

**Independent evaluation of the intervention study in Sunderland
Local Authority (LA) with young people who are not in
employment, education or training (NEET)**

Final report, March 2010

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Any evaluation study relies upon the goodwill, generosity and openness of those involved in the initiative to provide details and report about their experiences. In this respect this study has not been different from the many others we have conducted. However, this study has involved and touched on a very large number of people, and we are enormously grateful for the interaction and support provided by those many people. In this respect, the evaluation team would like to thank, most sincerely: Jonathan Drori and Nick Paske of Changing Media Ltd.; Joanna Traynor of TwoFour Knowledge; the area manager in Connexions Sunderland who championed the work in the LA; the key trainers; Connexions Sunderland and Connexions Tyne and Wear Hub staff; Sunderland LA staff; the City of Sunderland College and Sunderland University staff; youth work group staff; and last, but by no means least, the young people themselves.

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1. Description of the intervention approach and processes

1.1 Introduction

This report describes the outcomes of Go Create, a small-scale, short timescale intervention study that focused on two areas of national policy and social priority: the increasing number of young people not in employment, education and training (NEET) as well as implementation of the e-strategy to support all young people. The recent Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) strategy on information, advice and guidance for young people (DCSF, 2009) emphasises the need for technologies to play a broader role in providing support for young people seeking educational, employment or training opportunities. In the report, the department affirms a commitment to the development of a wider range of innovative services including:

- online services that support young people in sharing their experiences with others
- facilities to link existing online provision
- online moderated chat rooms to enable discussion
- message boarding to offer information provision
- confidential web-cam facilities to provide for advice.

Becta, the lead government agency concerned with the co-ordination and delivery of the e-strategy for education and children's services, indicated in its revised and updated strategy *Harnessing Technology: Next Generation Learning* (2008) a focus on three aspects of policy where technology can contribute to national educational objectives: "raising achievements and improving skills; narrowing gaps and supporting the vulnerable; and improving capacity, quality and efficiency". The intervention described in this report focuses on all of these areas of national priority and need.

1.2 The intervention

Context: Sunderland Local Authority

The intervention study, called Go Create, ran in Sunderland Local Authority (LA) between November 2008 and September 2009. Go Create was conceived and described by Changing Media¹ and TwoFour Knowledge², and produced by TwoFour Knowledge with a range of key workers from Sunderland LA projects whose remits brought them into contact with young people who are NEET. Because the producers and developers were located in geographically distant areas, the process of establishing contacts and bringing people from projects together was facilitated with the help of an area manager in Connexions Sunderland.

¹ Changing Media Ltd, 2 Sheraton Street, London, W1F 8BH , URL: www.changingmedia.co.uk

² TwoFour Knowledge, TwoFour Studios, Estover, Plymouth, PL6 7RG and 6-7 Cross Street, London, EC1N 8UA. URL: www.twofour.co.uk

The City of Sunderland is a large metropolitan area. While geographically it may not have been ideally situated for the producers or developers of this intervention, it was nonetheless apposite in terms of a range of key features and characteristics. According to the Ofsted *Joint Area Review* (2007), "Sunderland is the largest city in the north east region and includes the former new town of Washington and the former coal mining areas of Houghton and Hetton... There has been considerable investment in the area and a major growth of service industries, including telecommunications and call centres... There are still areas of high unemployment in the city and some mismatch between the skills of the workforce and the requirements of new industries." The report goes on to say that

[t]he population of the city is 283,700 people, of whom 1.9 per cent overall are from an ethnic minority background; this percentage is increasing and 2.6 per cent of school age pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with Bangladeshi and Filipino children forming the largest groups. In some areas of the city there are high levels of poverty, deprivation and ill health, with 46.1 per cent of the resident population living in areas ranked amongst the 20 per cent most deprived in England and Wales. Crime has recently fallen below the national average for the first time. Drug and alcohol abuse are above the national average. While the population has steadily declined in recent years, the mid-2005 estimate has recorded the first rise since 1993. The number of older people is increasing. There are 68,300 children and young people aged 0-19, who make up 24 per cent of the total population. 27.1 per cent of dependent children live with lone parents compared to the England average of 22.8 per cent.

The City of Sunderland is recognised by central government as a 'NEET hotspot', and national data from the government department highlights it as having one of the highest NEET figures in England. In November 2008, Sunderland was one of a number of LAs invited by government to discuss high numbers of young people aged 16 to 18 years with NEET status. Sunderland LA has been working with the DCSF on a reduction strategy, and a high challenge has been set for the Sunderland Partnership to achieve a NEET adjusted target of 9.5 per cent for 2009 to 2010 and 8.8 per cent for 2010 to 2011.

Sunderland LA, including Connexions Sunderland, has had a history of supporting and implementing initiatives to enhance the life chances of its population of young people who are NEET. A range of initiatives (Activity Agreement, Make It Work, Go4It, and the Engagement Support and Prevention Projects) had been supported and developed by Connexions Sunderland and the LA to engage and progress young people who are NEET prior to this intervention study. Some of these initiatives were still in place at the time the intervention study was introduced.

Some previous initiatives focused on aspects of technology use (including computer access to information in Connexions centres, information on public monitors accessible through Sunderland Partnership TV, and developments through the Digital Challenge initiative). Some initiatives that were pilot or project-based enabled the adoption of useful approaches for certain lengths of time but were not

necessarily able to be sustained when funding ceased or when projects or pilots were felt to have 'ended'. Initiatives that were not sustained or widened in the past for technological reasons might have experienced wider integration and longer-term roll-out at the time of the intervention study. This is because communication technologies at this time had developed to the point where they allowed convergence of systems, linking of data, and provision of higher levels of social involvement.

At the time the intervention initiative was launched, Sunderland LA had already developed and stated intentions for longer-term strategic directions that matched the forms of intervention offered through the Go Create initiative. The following statements attest to Sunderland LA's vision:

"All children and young people will be offered the very best preparation and foundation for adult life. They will be offered appropriate personalised learning programmes, high quality advice and guidance and the opportunity to learn in creative environments." (The Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025, 2008)

Furthermore, the Sunderland Software City initiative envisions "a high calibre workforce to support the innovation and growth needs of the regional software industry" as well as "an education sector encompassing secondary, further and higher education; providing exceptional technical and business academic and vocational education and training; and developing aspirational students and workers in the software industry throughout their careers." (Sunderland Software City Vision 2016)

In an early draft action plan, the Sunderland Partnership stated the need for delivery of a strategy that would:

- ensure that all young people participate in education and training that challenges them to achieve their potential and go on to further or higher education or skilled employment
- give young people the knowledge and skills that they, their employers and the economy need to prosper in the 21st century
- close the achievement gap so that all have an equal opportunity to succeed, irrespective of gender, race, disability or background.

The draft action plan indicated intentions to:

- enhance impact through greater focus and commitment to the NEET agenda
- agree on responsibilities and monitoring arrangements
- enhance impact through greater co-ordination of activities to achieve better outcomes
- identify accessible resources
- fully engage decision-makers from the wider partnership
- ensure staff development across all partners to support the NEET agenda.

The LA's ability to consider upcoming initiatives within the context of its wider policy and strategies indicated an important step towards integrating activity and practice across the service. The intervention initiative was a clear match in this respect.

The intervention approach

The Go Create intervention study was proposed on the basis of a previous study commissioned by Becta (Passey, Williams and Rogers, 2008) that explored the potential for using technologies to support young people who are NEET. The principles from the previous study that were discussed in conceptualising the intervention included:

- taking an informal rather than a formal approach with the specifically selected activities that involved young people
- engaging these young people in practical activity
- embedding activities within existing and developing social networks
- adopting creative approaches to activity and outcomes
- enabling short-term engagement to be built into longer-term involvement
- developing practices that would allow young people's outcomes to be shared and celebrated.

Fundamentally, the intervention sought to explore how young people's behaviours and skills (notably techniques and skills of self-presentation from experiences with online social networking) could be developed. The idea was that this would support positive outcomes in education, training or potential employment links. The project sought to scaffold several activities. It started with those activities that developed specific skills and behaviours concerned with online presentation to potential employers and education providers. This approach was outlined in several steps:

- 1 Considering key features of the young people's support systems
- 2 Initially drawing in the young people to create pieces about their passions (using multimedia)
- 3 Subsequently enabling the young people to create online multimedia or visual curriculum vitae (CV)

4 Concurrently introducing parallel support activities such as sharing and celebration events.

Changing Media shared their conception of the developing intervention with key workers in Sunderland LA to integrate on-the-ground ideas and to address professional comments. A step-by-step account of the proposal development process is provided in Appendix B. Following feedback, Changing Media finalised the proposal and shared it with key personnel. Subsequently, TwoFour Knowledge discussed production with Connexions Sunderland and with representatives from a range of groups across Sunderland LA, including youth workers from the voluntary sector and training providers from Entry to Employment (E2E). Additionally, the producers involved young designers in an attempt to meet the needs of the audience more acutely. Implementation of the intervention involved a range of key support workers in Sunderland LA, with the lead interest taken by an area manager in Connexions Sunderland. The Connexions manager was willing to take the initiative on board to look at its potential and impact, and to feed in LA thinking and practice, where possible. The intervention was taken on board, therefore, out of professional interest rather than as part of a specific LA remit or an intentional systemic adoption perspective.

The intervention facility and activities

TwoFour Knowledge created the online resource facilities described in the proposal and provided support and training for individuals and groups identified by the Connexions manager. The home page of the Go Create site that was created and subsequently used by support workers and young people is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Home page of the Go Create site

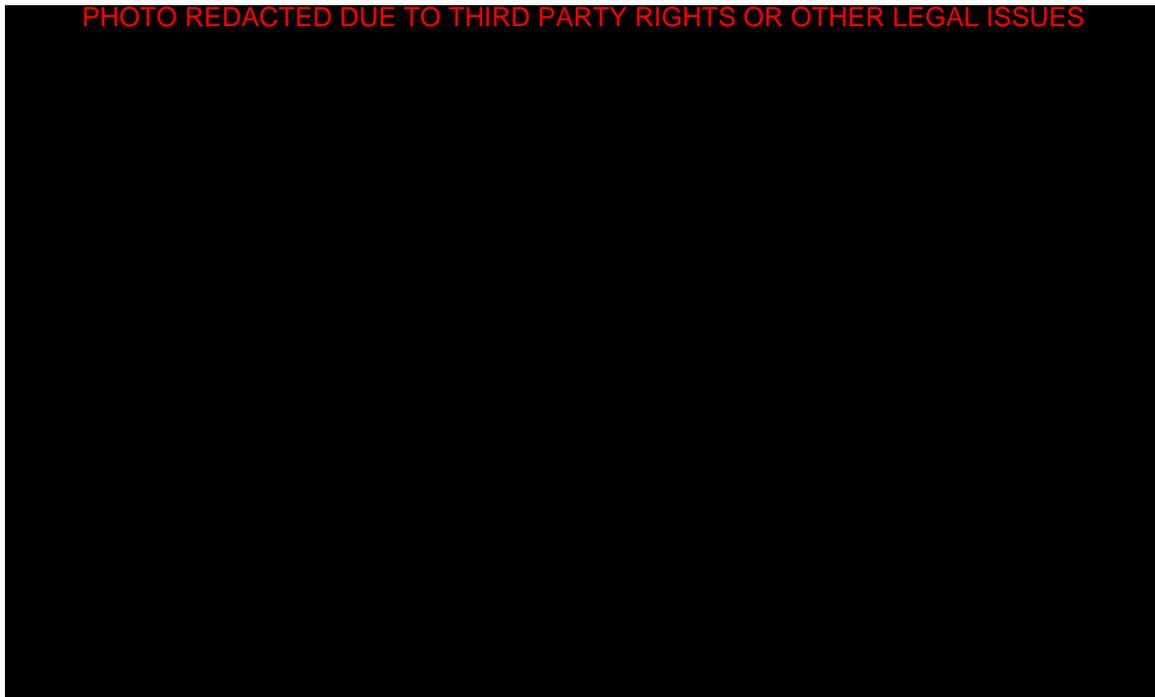
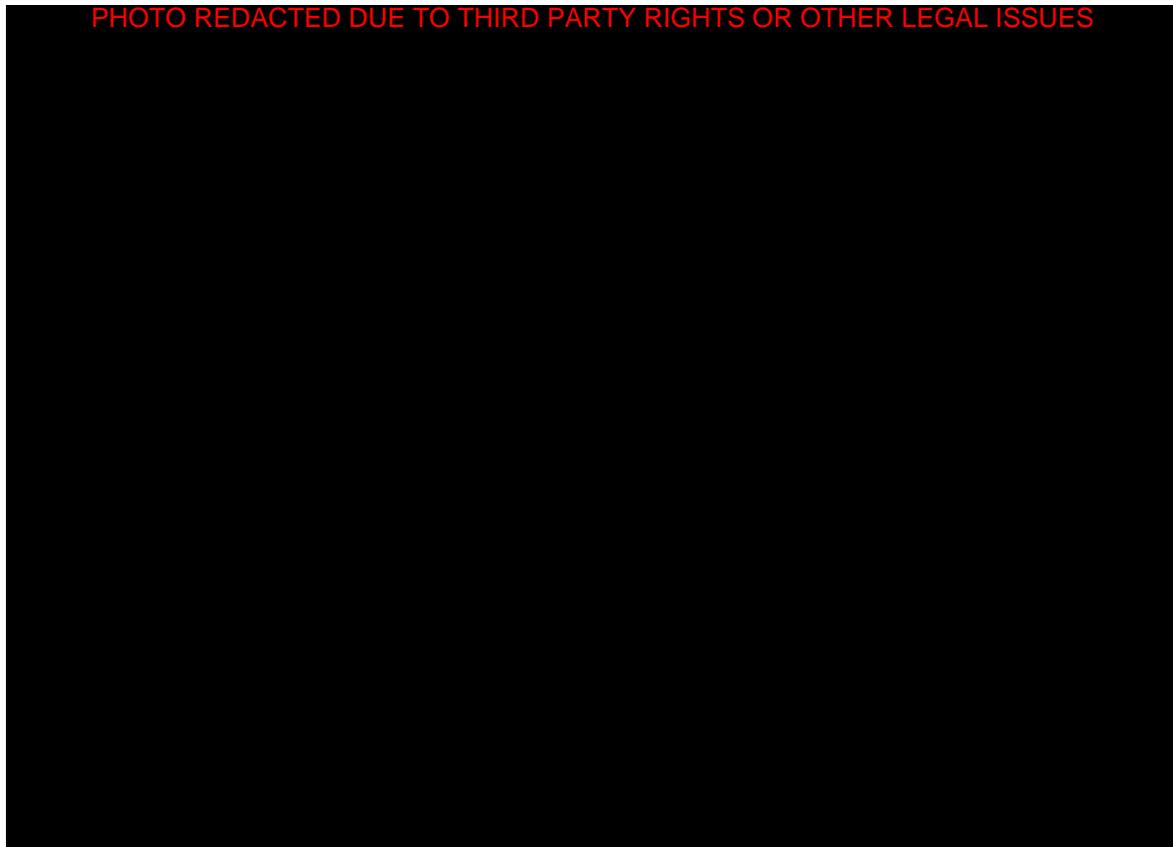


Figure 2: Continuation of the Go Create home page (scrolling down)



Having accessed the site and developed the necessary skills (through training sessions with trainers and support workers), young people were able to use offline and online facilities to create 'passion pieces' in video format, which contained images and statements about themselves. Some of the young people integrated these elements into a multimedia CV (MCV). These MCVs varied in format and content and portrayed some of the different skills and interests of individual young people. Part of a multimedia CV created by a young person, including some video elements showing activities in which the young person had been involved, is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Lead elements of a multimedia CV created by a young person and posted on the Go Create site

Summary

I consider myself to be a highly motivated and enthusiastic individual, with an excellent record of attendance and punctuality within education and employment.

