and by using other devices.

2 We will consult specialist colleges and organisations (for example, RNIB, Deaf mail and so on) on work already being done.

3 We will organise a series of workshops and conferences for AGSW on a regional basis by working with IAG networks and local learning partnerships. This will happen over a two year period.

Costs
Total cost is £127,000 for regional training and awareness conferences in 2003 to 2005 and for printing a series of worksheets.

Assessing learning outcomes

Assessing individual learning outcomes is a very important way of supporting learners. It allows the tutor or learning support worker to make a judgement of distance travelled, the need for reinforcing what has been learned, possible progression paths and future directions, which the learners may want to follow. We have carried out work in this area with individual face-to-face ACL provision. We need to explore how we can transfer this experience to online learning.

Task
We need to identify the progress made in assessing individual learning outcomes in traditional non-accredited provision. We must then look at the ways in which this experience and the methods used can be transferred to online provision.

Aims
1 We will identify those existing practices of assessing learning outcomes in informal provision which go beyond self-assessment by the learner.

2 We will review progress that has been made in creating a structured approach in this area through research and piloting work carried out by NIACE, LSDA and the WEA.

3 We will examine how we can use the basic nature of computer based online learning (which leaves a recoverable digital trail) to provide independent evidence of the learner's progress and achievement.

4 We will create environments which mean that online assessments have the same value and status as more traditional assessments.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will review any research and piloting which has taken place by interviewing relevant staff in NIACE, LSDA and WEA.

2 We will identify separate stages of traditional assessment to explore how we can match these online assessments.

3 We will identify features of online and interactive learning that produce evidence which we can check to assess the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners. For example, we can look at recorded answers to questions, whether 'drag and drop' exercises have been completed correctly by ESOL learners, contributions to chatrooms and e-mail exchanges with online tutors).

4 We will carry out pilot projects in five areas with different ACL providers to test out different approaches and methods of recovering, sorting and assessing evidence and interacting with learners.

Costs
Total cost is £10,000 for the initial research and for interviewing organisations involved in learning outcomes, research and piloting.

£30,000 for pilot projects to test different approaches and methods of doing things.

Staff development

Period Year 1
April to September 2003

Task
We need a programme of training and development to encourage people to use and create e-learning resources across all curriculum areas in the ACL area.

Aims
1 We will identify the range of training and development that is needed.

2 We will produce a report that can help us develop suitable training solutions.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will carry out a set of investigations into the skills and knowledge needed to deliver e-learning successfully in the ACL.

2 We will hold focus groups events to carry out a training needs analysis (TNA) from representatives across the sector. This must include the full range of roles and functions, and a range of experience of using IT and ICT. For example, this will include managers, technical staff and tutors.

3 Nine regions will hold three or four events taking TNAs from around 360 people.

4 We will produce a report that identifies the main skills and abilities and the areas seen as lacking in the ACL sector.

5 We will produce recommendations as to the most appropriate way to meet the training needs identified in the TNAs.

Costs
Total cost is £100,000.

Who
NIACE.

Staff development

Period Years 1 and 2
April 2003 – July 2004

We must make sure that information learning technology is involved in learning programmes using a mix of methods.

Task
We will provide a thorough training package that will help change practice so ACL staff can improve on and extend existing programmes with ILT.

Aims
1 We will consider the evidence of need so we can develop a framework for developing staff in ILT.

2 We will identify the challenges facing ACL in using ILT through visits to providers, case studies and pilots.

3 We will consider the parts of the Ferl practitioner programme that would be appropriate.

4 We will test a programme of training and small scale developments that involve ILT in teaching and learning.

5 We will include ICT training needs in the pilots.

6 We need to map training needs against training standards which have been approved.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will offer one pilot in each region.

2 We will offer pilots to ACL and partner organisations we fund.

3 We will develop materials between April 2003 and September 2003.

4 Materials will be available for tutors to use and download.

5 We will deliver pilot training from 0ctober 2003 to December 2003.

6 We will evaluate and redesign the pilots from January 2004 to July 2004.

Costs
We have set £100,000 aside.

Staff Development

Period Years 2 and 3
Sept 2004 to March 2006

Task
We will deliver a full training programme for 'First Step' ILT training in ACL.

Aims
1 We will build on the pilot programme to deliver the developed ILT training programme throughout ACL.

2 The training is aimed at our and LEA staff who will be using ILT to support teaching and learning. This will include community education workers, tutors, basic skills tutors and outreach staff.

3 We will build on the identified ICT needs to develop an online and downloadable ICT training module aimed at tutors and those who need ICT skills.

4 We will deliver training using a 'cascade model' in order to reach the large number of part time staff. In other words, staff will go on training courses and they will then pass on what they have learnt to other staff.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will invite representatives from each of the 14 curriculum areas to go on a three day training programme – 150 LEAs and 50 LSC providers = 2,800 trained 'guides'.