I have excellent communication skills and a friendly disposition.

I recently completed my senior instructors course in the army cadets which, overall made me comfortable and experienced with talking in front of people; and teaching subjects to the right standard.

I am also a good team player, I have the ability to work independently using my own initiative.

I play a lot of charity gigs in and around the North-East, recently playing the North East England music festival in Sunderland's Mowbray park.

I am also currently in talks with Futureheads and Maximo Park, with the possibility of being a support act for them when they play Ashbrooke in 2010.

night

Army Cadets



A quick video depicting my life in the army cadets

Photography.



I spent the day in and around Sunderland taking photographs for this video.

Another young person created and entered categories for skills, achievements and ambitions. These are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Lead elements of a second multimedia CV created by a young person and posted on the Go Create site

Key Skills

- I am able to adapt to new situations quickly.
- I can be trusted to handle cash.
- I have good health and safety awareness.
- I have good organisational skills.
- I have patience and am a good listener.

Achievements

- Young development group award level 1.
- D of E service, skills and physical recreation. (bronze)
- OCR - key skills in working with others level 3.
- OCR - key skills in application of number level 2.
- nocn - Participating in leisure activities level 1.
- nocn - Sex and relationship education level 1.
- nocn - Personal career preparation level 1.
- nocn - Understanding response to body image level 1.
- nocn - Using teamwork skills level 1.
- nocn - Using ICT and computer systems level 1.
- nocn - Developing skills for independent life level 1.
- nocn - Understanding prejudice and discrimination level 1.
- nocn - Diploma for progression level 1.
- nocn - Participating in leisure activities level 1.

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A third young person emphasised elements of work experience on a multimedia CV (shown in Figure 5).

Figure 5: Lead elements of a third multimedia CV created by a young person and posted on the Go Create site

College Work Placement

Barmston Primary School

Washington, United Kingdom

Oct 2007 - Jun 2008

Classroom Assistant

I worked at Barmston Primary School for two months. My role involved preparation of the classroom for the pupils this involved sharpening pencils, turning on the class computers, setting up the milk etc

I also got to read stories to the pupils. Another responsibility I was given was yard duty this required me to oversee the children playing, take part in yard games.

I also worked in year 1,2 & 3. My roles involved preparing things in the classroom for the pupils and staff. This included setting up the computers for the days routine, washing the fruit and getting their work books ready. I also got to help the children with their Mathematics, English and other lessons including Physical Education, Art & Science.

In Year 4, I helped them with their SATS. This included things like setting there papers out onto the tabels and supervising to make sure they wern't cheating. i was also allowed to re read the questions a 2nd time vif they didnt understand. I also did yard duty with other members of staff, this included keeping an eye on the children, and make sure they lined up when told to do so.

I went on a field trip to the Wild Fowl Park with the children and other members of staff, we spent all day looking at the birds, and then the children had a chance to play on the park. before we went on the field trip we spent time looking at information on birds and what kind of things we would see while on our trip.

A fourth young person emphasised ambitions and qualifications already gained. These aspects are shown in Figure 6. These four examples (Figures 3 to 6) indicate how the Go Create facilities were used in different ways to bring out elements of importance to each individual.

Figure 6: Lead elements of a fourth multimedia CV created by a young person and posted on the Go Create site

Objective

My objective in life is to become successful in whatever I do. I want to have a well paid career, a family, and have the funds to treat them to whatever they need or desire. I will work hard towards my life goals in order to succeed in this dream.

Education

St roberts of New minster school

Washington, United Kingdom

Sep 2002 - Aug 2007

N/A- GCSE

Art - A

Media Studies - B

Maths - C

English Language - C

English Literature - C

Science double award - CC

Religious Education - C

Geography - C

Graphics - C

Adult literature - Level 2 - Pass

Impact of the intervention approach

When introduced to the LA, the Go Create initiative was in the form of an initial development and, as such, was accepted on the basis of a professional ‘proof of concept’ rather than as an initiative for wide systemic adoption. Subsequently, following initial implementation, Go Create was discussed in the September 2009 Sunderland LA ‘Turn the Curve’ exercise as one of a number of action steps that partners might take to reduce numbers of young people who are NEET. These discussions were in line with strategies discussed in *Investing in Potential: Our Strategy to increase the proportion of 16-24 year olds in education, employment and training* (DCSF, DWP and BIS, 2009), a recently published joint government department document which states: “We are continuing to work with Becta to explore the potential of technology to support and reengage young people who are not in education, employment or training.”

The findings of the intervention study reported here should be viewed in the context of LA actions and statements from the time the intervention was introduced. The statements make it clear that Sunderland LA was in the process of reviewing its strategies, actions and plans, and that a complete integration of the intervention

study within the LA would require time and opportunity for key workers to fully align themselves to LA concerns and needs.

The intervention ran across a short time period (some 10 months in total, with technologies in place for five months within that period), thus limiting the ability to disseminate practice and assess impact on outcomes. The intervention was not conceived as an instrument for achieving short-term target needs, such as reducing the number of young people who were NEET within a one-year period of time. As such, certain assessment tools were not considered appropriate in evaluating this initiative. The evaluation methods used were in keeping with the stage of implementation that had been reached.

The intervention was intended to support some of the 'hardest to reach' young people – those who are NEET. It is well recognised that young people who are NEET have often built up concerns and attitudes towards employment, education, training and indeed any forms of intervention. These concerns and attitudes may well not be addressed within short time limits. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that short-term interventions for young people who have built up such attitudes over long time periods are likely to have limited impacts. As a consequence, expectations for impacts of this form of intervention should be kept within reason, since even engagement levels with this form of intervention could be expected to be limited.

This intervention study was a 'small, exploratory study' that examined a creative technology approach and its developments in a single context (one LA) to offer a 'proof of concept'. It was expected that the project would provide a greater understanding of whether this approach could engage and support young people who are NEET through a professional interest theme. It was anticipated that issues would arise, but that these would allow a greater understanding of how other communities in other LAs might approach an initiative like this.

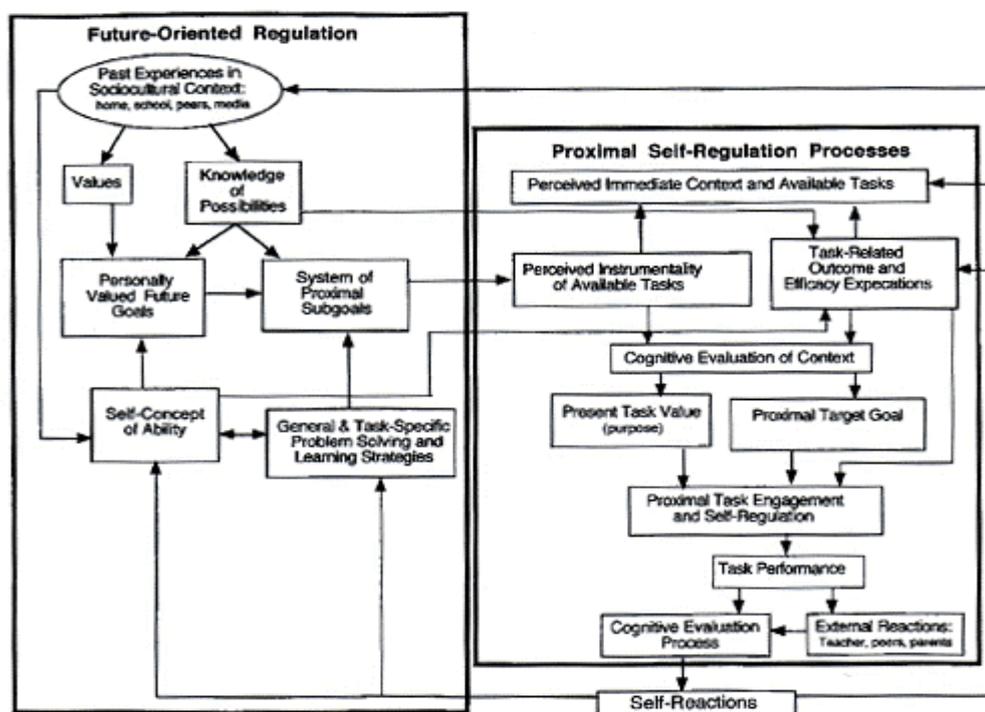
2. Evaluation and theoretical frameworks

2.1 Theoretical framework and impact on young people

A full account of the underlying theoretical support for the design principles of this intervention and associated empirical work are provided elsewhere (Passey, Williams and Rogers, 2008). What follows here is a brief account introducing the thinking behind the intervention and suggesting reasonable criteria for judging the impact of the intervention.

The theoretical framework behind this intervention is informed largely by motivation theory and research. Motivation is a key factor in the ability of individuals to engage with the challenges that they face. Finding an appropriate framework for discussing the relevant aspects of motivation theory and research is not straightforward, and alternative frameworks exist that may turn out to be better than the one proposed here. However, as a starting point, work by Miller and Brickman (2004) offers a model (Figure 7) demonstrating the various motivational processes assumed to be active in individuals engaging with education or training.

Figure 7: A model of future-oriented motivation and self-regulation (from Miller and Brickman, 2004)



These processes are affected by individuals' self-perception and self-understanding, as well as by their perception of the nature of tasks and challenges that need to be confronted. While high levels of interest and intrinsic motivation in the task at hand are beneficial and useful, it is frequently the case that individuals need to engage in

tasks that do not hold much immediate interest and intrinsic motivation. In these cases individuals need to regulate their own motivational processes. In this respect, the assumption at the heart of this model is that self-regulation is crucial to successful and sustained engagement.

The model distinguishes between long (future) and short-term (proximal) self-regulatory processes, with the former helping to determine the latter. Embedded in the long-term processes are value systems that help individuals attach value to short-term activities that might otherwise contain little in the way of immediate benefit. It follows that individuals who are able to engage relatively effectively with education and training have developed both the future and the proximal self-regulatory processes, and are thereby able to engage in short-term activities even when these do not carry immediate gratification of needs. The development of links between the future-orientated and the proximal regulatory systems depends crucially on an understanding of what might be possible. This understanding helps individuals to develop short-term sub-goals setting out the steps that need to be accomplished in order to move from where they are to where they want to be.

One assumption set out by Passey, Williams and Rogers (2008) was that many young people with NEET status would lack well-developed self-regulatory systems. It follows that effective intervention, whether focused on the use of technology or otherwise, needs to address this deficiency. Much of the literature setting out the benefits of technology deployment in educational settings has emphasised the apparent benefits that pertain to what Miller and Brickman refer to as the proximal forms of regulation. In many cases the assumption is that information and communications technology (ICT) can supplement or replace interest or intrinsic motivation by adding a multi-modal learning experience that raises the interest levels of the content.

While this is not disputed, the approach adopted in this intervention assumes that effective long-term intervention also requires the gradual building up of value systems together with an associated awareness of what might be possible in the future. In addition, a successful intervention must help individuals understand the series of actions needed in order to progress towards longer-term goals. Without an understanding of these actions and the links between them, future aspirations are based more on fantasy than on realistic and attainable goals. The current intervention was designed in the light of these principles, and its impact should be considered in terms of the value of its developmental activities in helping individuals work towards establishing effective self-regulatory systems.

According to this model, the impact of the intervention is unlikely to be immediate and dramatic. Nor is it likely to be best judged in terms of immediate gains in work or training placements. The problems faced by young people who are NEET, and the problems inherent in any attempt to bring about their re-engagement into education, training or employment, are varied and complex. There is unlikely to be a 'magic bullet' (technology-based or otherwise) that provides a quick and simple solution.

However, without an adequate understanding of the meaning of engagement, and thereby disengagement and re-engagement, any such attempts will be highly likely to fail.

The design of this intervention seeks to 'kick-start' a sequence of self-exploration leading to a more sustainable future engagement with employment, training and education on the part of young people. As such, not only do participants need to experience an initial and fairly immediate sense of self-enhancement through their engagement with the initiative, but they also need to begin to see links between satisfying activities and other goals that might start seeming both possible and desirable. This is only likely to occur if the intervention makes available the immediate benefits of technology together with support systems able to sustain the longer-term changes that will be needed.

2.2 System-wide evaluation approach

The theoretical frameworks described above focus on implementation at the level of young people who are NEET. In this initiative, however, implementation involves other 'actors' who provide and are involved in support activities with the young people and within the wider support system operated through the LA. The evaluation of this intervention, therefore, needs to include the wider systemic elements of its implementation.

In this context, fundamental work described by Corbett and Rossman (1989) has been used as a framework for the evaluation approach. These authors argue that indirect and undefined factors existing beyond the immediacy of an implementation situation itself are nonetheless fundamentally important for successful implementation of technology-based activity. They define three paths that implementation might follow: a technical path (focusing on technological implementation or activity implementation), a political path (focusing on personal or professional interest, endeavour or enterprise), and a cultural path (focusing on how activities match with interests and endeavours of the users rather than the providers). The authors stress that the most successful projects they have studied involved implementation practices covering all of these paths rather than only one or two of them.

Because the Go Create initiative required engagement with both support workers³ and young people, it is important to consider the potential range of 'actors' involved, how they are involved, and the contributory elements for each 'actor' in terms of technical, political and cultural paths. The implementation paths discussed by Corbett and Rossman match important elements of the implementation framework for this intervention. These elements include the intervention activities using technology, the mediation or adaptation of technology use by support workers

³ The term 'support workers' is used across this report to include all workers involved in providing support to young people who are NEET (youth workers, those within the voluntary sector, and Connexions advisors).

according to context, and the influences of and on the stakeholders. Such elements make the implementation of this initiative a case that involves both 'change' and 'systemic change'. In evaluating this initiative, therefore, we have sought to gather evidence about political and cultural aspects of the implementation, as well as technical aspects.

For the evaluation, we gathered evidence across the entire period of the intervention study. The evidence base provided perspectives about the background and context (of young people, within the LA, and within the support framework provided by systems in place), as well as perspectives about outcomes of the intervention itself. In tracking the development of the intervention, we gathered data from a range of sources, triangulating findings in order to consider outcomes through different viewpoints where possible to ensure that the outcomes are as robust as possible. The findings, detailed in subsequent sections of this report, cover:

- outcomes for young people
- training and technological issues
- feedback from trained support workers
- management and organisational implementation challenges
- cultural issues
- conclusions and recommendations.

The evidence base for the evaluation is detailed in Appendix A along with the methods adopted and used in the study. Due to the nature of the intervention and the limited number of studies undertaken previously and reported publicly, most methods were created in bespoke form, to suit specific purposes of the study.

At a systemic level, successful implementation of an initiative like Go Create requires substantial support. Steadman et al. (1991), in looking at school systems where technologies were being introduced, identified at fairly early stages of adoption a wide range of barriers and drivers that influenced their patterns and time of implementation. The drivers that would need to be in place to support a systemic Go Create initiative, and the drivers that already exist in this small-scale study, have been evaluated and grouped by the Corbett and Rossman categories of technical, political and cultural aspects. These drivers are listed by category in Appendix C.

Overall, to take this initiative forward at a systemic level, there were more additional drivers required (49 in total) than existing drivers in place (23 in total). Of the additional drivers required, most were in the political path (30 in total), with significant additional drivers required in the cultural (10 in total) and technical (9 in total) paths also. In terms of existing drivers in place, most were in the political path (13 in total), with some in the technical (6 in total) and cultural (4 in total) paths.

3. Measurable outcomes for young people

The intervention studied was intended primarily to support young people, albeit alongside and with the mediation of support workers. Although there was no specific number of young people targeted for the intervention, it was set up so that around 100 participants could be accommodated within the facilities available. By the end of October 2009:

- twenty-nine young people had placed material on the Go Create site directly
- two of these young people were not NEET
- of the 27 young people who were NEET, a grid completed by Connexions workers using the Passey, Williams and Rogers (2008) categorisation indicated that:
 - 1 was classed as MUDP (with multiple learning problems).
 - 0 were classed as ALT (choosing alternative lifestyles).
 - 13 were classed as NEER (nearly education, employment and training ready).
 - 13 were classed as EER (education, employment and training ready).

3.1 Key successes for young people

Of the 27 young people, 19 who produced multimedia material for the Go Create site had previously created a CV in a non-multimedia format. The remaining eight succeeded in producing a multimedia CV for the site but had not previously created a similar product in another medium. Of these eight young people who created a CV in a form beyond anything they had done previously, three were classed as NEER and five were classed as EER.

Although this does not mean that these young people are now 'off the NEET register' (a measure that was never intended as part of this intervention), it does mean that they achieved something that they had not achieved before. The achievement rate for this group—the eight young people with completed CVs who achieved more than previously in comparison to the 27 young people attending in total—is a success ratio of 0.3. Although it is not necessarily certain that this level of success could be generalised across the entire population of young people who are NEET—even for those who are EER or NEER—it is indicative of success that might be able to be taken further. This assertion is further supported positively by the feedback and comments of the young people themselves.

Seven of these eight young people provided written feedback at the end of the training course they attended. Their comments supported those of Connexions staff in affirming what they had gained from the project:

- A good multimedia CV
- A better CV
- How to do a CV correctly
- A visual CV and some good experience
- A certificate to show I have participated in the course
- I liked it that [R] helped me out with a lot of things and [C] helped me as well
- More creativity and a good way of showing employers that I am willing to think more outside the box by creating this visually and not just written down.

In total, 24 young people who took part in the training and used the Go Create site completed evaluation feedback. Their feedback on key questions is summarised here (a list of the individual responses to these questions can be found in Appendix A). When the young people were asked if they would recommend this intervention to others and why, only one response was negative. The majority of those recommending the intervention emphasised the value of creating a CV. Other responses highlighted the helpfulness of the support staff and the opportunity to improve technical and creative skills.

When asked what they liked about the course, participants again stressed the creative aspects of the project, creation of a multimedia CV, and friendliness and helpfulness of staff. Many participants also said they enjoyed using the technology to produce imagery and video. These comments are supported by feedback from the trainer who worked with many of them (see Section 4.2) and by other responses in direct feedback from the young people themselves.

Follow-up interviews with some of the young people provided more detail about their perceptions of benefit. These interview responses were gathered by one of the young people working with Connexions Sunderland. He was interviewed initially, and he in turn interviewed five of the young people involved in direct training sessions. The sample included five young people who were male, and one who was female. All six indicated that they had enjoyed the experience of creating a multimedia CV. However, their reasons varied:

- One young man had gained some certificates from a plumbing course and was able to take pictures of these and include them. He found taking pictures and presenting his certificates in this form far easier than writing about his qualifications.

- The young woman enjoyed trying out filmmaking technology as well as creating a multimedia CV. She enjoyed taking still photographs as well as making a short video.
- One young man emphasised how much he had enjoyed the experience – “Yes, really enjoyed it.” This was because it was different from creating a normal CV. He said he was “able to show skills and qualities visually rather than through the standard format of old fashioned CV.” He had also “told one or two mates” about his experience.
- Another young man enjoyed the experience because he “had a laugh.”
- A fourth young man enjoyed the course in overall terms but thought parts of it were repetitive. He thought it needed “the visual part first”, which would have introduced the young people to the type of technology on offer there.
- The fifth young man also enjoyed creating a multimedia CV. He enjoyed using the video software, which he had not used before. He went on to explain that creating the CV meant that “I learned a lot about myself. I evaluated my life, which parts would be of interest to employers”.

The young people trained directly and involved in the initiative achieved, across a short time period (within one or two weeks), a number of measurable outcomes:

- They all maintained their attendance and attention (although in some cases this involved particular strategies introduced by the support workers).
- All produced elements of multimedia work that was presented on the Go Create website.
- All 24 young people responding in a questionnaire said they enjoyed aspects of the experience.
- Twenty-three of the 24 responding in the questionnaire said they would recommend the initiative to others.
- According to Connexions workers, eight of the 27 young people produced a multimedia CV that was better than any other they had produced previously.
- Six of the 24 young people responding in the questionnaire said they enjoyed using a video software package or producing imagery and video.
- Two of the 24 said in open questions they enjoyed the creative aspects.
- At least one young person reported using the multimedia CV experience to reflect on personal strengths and weaknesses.

These data indicate the different levels of achievement gained by participants. These results are shown in the list following as ratio measures, and in Table 1 according to levels of learning attained.

- Attention and attendance: 1.00

- Attaining understanding of how to use the facilities: 1.00
- Stating the experience as being worthwhile for others: 0.96
- Creating video or imagery integrated into a CV: 0.74
- Achieving a better CV than previously: 0.30

Table 1: Key aspects of learning and ratios of young people achieving these different levels

Key aspect of learning	Ratio of young people achieving this level
Attention and attendance	1.00
Enjoyment of aspects of the course	1.00
Understanding	1.00
Producing multimedia elements	1.00
Creativity	0.74
Synthesis	0.30

3.2 Young people's perspectives on usefulness of the activity

It was clear from comments made by the young people that they saw the production of a CV as a route to gaining employment or towards employment. In this respect, many of them were concerned about engaging potential employers. However, perhaps surprisingly, the young people also stated that they did not think having a multimedia CV would always be useful to them, since they did not think employers would look at it. In this respect, they were very focused on the product (rather than the process). Only one young person discussed specifically in an open question the value gained from the process of creating the CV and the opportunity for self-reflection. Across the six young people who gave feedback by interview, the usefulness of the multimedia CV was judged by them to be:

- not useful: 3
- useful: 2
- fairly useful: 1
- very useful: 0.

When explored further, it was clear that the notion of usefulness was being judged in terms of the length of response time participants experienced between putting the items on the website and receiving comments from employers or others looking at these items on the site. Without feedback, the young people identified the value of the items to be low. Young people were clearly interested in whether employers had looked at the website since they had produced the CV, and if no employers had (or if none had responded to show that they had looked), then the CV was deemed to be of low value, even though it had been produced only a matter of weeks before. Comments from young people who thought it was not useful included: "Haven't

heard anything from it yet” and “Only use on a job website. Pointless, just sitting there. Great if employers knew about them.”

The people who thought the experience had been of some use referred to a future time when more employers would value multimedia CVs. One young person thought it was important to “hang on in there until visual CVs are more used”. For participants to feel motivated to produce a multimedia CV—or to update it—it appeared that they needed to have the sense that employers would use it. If the perception was that employers did not use it, then the CVs were judged as just on the site “sitting there”.

Nonetheless, in the same interview most of the young people indicated that they would generally recommend this facility to their friends:

- Definitely: 3
- Probably: 1
- Possibly: 1
- No: 1

The young people who said they ‘definitely’ would recommend the intervention to a friend said so not because the multimedia CV was useful but because the training course itself was enjoyable and there was a chance to try out new technology and make a film. One young person specifically liked working with the trainer, and the advice she gave to others who might become involved was “[C] was great with feedback”. However, this person would not have recommended the initiative to a friend unless “it improves if employers are accepting them”.

3.3 Recommendations for longer-term impact

There is clearly a need to engage support workers and employers more deeply in this form of initiative, so that they are committed to looking at work on the website, providing rapid feedback, and suggesting additional forms of ‘follow on’. Since this was not happening, the initiative had only a limited longer-term impact upon participants. Short-term engagement was secured through their interest in and commitment to the training; longer-term engagement was not secured as a result of the lack of timely feedback, suggestions and engagement from employers or training providers.

Some concerns also were raised about the Go Create technologies themselves. Certain responses from young people, for example, indicated an interest in the social interactions in the training but a lack of interest in the technologies themselves. One young person, who now works with Connexions Sunderland, has a reasonable knowledge of social network sites and how friends of his own age use them. He thought that Go Create was more complicated to use than other sites and that it was harder to get to specific sections of interest. For example, he was not sure how easy it would be for an employer to find the CVs on the site.

He felt that it might be better to have closer links with the sites that young people use. It is important to recognise that a social networking site like Facebook is a private social space, whereas Go Create was set up for the purpose of helping young people move into positive creative and longer-term endeavour. In his opinion, if Go Create is perceived as being a Connexions site, then it might not appeal as much to young people. The area manager in Connexions Sunderland who championed the initiative stressed that he made sure young people did not see Go Create as a Connexions site, and he described it as having democratic potential: 'used by everyone but owned by no one'. Additionally, it was felt that limitations of use arising from perceptions associated with the site might well be exacerbated by the fact that the more disadvantaged, or the 'harder to help' young people who are NEET, tend not to use social network sites so much.

4. Training approaches

4.1 The two implementation approaches taken

Two forms of implementation approach were used in Sunderland LA to gain involvement of young people. The first involved training support workers to work with the young people, while the second involved training the young people directly using an independent support provider (conceived as a 'summer school').

The first approach involved training provided by the City of Sunderland College (with costs met by Connexions Sunderland, a feature that will certainly need to be considered in terms of any wider scalability). A key trainer trained support workers in both Connexions Sunderland and youth groups. These support workers then introduced the website and facilities to young people. The City of Sunderland College trainer was entirely supportive of the endeavour, and the Connexions manager who championed the initiative encouraged tutors, youth workers, the Prince's Trust and E2E training groups to attend training sessions. Even so, attendance at training sessions was lower than had been anticipated, and the trainer often worked with small numbers of participants on the courses.

The second approach involved direct training of young people provided by a graduate trainer setting up a business start-up within 'The Hatchery' at the University of Sunderland. She worked with help from an assistant and supported by Connexions personnel who offered encouragement to the young people.

4.2 Direct training and support of young people

The second approach (direct training of young people) was successful, and led to materials being produced by young people that were put onto the Go Create website. The training provided in this approach was run by a recent University of Sunderland graduate who had set up a business, which was based in an IT centre within a new university complex on the edge of the River Wear. The area manager in Connexions Sunderland who championed the initiative had had previous contact with the University, and a key lecturer there suggested the trainer as someone who might be able to run a Go Create 'summer school'.