2 Each trained 'guide' will pass on training to at least 50 people. For example, one LEA will train at least 700 people. Nationally this represents 140,000 people trained.

3 We will give you at least one laptop and projector to each organisation to deliver the training.

4 We will give each trained 'guide' training materials and ILT support materials.

5 We will provide online support to trained 'guides' through the CERL 'guide' discussion area

6 We will provide ongoing support online through the CERL discussion area.

Costs
We have set aside £6,000,000 to cover the following: Laptops, projectors, Roll-out training programme trainers and hiring the venue

Who
The project and pilot will be managed by NIACE.
Becta will develop online support.

ACL – online resource (working title CERL)

Period
April 2003 to March 2006

Task
We must provide tools, resources and guidelines to help develop ILT. This resource must be designed to take account of the distinctive characteristics of delivering ACL.

Aims
1 We will provide a high quality website which is a model of good practice in using web technology to deliver learning and support resources.

2 We will provide regular news updates on issues which are relevant to using information technology effectively to support ACL.

3 We will provide content to support tutors including case studies of good practice, material for developing skills and links to effective online tools.

4 We will publish staff development materials along with other partners in ACL to promote an effective model of community e-learning.

5 We will contribute to staff development programmes which we will develop with partner organisations.

6 We will develop an online group of tutors and so on who will be involved in using ILT in ACL.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will develop a website to meet the standards for online public and e-learning resources (for example, e-Gif) and demonstrate features of good web design.

2 We will keep a regularly updated news resource of a range of relevant items which will interest tutors in ACL.

3 We will ask tutors for contributions about how they have used technology effectively in ACL.

4 We will provide templates to create resources, a hosting service for resources, and the related guidelines, guidance documents and supporting metadata.

5 We will work with partners to help deliver staff development programmes.

6 We will provide an online forum for tutors.

7 We will work with other major partners to develop metadata for community content.

Costs
Total cost is £1,236,929.

Who
Community Programme Team Becta – Lifelong Learning Division.

Outreach activities

Period   Year 1
April to December 2003

Task
Outreach activities are a significant part of the ACL sector and we need to provide ILT materials, staff training and other developments to support these activities.

Aims
1 We will carry out research to see what effect ICT has had on outreach activities.

2 We will identify good practice of ICT outreach and include this in training modules.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will identify the main areas of training using the following.
   – We will hold a two day consultation event drawing together expertise across the country;
   – We will review current practice, for example, NIACE Cymru, LSDA, Adult Learning Fund Projects, LIF, Neighbourhood renewal, and DfES;
   – We will interview the main practitioners; and
   – We will hold electronic mail group discussion.

2 We will include the training needs identified in the ILT training programme.

3 We will produce a good practice guide that can stand alone and be included in a training programme.

4 We will distribute the good practice guide freely within ACL.

Costs
Total cost is £50,000.

Who
NIACE.

Information, advice and guidance

Period Year 1
April – March 2004

Information and advice are critical for learners returning to learning. ILT has the potential to improve the existing efforts to provide information and advice through a range of services, resources and other types of help.

Task
- We must explore with the National Information and Guidance Board how to develop access to services, resources and help.
- We will explore how using ILT to provide information and advice can be included in training for ACL staff – particularly tutors and facilitators.

Aims
1 We will identify current ILT information and advice services and resources available to all ACL staff including IAG staff, for example, web based: Ufi learndirect, UK online 'help is at hand', current practitioners' websites and CD-ROM materials.

2 We will identify, within the sector, current practice in using ILT to provide information and advice.

3 We will identify how ILT can serve to improve the quality of information and advice, particularly for ACL tutors.

4 We will build on existing good practice to develop a way of providing access to services, resources and help.

5 We will consult within ACL and wider to identify and make recommendations for training needs.

How the aims will be achieved
1 We will review current services and resources.

2 We will consult representatives of ACL to identify training needs.

3 We will interview a selection of ACL and partner organisations (for example, IAG networks, local LSCs, Ufi) to identify key components of a portal.

Costs
Total cost is £25,000.

Who
NIACE/Becta.

Glossary of terms

BECTA	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
DELG	Distributed Electronic Learning Group
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
Gbps	Gigabits per second
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
IT	Information Technology
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
ILT	Information Learning Technology
ISO	International Standards Organisation
JANET	Joint Academic Network
JCN	Joint Committees for Networking
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
JNT	Joint Networking Team
JNUG	JANET National User Group
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
MAN	Metropolitan Area Network
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NILTA	National Information and Learning Technologies Association
NLN	National Learning Network
NREN	National Research and Education Network
RSC	Regional Support Centres
SJ4	Super JANET 4
SLA	Service Level Agreement
UKERNA	United Kingdom Education and Research Networking Association

Notes

Becta   JISC   >   NILTA   learning and skills development agency   department for education and skills   UKERNA

Learning+Skills Council