The trainer 'jumped at the opportunity'. She had set up her own business in digital media as part of her Masters degree at the University of Sunderland. As an element of this business, she wanted to offer digital media training, so she felt that running the summer school courses would be a 'very good experience'. She met with the trainer from the City of Sunderland College who had delivered the earlier courses for support workers, and he provided insight into the project and the training he was already offering.

Despite productive meetings with the support work trainer, the area manager who championed the initiative, and a key person from the University, the graduate trainer still found it hard to grasp what was involved in Go Create and did not feel sure what

to offer on the summer school courses or exactly how to do it. The area manager explained that he would leave it up to her to come up with ideas about what should be included. She did a lot of preparation work with slide presentations, and found that these initially were perhaps pitched at too high a level. However, she was able to develop week by week the eventual format of the training, using the evolving experience of working with the young people. She found that during the early course she ran, there were a few young people who really liked ICT and she could engage with them on an ICT level.

Each course ran for four days, for three hours a day. The course ran four times, with a similar pattern for each of the courses. It was found that just three hours a day held the attention of the young people, and the short sessions helped the young people to relax. The courses were made as informal as possible.

Day 1

On the first day everyone on the course went down to the riverside (the part of the University built alongside the River Wear on the site of a former shipyard, which has been landscaped with footpaths and public sculptures commemorating the heritage of the area). The young people were given digital cameras to take video and photographs, with 20 minutes allocated for everyone to explore ideas for shots and to take various photographs. For some of the group this was a new experience and they needed encouragement to fulfil the task. The young people then went on to make short movies, around 30 seconds to a minute in length. They were told to make a film of their own interest. They took shots of the river and the boats (a number called their films "Down by the River"). They then went back to the IT centre and used MS MovieMaker to edit the shots.

In this first session the trainer was involved in a steep learning curve; she had no previous experience of working with young people and had to think on her feet and adapt to situations as the sessions went along (this was one of the reasons Connexions Sunderland provided staff, since they had experience of working with young people in both large and small groups). The trainer was at that point developing ideas of what Go Create was all about. This first group engaged relatively readily.

The group who took part in the second course was very different and far more challenging. Their concentration levels were very poor and many were constantly flicking between Facebook and You Tube. A Connexions manager who was present on the course suggested strategies to accommodate the difficult situations arising. On one occasion, for example, the group was split into smaller groups; two Connexions Sunderland colleagues took a group outside on the riverside to film, while the trainer and her co-teacher remained in the building and worked with others.

For the last hour of the first session on the course, participants were registered on the Go Create website and shown examples of the sort of material that was on the site. For the next session, participants were asked to bring things they might like to

film such as medals, certificates, or things they liked to use in their lives. However, nobody brought anything in, and some explained they had very little content in their lives that they thought was worth filming. This clearly showed that the young people were not an easy group to help.

Day 2

Since none of the young people brought anything to include in their films, the provider had to think on her feet for this session. She gave the young people creative ideas and got out her art box with items like pens, paper, and glitter. One young woman made a nature film and cut out paper flowers to film. Another young woman made balloons and used these in a small animation film. These two young women said they liked art, and those with creative ideas began to get involved.

The provider tried to plan a programme but found that the young people all worked at different paces. At that point they moved on to thinking about making a multimedia CV. The young people were asked to make lists of ideas of what might be included in it. The provider took them through the multimedia CV website and helped them with the terminology that was used on it.

After Days 1 and 2 the provider told the young people they could take the cameras home to practice and to film things that they found interesting.

Day 3

By this time the young people had produced some photos and short videos. A key task was to put the movies together. The young people all worked at different paces. The Connexions staff there (two for each course), an IT centre worker and the provider all spent time moving from young person to young person. Many of the technical problems that arose were not extensive, and it was found that technical confidence was needed to solve them rather than a lot of expertise.

At other times the problems were more difficult, requiring the provider's expertise and experience. For example, one young man had used a mobile telephone to create a video of himself on a rafting trip, and the supporters needed to find software to convert the format of the file. It took the provider two hours of her own time to solve this problem. The provider realised that difficult technical issues such as film conversion and music copyright required adequate on-site expertise and support.

The content of the films that the young people produced was of variable quality. This was due in part to the quality and types of cameras used. The trainer felt that the young people should be allowed to take the expensive cameras home. Although this was a good idea, there were occasions when young people forgot to return them and someone from Connexions Sunderland had to retrieve them (involving the area manager knocking on a door on one occasion and waiting for a parent outside the University on another occasion). It was not the value of the camera that created an

issue so much as the inconvenience of someone having to do without a camera or people having to share camera facilities.

Day 4

The plan for Day 4 was to finish off the films, upload them and then showcase what everyone had done. The provider thought the young people would like this; she even bought popcorn for the showcase event. They ate the popcorn but did not want to show their films to the other people there. The provider thought this was due to a lack of confidence. Everyone eventually put material up on the internet.

After the first course, the provider found that she gradually got into a routine and that subsequent courses went smoothly. She ran the course with a worker from the IT Centre, and there were always two people from Connexions there to help advise the young people on their CV content. The young people needed encouragement, and Connexions staff sat talking to them when they had to wait for the trainer's direct support. The provider tried to make it as relaxed as possible—she brought in fruit and water to keep them going and made everyone feel welcome, relaxed and involved.

No session or group was the same, since each participant had different needs. There was no need or place for a regimented approach. For it to work the course had to be quite 'loose'. This was not how the provider had planned it, but it was the way that enabled the young people to do something. It is clear from these experiences that a trainer needs to have a repertoire of skills to engage young people and to keep them on task.

4.3 Training of support workers to engage and work with young people

The approach involving the training of support workers at the City of Sunderland College was not as successful in terms of final outputs produced by young people. Interviews with the support workers involved indicated a range of barriers and issues that limited rapid progress, and the numbers of measurable outcomes from a young person's perspective were much lower. However, this approach did raise awareness and expertise for support workers (although limited follow-on has been possible within the short term frame of this study – see Section 6).

The approach involved training groups of support workers in sessions run by a trainer from the City of Sunderland College. The trainer held three roles in the college: he taught 3D animation and worked with art students; he worked as a curriculum support tutor; and he had a contract as a technician. He had a keen interest in photography and science fiction films, and at the time he undertook the training he was making various small documentary films on topics of personal interest.

In total each course involved 12 hours of teaching. The trainer devised the course after speaking with TwoFour Knowledge, based on the specification devised by

Changing Media. The first training course was run from this background on a 'trial and error' basis, because it was not really the trainer's course, although he certainly learned from it. The trainer spent about five hours planning the initial course, and as much time afterwards refining it in the light of experience. He found that this ongoing updating of the training was absolutely vital.

The training took place in the resource centre at the college. There were six support workers involved in one course: a Connexions worker and her colleague (a young man recruited to Connexions after serving as a young person on the Youth Engagement Group); two people from the mobile library service that travels around the community helping people use technology; and two other support workers, both reasonably confident with PCs, who worked for voluntary youth organisations.

The support workers were introduced to the Go Create initiative in general and in particular how to use the website. The trainer assumed they had background knowledge of the aims and objectives of the initiative. His main concerns were accessing the website, using technology with the young people and adding their 'passion pieces' to the site. It was also important that support workers understood the different facilities provided by the two main sites (Go Create and VisualCV.com); indeed, later feedback suggested that some confusion had arisen in this regard, and experience suggests that more emphasis on these differences would support future cohorts more readily.

It was found that the trainer was a very informal and active trainer who soon struck up a good relationship with the six support workers on the courses. When problems arose, he spotted these readily and offered help. From the start, two people who were very confident using personal computers (PCs) were giving others a hand. From an early stage, a positive ethos was set up.

Description of the course

The training took place over two weeks involving four sessions. The pattern for each course was similar:

- Week 1, Session 1 – social networking and creating Ning accounts; trying out the technology
- Week 1, Session 2 – using a Ning website
- Week 2, Session 3 – storyboards and editing
- Week 2, Session 4 – developing camera and editing skills.

As people arrived they were asked to select a PC and open their Facebook account if they had one. Four of the six already had one; two did not and the trainer helped them start one just for the purposes of the training. The trainer indicated that he did this to assess how PC-literate people were (although this indicator might be regarded by some as potentially unreliable) and to illustrate that social networking was at the core of the Go Create initiative.

Apart from the networked PCs at the college, the trainer laid out a range of devices to record images, including eight types of digital cameras of different capabilities and some mobile telephone devices. He spent some time explaining how the films and images were stored on the cameras and how they could be transferred to the PC for editing. Later he explained that this was where people were most likely to have difficulties (and indeed, this was exactly the point where the provider who trained young people directly experienced the most difficulties).

Most of the support workers on the course seemed reasonably familiar with at least some of the technology. Seeing that the technologies were familiar and could be bought at ordinary shopping centres helped people feel comfortable; it was clear that they were not being taken down a path to professional filmmaking. The trainer explained that he had selected this technology because it was easy to use and enabled support workers to transfer material to the PC very quickly. He explained that the immediacy of the transfer was critical for the type of work they would do, since the young people would want to see rapid results for their work. He added that the area manager who championed the initiative had bought some of this technology, which could be loaned out to the support workers.

After creating Ning accounts, support workers were invited to make a short film in the library. These short films were then uploaded to PCs using a card reader, and it became evident that this was a very important piece of kit. The goals of the first session were for people to: understand the purpose of a Ning site, feel comfortable with the cameras and appreciate that it was relatively easy to upload a film (especially with a card reader).

By the end of the session people had opened and customised their Ning accounts and had a grasp of the role of a private social network. They had all made a short

film and with the trainer's assistance had managed to upload this to their Ning site. Everyone seemed comfortable at that stage.

Following the session, one or two support workers asked where they could borrow kit. They were referred to the area manager from Connexions Sunderland. One support worker did share a concern that she would worry about letting young people use the cameras "in case we don't get them back". For support workers from the library mobile bus facility, the issue was not the technology but their inexperience of working with young people who are NEET. But it was intended that a Connexions worker would support them. All support workers left saying they were looking forward to returning to Session 2.

Session 1 was planned to be easy, and the trainer appreciated that for some it might have been too easy. The trainer's personality and anecdotes of some of his incidents with technology put people at ease with whatever limitations they thought they had. The course was designed so that the level of difficulty increased as the course progressed. Sessions 3 and 4 were quite technical.

By Session 3, the same six support workers appeared to be very positive about the training and had bonded together as a group. The training took place in the same part of the library as before using the same machines that the trainer had reserved. People went into the library, logged on to the machines before the trainer arrived, and accessed their Ning sites.

After 10 minutes or so the trainer called everyone together around a table where he had a series of handouts. The topics covered in these discussions were:

- legal aspects of filmmaking, such as consent, copyright, and use of 'free' music for backgrounds
- technical aspects of different camera angles and shots, and appropriate terminology
- dividing filmmaking into three phases – pre-production, production and post-production
- using storyboards to design and develop a film.

The trainer explained that a lot of the material was taken from BTEC media courses, and his repeated references to the making of well-known scenes in certain films and television (TV) programmes helped to bring it all to life. This round-table discussion took about 90 minutes. This meant that with breaks, the group had about 60 minutes to devise a storyboard, shoot an actual film and upload onto their PCs.

The main working pieces of technology for this session were the storyboard—a series of squares where people sketched in the main aspects of a particular shot, such as reaching for a cup of coffee—and a video camera set on a tripod, which would be used to make the films. The main purpose of the training was to help people make a reasonably good film following a few basic guidelines. For the first

film, a straight to camera interview, the key points were: the height of the camera; the subject talking to the interviewer and not the camera; and appropriate props placed in the background to 'fill the frame', such as cooking utensils if interviewing a chef. The trainer seemed to strike a balance in giving enough knowledge to make a reasonable film without swamping the support workers with too much technical detail.

For the second film—a storyboard film—the trainer asked the support workers first to sketch out an idea on the storyboard. This was quite a challenge for the group since it takes a particular 'mind' to create a piece and then work out the stages and sequences that need to be shot to make the film. Fortunately, one support worker thought of an idea and was able to articulate some scenes while everyone else was coming up with a mix of fairly unrealistic ideas. There was a model of a skeleton in the library, and she thought this could form the basis of a film showing a lecture in a medical school. She nominated one of the support workers as 'Professor Brains' and the rest as medical students. A spoof lecture where all the students gradually fell asleep was filmed, and everyone enjoyed making it and acting in it. The trainer, with the cameraman, asked the participants to act out the scene about three or four times while he moved the camera position. This produced two to three minutes of footage, which was then uploaded to the PCs for editing in Session 4.

Some support workers in the group were beginning to identify ways they might be able to use the Go Create website and facilities. For the training to be successful the support workers needed to develop clear connections between 'new ways of working' and 'ways they engaged with or helped the young people themselves'. Just as each member of the training group had different talents, a key success factor might be identifying and working with a group with a similar range of talent in each organisation; in this way, a film could be made together by a team rather than by an individual support worker.

One support worker was a Connexions information officer who ran a job club and thought there might be scope for using the approach when young people who are NEET called in. She felt that having them in a group in a set location at a specific time should make it easier to organise a 'passion piece' and then a multimedia CV. The two support workers from youth centres were involved with E2E support, working to make young people job-ready. They remained positive but stressed how difficult it could be to motivate some of their young people. They felt that creating a 'passion piece' might be difficult because the young people seemed to be interested in very little. However, both worked for large organisations, had supportive colleagues and several were being trained. Therefore, they felt it should be possible to build up a team to undertake this work.

By the end of the session, most people had a grasp of the legal and ethical aspects of filmmaking and appreciated how a few filmmaking rules could result in a reasonably good film. The trainer had a good sense of the needs and ways to involve the mixed group, probably because of his experiences of teaching media to

students at the College at a range of levels. He came across as an enthusiast as much as an expert. He was non-judgmental and made everyone feel comfortable.

Feedback about the training provided by the City of Sunderland College was that it was 'excellent'. In terms of any wider scaling of this initiative, it would be possible for LAs to consider involvement of appropriate trainers within their local FE colleges, although some LAs support City Learning Centres (CLCs) that might provide training support of this form (especially since some CLCs specialise in media development and training).

5. Technological challenges

5.1 Challenges for young people and support workers

There were occasions when young people and support workers raised technological issues, and when certain technological issues might have prevented further engagement and activity. Editing material to go onto the Go Create site was found to offer particular challenges for support workers and for some young people. One support worker felt that Go Create was quite difficult from a technical point of view and that four half-days of training (about 12 hours in total) was not enough for people who were not confident about using ICT. By contrast, it was found that trainers were able to edit the material far more smoothly.

Some support workers felt that there was a need for quite a high level of technical ability to edit. For example, 'cropping' group photographs to put them up as individual photographs on the site was found to be challenging. Gaining material was sometimes an issue. Lots of young people struggled to come up with their own individual photograph; even when some were loaned cameras to take home and strongly encouraged to create something, very few were able to do so. Putting material into final online form took up a lot of time for some support workers. Many hours of technical input (up to 50 hours as quoted by one support worker, although this may well represent the value at one extreme) were required to produce multimedia CVs.

5.2 A trainer's perspective and recommendations

The support worker trainer shared his perspectives about the training courses he had run. He felt that benefits had arisen for certain participants, but he was not sure what resources had been created and put up on the Go Create website as a result of the training. He emphasised that he had 'created the path to put things up', taking account of the places where young people would access Go Create. Rather unexpectedly, he found that some people came to the training asking why they were there. Although he felt that most people had benefited from the training, he was doubtful that all would use it with the young people.

He felt that Go Create was a good initiative overall but thought there would be an issue of back-up support in the field. He was not sure how the initiative would cope with technical problems, since it had not been possible on the course to cater for all the formats they might possibly work in. He hoped he would have opportunities to go out to one or two youth projects to help them out when they faced hitches. His experience told him they also might have problems getting young people in front of the camera, and that some of the young people might not want to do 'passion pieces'. In the final two sessions he had tried to touch on some of the problems the support workers would be likely to face.

The trainer felt he had a good idea of how young people used technologies, because he had experience of working with young people who had been NEET and had then

come to the college. He had also developed ideas of how to keep them motivated, such as doing make-up for horror films. He noted the importance of connecting with their interests and trying to understand why young people who are NEET might want to use technology and what they want to use it for. He felt that the key thing was immediacy—they need to see that what they have done can be used straight away, as they often have limited attention spans.

5.3 Technologies and core skills of support workers

The main limitation of the support worker training course was the time available on the course to practice using the equipment. For example, only one person gained experience of operating the camera. It was felt that access to filmmaking equipment back at work and the need to try it out a few times before attempting any ‘proper’ filming were two key barriers that might arise. This might have been a structural problem with the training but, as the trainer and the area manager explained, taking people away from their jobs for four afternoons over two weeks was already a massive time commitment. However, it is clear that this issue needs to be considered in the context of the roles of individuals, their remits with regard to working with young people, and their involvement in continuing professional development that will support their professional endeavours (see Clarke and Newman, 2009).

This did raise the question of whether being competent and confident with modern technology should be a core skill with youth workers (a point raised in discussions by TwoFour Knowledge early in the initiative). How this is brought about and integrated into practice is clearly an issue in its own right, but should not be divorced from the practice that the technology needs to support. Development of technological skills is not in this initiative an end in itself, but a means that enables support workers to help to develop longer-term engagement and goals of young people. At the stage of the initiative reached in October 2009, it appeared that many support workers had some levels of technological skills, but almost all did not possess the skills to be able to use technologies to support longer-term engagement and life goals. Support workers did not, for example, use the technologies themselves to offer feedback to young people or to engage others, including employers, within the mediation ‘system’.

6. Support worker implementation approaches and feedback

A field researcher conducted interviews with support workers who received training to elicit their feedback about Go Create. The types of responses gathered by this initiative and its approach varied according to support workers' background and affiliation. For example, it is clear from responses that some youth groups work with young people who are the hardest to reach (those within the ALT and MULP categories), and these young people were not the intended focus for this initiative. Engaging young people from these groups has been an achievement in itself, since the initiative was not designed specifically to cater for these groups. This may explain in part some of the difficulties in recruitment. It may also explain the recommendations from some support workers that these facilities be used with 'captive audiences' on entry to employment (E2E) programmes (for example) or with younger people when they are in schools. Some youth workers felt that gaining young people's engagement with these facilities when they are in school would provide a higher likelihood of them maintaining interest and involvement when they are older.

Findings for support workers are considered here by looking at responses according to the group or institution involved. A number of examples follow, and these show different types of responses by support workers according to the group involved.

6.1 A youth work centre

The youth work centre is funded by contracts from Sunderland City Council and from other sources. The centre provides:

- a core work programme
- an alternative curriculum for young people at risk of exclusion
- a football and fitness project
- a GO4IT programme
- a SHOWT sexual health and smoking cessation programme
- a centre-based youth club provision
- detached youth work.

As the youth work centre website states, "The GO4IT programme provides stimulating activities and courses to young people aged 14-19. GO4IT aims to engage young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or in danger of becoming NEET. The aim of the project is to provide these young people with the confidence, skills and qualifications needed to progress into work, college training scheme or apprenticeship."

The centre is run by an umbrella organisation working with all-age community projects and running youth work projects and children centres. The youth worker who attended the Go Create training manages the day-to-day youth work provision, has 20 years of youth work experience, and is responsible for upwards of 25

members of staff. Many of these are part-time and volunteer, with a mix of experience and training levels. The organisation provides for static youth projects and undertakes targeted work with young people who are NEET. They are contracted to run youth work on the north side of the city and target people involved with anti-social behaviour.

Some of the youth work centre's past work focusing on young people who are NEET was funded through Connexions grants, but these now no longer exist. Following discussion with TwoFour Knowledge about partners for this intervention, the area manager in Connexions Sunderland who championed the initiative approached this youth work centre about taking part in Go Create. The youth worker felt the initiative 'sounded good', and this was confirmed by what he heard from the lead producer from TwoFour Knowledge. In terms of engaging with this initiative, it is possible that previous youth work centre initiatives concerned with developing confidence and skills rather than specific tasks allowed the youth worker to identify connections with the Go Create initiative more easily.

According to the youth worker, part of the appeal of Go Create was that it was different. He found the CV activity particularly interesting and thought it would appeal to young people who are NEET and spark some creativity in them. The youth work centre has found from previous experience that it has been very hard to help young people who are NEET, especially those who have been NEET for a long time. It has been found that many are unmotivated. On the whole, working with this group has been a 'struggle' for the youth work centre, so any new approach to help engagement was welcomed. Go Create was viewed as a means to an end: to improve their self-esteem, according to the youth work centre manager. (In this case, the term 'self-esteem' was referring to positive values gained when work done by young people is seen to be valued by others.)

The youth worker was the only person from the organisation to attend the Go Create training, along with their Connexions link worker. Training for voluntary and community sector projects from Digital Challenge was also available at this time, which led to concerns for the youth worker about getting involved in additional training for the Go Create initiative offered at the college. The youth worker enjoyed the video and editing elements of the training but felt that too much time was spent on social network sites and things that were not necessary. Towards the end of the course it became too technical and 'went over [his] head'. Overall he felt that the course failed to strike the right balance between being basic and providing enough explanation of the technical aspects.

The youth worker envisioned Go Create as going hand-in-hand with the youth project's NEET work (the GO4IT project). However, it turned out to be a struggle to recruit young people who are NEET to the Go Create initiative; the youth worker had to knock on doors and make young people aware of the Go Create facilities. As a consequence of the training, the centre had devised a programme within GO4IT that had a Go Create element. The staff hoped to start work on that but recognised that

the best time of year to enrol young people who are NEET was September to January, targeting those who have left school but have not yet settled into a 'NEET lifestyle'. From experience, youth workers in the centre have found that the period from May and June is a hard time to recruit. After the training sessions, the centre started a cohort on Go Create work but found that they had to put a lot of work into it. They started work on the programme with seven young people and thought they might run another Go Create session with another cohort of six or seven young people. They ran a 12-week programme, and young people attended on Wednesdays. The young people worked on Go Create for an hour per week, although the elements involved were tailored to the individual.

In discussing his perceptions and experiences, the youth worker highlighted the ability of the Go Create initiative to be tailored to individual needs as a positive element of the intervention. This flexibility allowed him to envision linking Go Create in with his centre's confidence-building programme, which involves a sports leadership award as well as elements of an ASDAN programme.

The youth worker's main criticisms and suggestions were about the training sessions and the suitability of the Go Create CV project for the young people targeted by his centre. He was frustrated with the time commitment required by the training, echoing a difficulty found throughout this study of staff not having enough time or capacity for new projects. His criticisms and suggestions regarding the project included the following points:

- Perhaps 'outside people' have the wrong perception of what projects supporting young people who are NEET are like.
- It is hard for someone involved in anti-social behaviour to focus on building up a CV.
- A CV is hard to do when there is little to put on it.
- Go Create might be easier to work with in schools with the pre-NEET pupils, when it might be easier to get them engaged; it was hard to get the long-term young people who are NEET engaged.
- The Go Create initiative might be easier to do with the 'easier-to-help' type of young person who is NEET.

This last point certainly matches the categorisation of young people who are NEET that was proposed as best suited for the Go Create initiative (EERs and NEERs, rather than ALTs and MULPs).

6.2 A second youth group

This youth centre, located in south Sunderland, has a series of different contracts with the LA concerned with creating opportunities for local residents. This second youth centre does a lot of outreach work and specialises in outdoor activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh award and bike riding projects. It has a range of activities for young people of different ages and provides group activities on a number of topics of special interest. A member of the second youth centre went on the first Go Create training course.

On taking the course, he felt that it was 'early days' for Go Create and that he was 'still cutting my teeth'. He aimed to use the intervention as a way of doing group activities rather than individual work. The youth centre runs ranges of group work built on activities, such as a 3-day bike ride. The centre also has a group that works with young people who are NEET; they look at the media and complete CVs. This youth worker envisioned Go Create as a tool to use with different groups of young people on different projects, rather than a project in itself.

In his opinion, the 'great thing' about Go Create was meeting other people on the training and networking. He felt that more needed to be done to give it a higher profile, and that youth groups needed to be more involved but that they did see its value. He felt that using the training was not going to be an automatic thing because workers have other roles and might see Go Create as another layer of responsibility. He thought it was likely that the centre would make a start with the program and gradually get more involved as time went on.

The key question for this youth worker was how professional the films needed to be. He thought that the 'passion pieces' were a very good idea and commented on the importance of using film and graphics in youth work, saying "it's important for us to get involved in visual stuff. If we want to progress kids it's important we help them with this technology." He believed he could help the young people technically; he had done things in the past with a camera, and saw himself as an amateur who could make films.

In his opinion, the main issue was not the technology but rather the difficulty of getting young people to stand in front of a camera and agree to be filmed. His experience indicated that, because of confidence issues, young people who are NEET may find being filmed more demanding than just doing a CV. He suggested that the filming might be easier as a group project rather than an individual task. In any case, the youth worker anticipated that getting young people to do something in the early days would be likely to be hard. The best thing would be to take it slowly with them, just doing small steps and letting it snowball.

It is clear that using creative technology raises issues about confidence, confidence building, self-esteem and self-efficacy. One point that this intervention raises is that the focus of concern should not only be on actual impact on the status of young

people who are NEET. Youth workers should also consider the potential of an intervention to develop skills like motivation, self-confidence and self-regulation, which can build young people's capacity for long-term engagement.

6.3 A third youth group

A third youth group runs E2E courses at a number of centres. Some 10 young people at a time attend for 14 to 16 weeks; most would be classed as young people who are NEET. They attend from 9:00am to 3.30pm, three days a week. The intention is to progress these young people on to other courses.

The youth group has a website with information about the project and the type of activities the young people do. There is a page that shows still photographs of a range of the members, and alongside each one is written a personal statement of who they are, what they like doing, why they attend the project and what they get from it. In some ways these are embryonic 'passion pieces' produced before any involvement with Go Create. The website has a page devoted to a programme organised by the project, which is a comprehensive educational and relationship-building programme helping the young people to develop their skills and realise their potential.

A youth worker from the group thought that the Go Create idea was 'good'. The group used it as a tool with young people, mainly to both assess and help develop their ICT skills. Nothing negative was reported about the initiative as a whole, but the youth worker debated whether it could reach the goal of helping young people to create a multimedia CV. One of the ways this group used Go Create was to present young people with a positive side of technology. The youth worker stated that Facebook can present a negative side for young people because they use slang and often do not give a very good account of themselves, and that employers check out Facebook to see what a young person is 'really like'. He presented the initiative as an opportunity to create some good material using Go Create and then to compare and contrast it with the material on Facebook.

The youth worker reported that the training was good at giving an introduction to what the project was about and what could be done through it. Getting to use the technology had been a learning curve for him, since he did not have much experience of filming and no experience of editing. He would have preferred that the young people attend the training, which he thought would have had more impact than just having support workers there. He wanted the young people to get their hands on the training, so he took them to a number of university sessions for some direct training, so they could gain the experience. The young people planned their day there and learnt a bit about doing storyboards.

Prior to the training courses, the youth worker had some experience of basic ICT but a lot of this had been new, including using the internet as a place to put up film. He felt that young people sometimes were alienated by technology, but that the way Go

Create had been set up had made it simple for them to use, including setting up individual email accounts for the young people. This was because the Ning account gave them a template that reminded them of Facebook (most of them were familiar with Facebook), so they could easily move over to Ning.

He worked with young people on Go Create for about four hours per week and found that some technology could be difficult for the young people 'to take in and get right'. Staff on the programme showed them how to film and edit. The youth worker supported young people in making short films about themselves, with the goal of adding at least 30 seconds of edited film to their pieces every two weeks. By the time they were into the fourth two-week phase of this activity, the youth worker could see an increase in the young people's confidence. He reported that the young people were usually very pleased with what they had done, and this added to their confidence.

The young people could look back at their first 30 seconds and clearly see improvements in talking about themselves and talking to camera. The staff found that this formed a pictorial history of how they had developed. In this respect the group judged the Go Create project as very successful. They all saw each other's outcomes and offered advice and criticism of each other's work. Some outcomes were put on the website as well. The youth worker reported in May 2009 that 'you can actually see a noticeable growth in confidence with the group'.

The staff found that to be able to achieve something through Go Create, the young people had to have an understanding of what it was possible to do. They found that getting young people to film, edit and put up a small film about them was possible and valuable. Moving on to a multimedia CV, however, was perceived as a huge task. The youth worker commented that many of the young people would find this very hard to do, and they might not think they had anything to put on it. Learning difficulties could also pose a limitation for some young people.

For the youth worker, the key objective was to make young people feel confident about using technology by making the Go Create site as non-frightening as possible. In his opinion, having to produce a multimedia CV made it frightening. He felt that the CV should not be the focus of the project, that it should just be an outcome, and that this would also make it easier for the youth workers. It was not clear to the youth workers what would be gained if they spent their time asking young people to produce a multimedia CV which they did not think they could produce and which they could not be sure employers would want. The group also felt that there was a need to justify time when using Go Create because the youth project was not drawing down any funding to do this. Creating a multimedia CV was not considered to be a good use of time. As the group stated at an earlier time, 'the clients we are working with are finding it hard to put together a written CV never mind an electronic one'.

For this group, the value of Go Create was that it allowed the support workers to work with young people in ways and towards goals of the support workers' choice.

The support workers appreciated taking what they could from the initiative rather than following Go Create as a whole, unquestioningly. For this youth group, Go Create had influenced their practice, and they had built elements into their E2E courses, focusing on the element of creating 'passion pieces'.

6.4 Mobile library facilities

The Sunderland Library Service has a manager responsible for e-access, and part of this remit is provided through a mobile library bus that takes PCs around communities in Sunderland. Funded through UK Online, the bus provides access to computers and the internet for those who do not have such facilities at home and who find it difficult to travel to libraries to use them. As such, the service seeks to target digitally excluded people in the community. These have tended to be older people who might not have the confidence to have a PC at home or may not be able to afford a computer and internet access costs.

The library service had been doing a lot of work with older people in Sunderland and was keen to be more involved with young people. The manager recognised that Go Create offered an opportunity to take technical knowledge out to younger people in the community. Although many young people acquire internet and PC access skills during their time at school, the mobile facilities could offer specific aspects of value to young people who had not developed ICT skills at school or who might want to extend their skills. Additionally, Go Create provided an opportunity for library service staff to learn filming and editing skills and to get experience working with younger people.

Two project officers who ran the bus facility attended Go Create training for support workers. They enjoyed the training and the challenge of working with groups of young people. The first project officer reported that the training was successful and appropriate in terms of the needs of the project. This project officer appreciated the flexibility afforded by the training: the skills and approaches provided an important learning opportunity that could be adapted to other aspects of the library service's work. The approach could be used with other age groups, for example with Age Concern work to help participants to make a short film about a subject of their choice. Negative aspects of the training were that there was a lot crammed into the training, perhaps too much, and that some people might not use the training when they had finished the course because they were not that confident using the technology.

The second project officer thought the training was quite comprehensive but risked 'going over the heads' of people who did not have previous work experience with technology (indeed, it was reported that some people were struggling with some technical aspects). He reported that it was very useful to have participants make a short film while on the course, since it showed what could be done and what was needed to produce even a small piece of film. For this project officer, the key issue was ensuring adequate practice when the course was over. When he 'played' with

MS MovieMaker on his own PC following the course, the project officer discovered that he needed software to convert his camera file format into a form that could work with MS MovieMaker. Although this was covered during the course, it did not make an impact at the time. There was also some confusion following the course about the uses of the two separate sites (Go Create and VisualCV.com); it was not clear to this project officer that the sites were used to create two separate products – a ‘passion piece’ and a multimedia CV.

The two project officers did some preparatory work over the summer and were keen to carry on with the project. They worked in partnership with Connexions Sunderland, which took responsibility for identifying young people who might benefit from this training and for planning the venues, groups and equipment. A barrier for this project was the need to fit these sessions into a calendar of booked events for the mobile facility. As a result, the sessions were scheduled for Tuesday afternoons and Friday mornings during August 2009. This lack of flexibility in scheduling the sessions proved to be a constraint for Connexions staff in terms of their abilities to involve young people.

The two project officers ran a number of sessions and found that the young people needed to be encouraged very strongly. In a series of sessions co-ordinated with a youth centre, the project officer took aspects of standard CV work that they were already doing and suggested ways they could use the facilities to create a multimedia CV. The youth centre workers were more concerned with helping the young people to make a CV than with their ‘passion piece’. The first session was mainly an introduction. In the second session the young people filmed sports activities, and from it some 14 or 15 captures of activities were managed. The three young people taking the films were slow to come out of themselves, so the member of staff found he had to work slowly with them. The third session was cancelled, so the member of staff took their videos home and edited some of their film. He took one of their minute and a half pieces and used this as an example, including a voice-over. He hoped this would catch their attention during the next session. The plan for the next session was for the young people to see the example and then try the MS MovieMaker software. The three young people who had captured ‘passion pieces’ about sporting themes were the ones who had mainly created the videos up to that time. One of the young people created a Ning site for himself, and also created CV material.

The project officers said that for Go Create to be successful there needed to be an impetus. The young people had been asked to come up with ideas, and there was a camera there for their use, but the young people were slow to become involved. The staff had not managed to run any sessions on Tuesdays, since no young people had attended to do Go Create. For the purpose of this activity, the bus was tied into a youth project (funded specifically to deliver a project). However, because the bus had to be timetabled for specific sessions, this greatly reduced the flexibility to ‘sell the idea’ to young people, especially during the month of August, which many young people regard as a holiday period.

6.5 Connexions staff involved with job clubs

One Connexions staff member who works as an administrative officer and receptionist attended some of the initial training for support workers. He assists at the job club and introduces vacancies to people who come to the job club.

He thought the training was run professionally, and that there was plenty of content. He felt the content was what the support workers needed to know – how to use a camera and how to use MS MovieMaker. He had no previous knowledge of MS MovieMaker and had used digital cameras at home but not at work. He was quite confident about using technology and going on the training. He thought the trainer got the balance right, that it was easy to understand but with enough in-depth content. He felt that understanding Ning was a problem because it seemed more difficult to use than Facebook.

He attended the training for young people also, in preparation for assisting a young person to make a multimedia CV. He created his own multimedia CV so that this could be a template for others to use. His CV was already up on the site so that it could be easily accessed and used as an exemplar for others. He became trained in the use of Go Create so that he was ready to support the key worker in the Connexions office.

A second Connexions staff member—an assistant who advises young people when they call into the centre on topics such as vacancies, benefits, and personal issues—also attended the support worker training. She also runs a job club at the Connexions centre and provides advice on applying for jobs, interview techniques and creating CVs. She attended the training for support workers in June 2009. She had not anticipated being trained for Go Create and at first had mixed feelings about the relevance of the initiative. In particular she was unsure whether employers would welcome receiving multimedia CVs. However, having done the training and given the matter some further thought, she could then see the value in certain circumstances.

She enjoyed the training, despite apprehension about her own computer skills. She liked the way the trainer taught and felt he pitched it at the right level – between those who had previous ICT experience and expertise and those who did not. The only difficulty she had was fitting in the four half-day sessions with her work schedule. She had not had a lot of previous experience with cameras and felt it was good that those on the course made an actual film. She had not done any editing before but was able to follow the step-by-step guide to film editing.

This Connexions worker used the training she received by attending and helping out on the training sessions run for young people at the University. Many of the young people knew how to use ICT, had Facebook accounts and even had used MS MovieMaker before. The part that caused the most problems for them was deciding what to write on the educational part of their CV, and she found that to get something from the training the young people needed a lot of one-to-one attention. She

escorted the young people to the university, helped them with elements of careers advice, and assisted them with ideas about what could be included in their CVs.

In her opinion, it was hard to persuade people about the value of having a CV. She found that lots of young people did not produce a CV in anticipation of a job. Rather, they called in to the centre for help with writing a CV upon seeing a vacancy in a window that required a CV, and they wanted to create a CV that day for a particular job. She felt they did not see the value in having a CV for their life in general; what they did was just a response to an immediate need.

She found that what the young people got out of the training and their activities depended on them as individuals. The more 'capable' and committed to the training they were, the more they appeared to get out of it. One girl completed what she felt was a very good CV, while a group of boys spent most of the time filming themselves playing football.

She thought that Go Create had potential in certain circumstances, and she was keeping an open mind about it, seeing more pros than cons. She felt that the training and working sessions gave her the facilities to make multimedia CVs with young people in the job club. She could see how she might be able to use some of the training in her work with the right young person who would find a multimedia CV useful, for example, someone who wants to get into the fashion industry and makes clothes at home. Multimedia CVs might also be good for artists or people who wanted practical jobs and wanted to show what they could make. In her opinion, the usefulness of this depended on the specific person she was working with. Her only concern was that it might lead to visual discrimination if others could see the young person. To avoid this, she wondered whether Connexions staff might suggest to young people not to include a photo of themselves on their CVs.

6.6 Personal advisers in Connexions

A number of Connexions personal advisers (PAs) have been involved in this initiative, in both receiving direct training and attending sessions where young people have gained direct training. Two PAs who were involved have community roles and work with young people who are NEET and with youth work projects in their areas.

The area manager who championed the initiative asked one PA to go on the training, which the PA found to be useful and interesting. She had no previous experience of technology and felt that she needed to develop her ICT skills or she would be 'left behind'. She did not have a *Facebook* account but knew of its existence. She thought the training was aimed at the right level for her, but that some other members of the group were more advanced.

This PA felt she might be able to use the facilities and approach with the young people she worked with. She thought the content of the course was very useful, especially:

- the use of mobile telephones and video cameras
- general information about digital technology
- using 'passion pieces' and then going on to a multimedia CV
- the potential of 'passion pieces' to help young people who are NEET with IT skills, with self-expression and as a basis for discussion.

The main problem she experienced with the training was the editing, which felt too rushed and complicated for her as a beginner. At the end of the training she realised she needed to review and practice the whole process herself but felt that there was a lot of potential for the Go Create project.

She planned to work with young people in a youth centre group, working with a youth centre worker who was also trained on the same course. She expected that young people who are NEET would have to learn how to use the technology and feel comfortable before doing a 'passion piece'. It was likely that some young people would take to the technology more easily than others, and that this would all depend on the different individuals involved.

A second PA attended the first training course and enjoyed it. She was not 'an ICT whiz' or 'a Facebook person' and had to 'work to get into that mode'. With the trainer's help, she envisioned how to use Go Create at her youth centre, where she ran basic team building courses around Junior Sports Leadership. She thought these courses could be adapted for Go Create, so she arranged for some of the youth centre workers to also go on the training.

Following the course, the PA asked a local youth project that she worked with to incorporate Go Create into a 'Preparation for Work' course which she was able to commission with funding from a government regeneration programme. This 'Preparation for Work/Go Create' activity involved the two volunteer youth workers who had taken part in the training delivered by the City of Sunderland College. The participants on the 'Preparation for Work' course were recognised as being 'hard to help', having differing abilities and needing a lot of one-to-one support. At the same time, they held the potential to be a captive audience, which increased the chances of the course succeeding.

The materials created by the young people were to be uploaded on the Go Create website, and a presentation was planned involving people from the community and a local training provider. The PAs reported that a great deal of time was spent pulling together and then editing film made specifically by two young people playing football, while the other five or six young people involved created a basic MS PowerPoint presentation. No music was involved, and nothing was added to the film. Additionally, there were technical problems and issues to do with music copyright. In sum, the PAs felt that many of the young people did not gain that much from the activity.

Having experienced working with and engaging others in the initiative, the PAs felt that Go Create would only work with a captive audience of young people (which might be people who were on an E2E scheme). Experience showed that Go Create did not work well with casual callers at a youth club. Many young people who are NEET did not regularly attend youth clubs, so they found it hard to complete films. It was also found that Go Create appealed more to those young people who already had ICT skills.

The PAs had some difficulty engaging youth workers as well as young people. One youth worker thought multimedia CVs were a good idea. She said they allowed her to see a young person as a person rather than a piece of paper. But it was at the same time recognised that employers and others could not see the benefits. For this initiative to work for the long term, it was clear that employers, youth workers and others all needed to engage with it.

The PAs suggested that Go Create could be very useful for pupils in school in Year 11 and for those who wanted to enter creative industries. For these groups there would be a captive audience and people who could see a use for it. The blanket use of Go Create with young people who are NEET was felt to be a hard idea to put into practice. It should be emphasised again here, however, that the initial intention of Go Create was to involve those young people who were EER or NEER, rather than to provide a blanket cover.

6.7 Recommendation: engaging support workers and employers in online facilities

The Go Create facilities have been created specifically to engage and support young people. While it is clear that young people expect quite rapid feedback and response on items they have created on the site, it is also clear that the site itself is not designed specifically for the purposes or engagement of support workers or employers. There is a case to consider whether more specific sites and facilities need to be produced for the purposes of support workers and, separately, for employers. Other researchers and developers working in this field in other countries have also come to this conclusion, and are looking to the development of such facilities (see, for example, Dekelver, 2009).

If specific facilities are created for support workers and employers, then these clearly need to integrate well with training and facilities that young people themselves receive. When courses were run to train young people directly, the trainers supported the young people across an entire technical process: signing them up on the Ning site, helping them with their ideas and uploading their films. This required highly developed technical knowledge on the part of the trainers.

Another key consideration is how online facilities mesh with social interactions and dynamics, particularly those associated with support workers and employers. The young people who attended the training courses came from a variety of

backgrounds. Some were keen from the word go, some were reluctant but became engaged, and others were not interested and just wanted to 'mess around with Facebook'. There was also irregular attendance in some cases.

The young people who were keen 'hit the ground running'; they were found to be motivated, were involved in volunteering, and intended to take up a place on a course in September. This group was not typical of the entire group of young people who are NEET, so the trainer's experience in this case would be different from the youth workers'. For many young people who are NEET (taking the entire population into account), making films for Go Create might well present some difficulties, particularly a lack of ICT skills and a lack of appropriate material (that is, suitable photographs or activities that can be filmed).

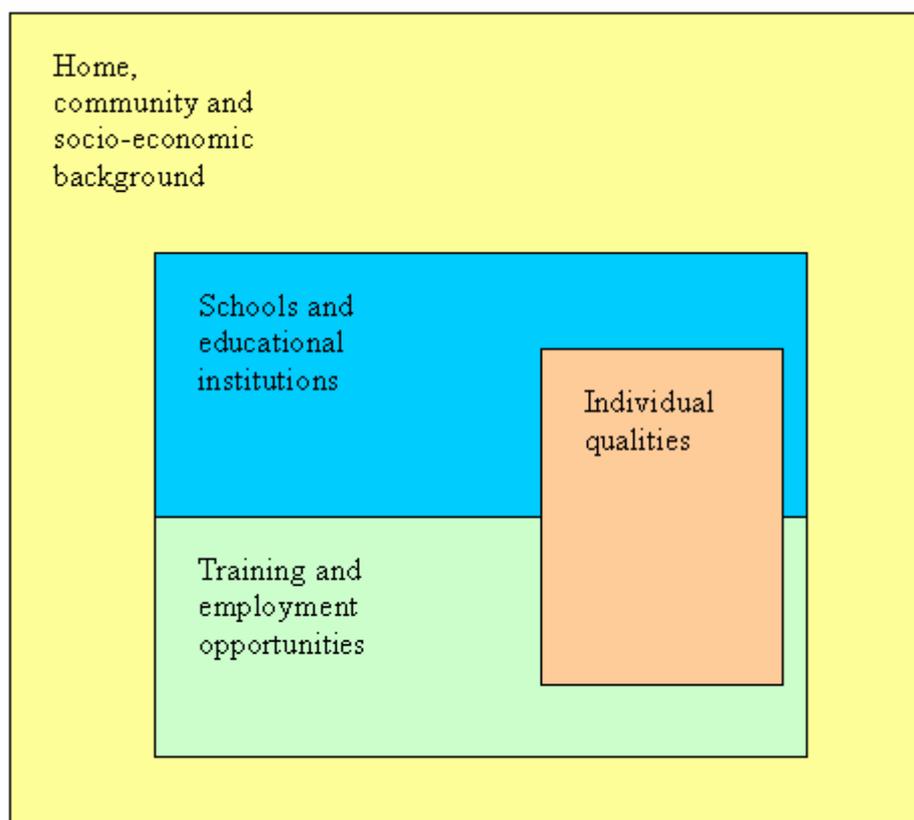
Facilities and strategies for support workers and employers need to take these types of potential limitations and needs into account. If this form of intervention is to provide support in the long-term, then short-term limitations and needs should be built into and supported by online interactions with support workers and employers.

7. Management outcomes and organisational perspectives

7.1 The role of mediators across young people's support systems

Many young people are positively and readily supported in terms of their education, training or employment endeavours. This positive support can come through their involvement with home and community, elements of their socio-economic background, their engagement with schools and educational institutions, and at later times through their interactions with training and employment opportunities. Overall, for these many young people, their endeavours to engage with and gain from education, training and employment opportunities are positive. Although they face risk situations, these do not impinge to the point where trauma or negative experiences become a prominent feature. In these many cases the young people possess individual qualities that enable them to accrue gains through experiences that engage them directly with the three groups (home, community and socio-economic background; schools and educational institutions; and training and employment opportunities) that are most important in terms of supporting their life prospects. This pattern of progress and engagement is illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Systems through which most young people engage and move

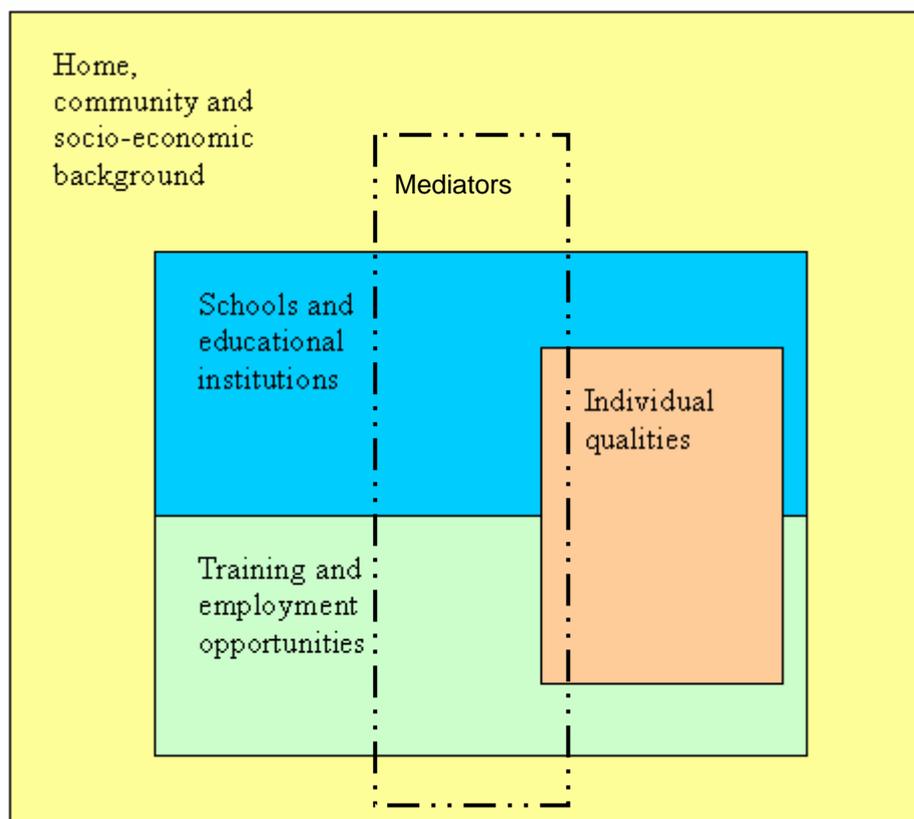


Some young people, however, for a range of reasons, do not 'move' through this 'system' seamlessly or readily. It may be that their home, community and socio-economic backgrounds bring concerns, disruptions or trauma to their lives; that

school and educational institution experiences are negative or neutral; that training and employment opportunities are not easily or readily accessible at appropriate times; or indeed that their individual qualities, skills and characteristics do not enable them easily or readily to engage with and gain from support in positive ways. When these types of experience occur—when young people experience issues or traumas, when they do not engage or when they disengage—then active support through mediators (of a variety of forms) is often involved.

Mediators may come from a wide range of support agencies according to specific reasons for a young person's lack of engagement or gain: they may be mentors, counsellors, social workers, Connexions workers, youth workers, educational welfare officers, health workers, youth offending support workers, or drug or alcohol support workers. The presence of these support workers places another layer within the 'system' (illustrated in Figure 9). This additional layer, working across the arenas that provide support for the majority, is complex (because of the number of different mediators that can be involved) and often lacks total clarity (because the professional needs, approaches and goals for the different mediators may differ widely). Technology interventions bring another 'actor' to this arena of mediation, and the technologies lie at potentially different points within this mediated 'system'. The evaluation of the Go Create intervention study has sought to understand more about the nature of this mediated 'system' and about the implications for the management of this system when a technological intervention is introduced.

Figure 9: Systems through which some young people who are at risk (including those who are NEET) engage and move



7.2 System-wide management and leadership

In the Go Create intervention an area manager in Connexions Sunderland was willing to champion the activity (mediating across the system that focuses on training and employment opportunities as well as supporting appropriate individual qualities of young people with regard to these endeavours). Other support workers have also been involved in this initiative; they work across other areas of the system that focus on home, community and socio-economic background (youth workers, personal advisers and care leaver support workers) or on schools and educational institutions (mentors and counsellors in an FE college).

The champion for this initiative, prior to his involvement, had developed wide contacts with a range of mediators who might be involved, and this position clearly supported the implementation strongly and positively. The champion had not previously been involved in implementation of a technology-based project. While this raised challenges, it was critically important that the champion 'saw the potential of the initiative'. The technologies were seen as enhancing rather than creating issues. It is important to note that Connexions Sunderland was never a formal partner in the intervention, and the area manager who championed the initiative played down any 'official' role when discussing the initiative. The original design from Changing Media

did not want Go Create to be seen as something 'official' or smack of 'authority' or 'government'. No one wanted it to be perceived as an intervention designed to reduce NEET figures; the role was therefore facilitative and based on the fact that the intervention required involvement of someone with a local knowledge to help the producer from TwoFour Knowledge to set up meetings, arrange training and maintain interest and support.

Technology-based projects tend to take more time to implement than planned; this intervention was no exception, particularly due to challenges raised by the lack of awareness within certain parts of the mediation 'system' to ways that technology might be involved and the time needed to work with different elements of the system. Indeed, by the end of May 2009, after 14 workers had received training, the initiative was moving more slowly than had been anticipated by the commissioners, with none of the first cohort of support workers having produced anything recognisable at that stage with the training they had received. There were two more training sessions in June 2009 and a further two for July 2009. As detailed in Section 4 above, the training included participants from a variety of backgrounds: youth workers, key workers and other support workers.

By the beginning of July 2009, the Go Create site still lacked material with a 'Wow!' factor that would offer ideas to others or elicit interest from employers to hold an event. A number of young people were self-conscious and sensitive about what they had to say and how they came across in front of peers. There were also some doubts about the value of multimedia CVs; it was said that some employers might view them as a more time-consuming way of selecting applicants.

In view of the difficulties experienced, the champion (having explored the potential of the initiative through professional interest rather than through any LA system-wide or systemic adoption) explored two alternative approaches for Go Create:

- A library service bus equipped with PCs and other technology that visited communities in Sunderland and had been looking for opportunities to work with young people in the community. The library service agreed to offer two sessions a week to young people during July and August 2009. A youth group working with young people in one area intended to bring up to eight young people to the bus for these sessions.
- Summer schools funded by the LSC and run through the university in a brand new state-of-the-art facility. A business start-up centre at the university provided contact to a company able to supply expertise for the summer school. Four cohorts of young people were planned, with possibly two others to follow, reaching perhaps 36 to 48 young people. It was anticipated that this approach might well lead to sources of good exemplars of multimedia CVs. This option did indeed lead to a range of identifiable outcomes.

7.3 Development of the initiative: key dates and actions

Communication has been an important aspect in this initiative. From the perspective of awareness at senior management level in the LA, there were key occasions when proposals for the initiative were shared with key personnel at senior level. The pattern of progress of the initiative can be considered in terms of actions at key times:

- In September 2008, key personnel in Sunderland LA acknowledge that the area manager will work with Becta, and this agreement is sent to the acting head of Connexions with the original note of agreement copied to the head of the division.
- In November 2008, the initiative is noted in the minutes of the Children's Services ICT Steering Group, a group that included key staff in a range of agencies and groups, including Digital Challenge.
- In December 2008, Go Create team members discuss ideas at a meeting with all key LA personnel invited and with associated groups and agencies, including Digital Challenge.
- In January 2009, the City of Sunderland College indicates interest in taking the initiative forward. Go Create posters are given out to a number of training providers, but no responses to these are received by email.
- In February 2009, the City of Sunderland College agrees to run training for the initiative (6 courses, each 12 hours in duration, paid for by Connexions Sunderland).
- In March 2009, Learning Care expresses interest in the initiative but no further action is taken (the key person involved unfortunately left soon afterwards).
- On 16 March 2009, a key meeting held at Sunderland National Glass Centre brings together the area manager in Connexions with groups from across the LA to discuss the proposal. Various responses indicate a range of negative points raised by individuals and key groups across the LA, including: employers not accepting a multimedia CV; the difficulty of engaging hard-to-reach young people; stages that were overly complex; difficulty of young people in using video technologies; lack of funding; and perception of financial interests in the initiative. Following this key meeting, the start of the implementation of the original Go Create proposition is delayed.
- At the end of March 2009, the implementation of Go Create commences with a series of visits to Sunderland by a producer from TwoFour Knowledge, who also made contact with Digital Challenge.
- In June 2009, the area manager meets with the head of division to discuss questions raised. Youth offending teams indicate some limited interest, a possible link to the Learning Disabilities site is discussed, but there is no follow-up. There is discussion with the Sunderland Foundation. The Prince's Trust has not followed-up previous interests. The Hub Project (an

intermediate labour-market approach) does not follow up its previous interest.

- In July 2009, a few training providers agree to show the site to employers, but there is no subsequent follow-up. An administrator for the site is sought, but no one comes forward to fulfil the post.
- In August 2009, summer schools are run with help from the University of Sunderland.

Communication was a vital element with so many individuals loosely connected across the mediation ‘system’, involving considerable time and effort by the champion in identifying, liaising with and following up with specific individuals and groups. There was variable interest generated among the support worker partners who were involved in supporting young people who were NEET, yet at the same time it appeared that what Go Create asked people to do was not that hard and was recognised as potentially useful. So, a clear question remained: why were there so many obstacles or barriers?

7.4 Support worker implementation issues

The training of support workers was recognised in the initiative design as an important requirement for this intervention, and training delivered by the City of Sunderland College was based on suggestions around content for skills development suggested by Changing Media and TwoFour Knowledge. Participants interviewed in the subsequent evaluation were very complimentary about the trainer, but acknowledged that outcomes were limited by the amount of time offered and delivered at an individual level. The champion confirmed that some potential trainees had not taken part because of difficulties of fitting into this timetable. Some people had found the training too easy, but others indicated that 12 hours was not sufficient time to cover what was needed.

The area manager who championed the initiative throughout this period was always optimistic about Go Create and about involving young people, but he was apprehensive about maintaining timetables that had been agreed earlier with the commissioners. Getting people involved with the training and, probably more importantly, coaxing them to do something with the training, involved far more effort than had been envisaged. The feedback events planned in June and July 2009 whereby young people would come together to showcase their ‘passion pieces’ or multimedia CVs—considered an integral part of the intervention by Changing Media—did not take place because insufficient material had been produced.

By July 2009, obstacles to a wide success of Go Create had not diminished and progress in this respect was slow. Some work created by young people, although said to be complete, was not uploaded to the website even though one volunteer had put in a great deal of time supporting and editing these films. Video footage from a Prince’s Trust course, completed with help from Digital Challenge and promised to be uploaded to the website, also did not materialise. Indicators at this time

suggested that interest beyond the initial training of support workers was waning and eventually in some cases their involvement 'just petered out'. A worker commented on how the initiative seemed 'to have run out of steam'.

Within the time scale of the initiative under study, aspects of the initiative had not been taken forward by the Prince's Trust. It appeared that training by October 2009 did not adequately address the needs of support workers to know how technologies could be involved in supporting young people through long-term initiatives of this type. The huge potential of Go Create was recognised, but these experiences suggested the initiative offered challenges to workers and projects that were too great for them to address, certainly within the time limits of the study.

By contrast, the young people involved in direct training enjoyed it. Very few dropped out, although a few 'struggled'. It was found that one group was not on task but that other groups were engaged. However, it was recognised also that young people had not done anything since their attendance on the course. Although the initiative provided training and qualifications for young people, there was no evidence that any of them were using or viewing Go Create by October 2009.

7.5 Lack of 'buy in' from voluntary sector organisations

In Sunderland LA there is little direct LA youth work provision, and most youth work is commissioned in the form of funded projects undertaken by the voluntary sector. The Sunderland Voluntary Sector Youth Forum (SVSYF) exists as a youth work forum for promoting, supporting and delivering effective practice within the third sector. A project worker representing this sector was present during initial discussions and contributed to the debate at the launch of Go Create. Not all youth projects represented by SVSYF, however, were knowledgeable about Go Create or understood its purpose, its potential impact on their work with young people, or the developmental opportunities it offered for their staff. Although it was not clear why this was the case, one explanation suggested by research might be the close links of some voluntary sector youth projects with other initiatives that they saw as legitimate alternatives, such as the Digital Challenge team, from whom they could access training and hire equipment. Digital Challenge was present at the discussion with SVSYF about Go Create, but at the same time as promoting the use of loan equipment for Go Create, this project was trying to involve voluntary groups in a separate endeavour.

Another possible explanation is that some of the voluntary groups who work with young people who are NEET are not sure how to use technology to help them. Some of the people in these voluntary groups had received money for working with young people who are NEET, but this may not have involved introducing innovative approaches. Some youth groups have tended to support young people only in more traditional ways, to the point that they are not always seen to be open to new approaches.

There has been some negativity about the initiative raised by some key personnel in the City who work in employer engagement. For example, some have suggested that the majority of employers will not accept a multimedia CV. Within the intervention proposed by Changing Media, the multimedia CV was not intended to be an end in itself. Indeed, the facilities provided allowed a young person to print out a CV, which could be submitted in a more traditional way if employers desired this. The intervention was intended to allow a focus on creative endeavour and longer-term benefits, and the creation of a multimedia CV was part of that longer-term programme. However, those sceptical of the benefits of a multimedia CV have not shared the vision held by advocates of this way of working with young people who are NEET.

Measurement of outcomes by specific groups can be a key issue in itself. Connexions workers are led by the need to reduce numbers of young people who are NEET, while youth workers are involved in meeting the targets set by individual contracts. The youth offending team have different targets again, and these are not measured in the same way. Connexions managers operate in similar ways to other publicly funded bodies and regularly hold discussions about performance management (and in the context of their work, specific reductions in the numbers of young people who are NEET within highlighted categories).

The fact that Go Create has been identified often as a project is also in itself an issue. Because projects have an end date, their longevity and sustainability are more unlikely if they are not integrated into existing work practices from the outset. Although many projects offer additional money to organisations, this does not always support sustainability. There is a clear need for review of existing and updated practice as a matter of course at the outset of any project or initiative. Similarly, if support workers are committed in their work for 100 per cent of their time, then projects are not helpful. They may just add to the burden of work items to get through. Indeed, Connexions provided plenty of evidence indicating the extent of work that can arise when projects are added to existing practice. As an example, several youth groups along with Connexions staff were involved in 'door knocking' exercises to raise awareness of young people about Go Create.

7.6 Issues involving strategic support and positioning of the initiative

A major issue that emerged as the initiative unfolded in Sunderland was a lack of clarity in the LA with regard to the positioning of the initiative, and consequently where direction for Go Create might sit most reasonably (because the initiative was concerned with engaging young people who were NEET, the question was whether it was better placed within the 'targeted youth' agenda or under the '14-19' agenda). Certainly a number of policy issues appear to have arisen as a consequence of the initiative being implemented. These issues are likely to be important in terms of any wider rollout. While there were some concerns raised about safety and child protection, as well as safeguarding, issues of young people's voices were not raised to the same extent.

Important questions were raised by Becta with senior management within the LA, about steps that could be taken to give Go Create more strategic support, since at that time the only person promoting Go Create was the area manager. There could have been issues due to timing that did not easily enable certain additional actions to be undertaken. For example, the Connexions service was being re-integrated into the LA at the time this initiative was being introduced. There is no doubt that if the Go Create initiative is adopted in other localities, it will benefit from immediate strategic direction or support from someone senior in an LA.

In Sunderland LA, the initiative was clearly being undertaken as a 'proof of concept' rather than as 'an adopted strategic model'. Although this initiative arose at the same time as consultation with the DCSF about targets for reducing numbers of young people who are NEET in the LA, the 'proof of concept' approach meant there was no attempt to integrate it into an LA response alongside parallel initiatives such as GO4IT and Digital Challenge. The lack of contact with and support from the Digital Challenge group was considered to be significant, as this group has played a major role in terms of development across the LA of a wide-ranging parallel initiative. Links with and discussions across such endeavours are clearly important. In other situations where such an initiative is adopted, this form of integration would provide those involved with support and reassurance through senior authority advocacy and legitimacy in the same way as other initiatives.

Interviews, outcomes of discussions, and documentary evidence all indicated that Go Create did not initially or quickly catch the imagination of policy makers in the city. Nonetheless, the champion provided exposure of the initiative to groups widely, and often people indicated interest. Indicators did start to emerge demonstrating that the initiative had been recognised by key groups, including the Chief Executive's Department in Sunderland City Council. Discussion with a policy officer from the Chief Executive's Department indicated interest in exploring what potential the intervention might offer in helping young people gain recognition for their abilities and talents in recruitment processes with large employers such as the Council. However, the initiative was not necessarily placed as an activity that either was clearly adopted or would be systemically integrated. In any wider rollout, issues concerned with the position of such an initiative should be considered carefully at the outset.

7.7 Summary of management and organisational challenges

Historically, it is possible that certain cultures have not been established already that would have helped this form of initiative. One challenge thrown up by the Go Create initiative is the extent to which support workers, including those from Connexions, training providers and the voluntary sector feel skilled or confident in using ICT. A lack of skills and confidence in using technologies to support the work of helping young people was seen as a major barrier in some cases. The emphasis on engaging youth workers from voluntary sector projects to do this work, in hindsight, was perhaps not realistic, given the resource implications and complexity of some

tasks. However, there were examples of integration of the Go Create facilities into some aspects of youth work practice.

Obstacles to implementation which emerged from the evaluation included: a lack of confidence, competence and skill sets of some support workers with the ICT; low perceived value of the activities; lack of measurable outcomes from which to start; lack of interest; the need to 'sell' the ideas to others; and the lack of fit with interests of youth workers (and their perceptions of interests of young people). The lack of costs to cover staffing also proved to be a major obstacle because there was often no spare capacity available from projects to deliver.

Overall, there was some lack of 'buy in' to Go Create. Any wider rollout might address this important element by engaging more immediate strategic 'clout' from an LA at early stages when the initiative moves beyond its 'proof of concept' phase. Management processes to increase commitment, belief and interest, and to enhance confidence and competence with the technologies and their uses in the field, would all be likely to support such an initiative positively. This initiative was targeted at supporting two categories of young people who are NEET—the EER and NEER groups. While it might be more straightforward to develop ideas with these 'easier' rather than 'harder-to-help' young people, these groups might not always be an obvious focus of required attention by all policy makers and funding agencies.

Evidence indicates that many groups have been uncertain about the status and long-term intentions of Go Create. There has been a concern raised that an initiative of this type requires clear statements at the outset. Overall, wide 'follow up' has not been apparent at this early stage, and it is clear that this type of situation could lead to widespread uncertainty and to a total lack of reassurance for the actions and directions being taken. It has been important in this respect that the champion has been in a position to continue to encourage the initiative positively; different individuals in less prominent positions, faced with the prospect of taking this initiative forward, would have been likely to flounder at an early stage. Without such championing, it seems likely that the initiative would not have progressed to the stage it reached.

7.8 A way forward: The manager's perspective

In terms of positive drivers, the area manager who championed this initiative commented that having the Go Create website up and running made it a lot easier to promote the project with a lot of partners. Before the website was accessible, the initiative was much more of an abstract concept and possibly hard for others to grasp. Once there were some examples of what could be achieved through it, it was easier to develop their ideas.

The area manager spent a lot of time contacting people who might be interested in Go Create, making presentations at various voluntary sector youth and community groups, committees, and training provider and employer meetings. Members of his

team also worked with local groups such as youth projects to try to increase the numbers of young people who were NEET being involved with the initiative. There was a lot of interest in the potential for Go Create. Like a lot of new ideas, it took time for the ideas to 'sink in' and to be accepted, moving from an abstract concept into something tangible like a website.

There is likely to be a need for greater time to integrate this form of initiative, and a year to initiate it. One approach would be to start much earlier, involving young people when they are in Year 9 in schools, and to run across the 14- to 19-year-old arena, involving schools, Connexions and colleges in courses and in outreach. The reason behind this suggestion is that this would provide time to build up a culture of acceptance of use and practice.

A way forward suggested by the area manager champion was to learn from initial experiences and adapt the initiative. For example, he felt it was possible that some of the support workers who might have potentially attended did not attend the training because their fear of technology was the main barrier. The area manager felt that there could possibly be a need to attract younger people to the courses who were more confident with their ICT skills.

In view of all the challenges faced, the area manager felt he was mainly holding the initiative together while moving forward at a slower pace than he had hoped. For example, some key events such as presentations were put back until groups of young people were ready to present examples of the work they had done. At the same time, he was continually committed to the initiative and thought that it might be a case of him having to face up to early challenges.

8. Cultural perspectives

8.1 Creative, practical and social opportunities

It is clear that creative opportunities for young people in Sunderland have been limited (although it is recognised that there have been and continue to be intentions to increase these). Young people have not always had much opportunity to be involved in creative endeavour, and indeed there are beliefs that some support workers should be looking at the development of social and practical, rather than creative, skills.

The training opportunities that are available for young people clearly need to match their known interests, as well as their potential undeveloped interests, as far as is possible. From a number of previous reports on the types of activities sought by young people who are NEET (Passey, Williams and Rogers, 2008; Citizens Online and the National Centre for Social Research, 2008; Hayward, Wilde and Williams, 2008), activities that include practical, creative and social aspects have been highlighted as being particularly important. Taking the apprenticeship subject list from the 14-19 website of the LA, subject courses with identified practical, creative or social features are shown in Table 2 following (a '✓' indicates a highly likely aspect, whereas a '?' indicates a more uncertain aspect).

Table 2: Incidence of practical, creative and social aspects arising in apprenticeship courses in the 14-19 prospectus

Apprenticeship	Practical aspects	Creative aspects	Social aspects
Accounting	✓	?	?
Beauty	✓	✓	✓
Business Administration and Management	✓	?	✓
Call Handling	✓	?	✓
Care	✓	?	✓
Customer Service	✓	?	✓
Catering and Hospitality	✓	✓	✓
Construction	✓	?	✓
Dental Nursing	✓	?	✓
Design and Print	✓	✓	?
Early Years and Education	✓	?	✓
Engineering	✓	?	?
Entry to Employment	✓	?	✓
Fabrication and Welding	✓	?	?

Apprenticeship	Practical aspects	Creative aspects	Social aspects
Glass Training	✓	✓	?
Hairdressing	✓	✓	✓
Horticulture	✓	?	?
ICT	✓	?	?
Manufacturing	✓	?	?
Motor Vehicle	✓	?	?
Printing	✓	?	?
Retail	✓	?	✓
Sport and Leisure	✓	?	✓
Warehousing and Distribution	✓	?	✓
Total numbers of highly likely aspects	25	5	14

From this analysis it is clear that practical aspects predominate largely in courses offered. Although social aspects are also high, creative aspects are low. Some courses might highlight the creative and social aspects, but this varies from course to course. From this evidence alone, there appear to be limited opportunities for young people to be involved in creative endeavour through apprenticeships, which in some cases might provide viable alternatives for job or interest routes. The issue of limited creative opportunity for young people is also highlighted in another recent study for Becta (Hollingworth, Allen, Kuyok and Williams, 2009). A key finding of this report concerned the geographical limitation of creative exposure, stating that “[t]he ‘London-effect’ (the creative sector predominance in London) had an impact on young people’s aspirations and decisions. Students in East London perceived creative careers as accessible while students in Stoke-on-Trent reported an absence of any such opportunities in their local area. However, students in Nottingham recognised a number of local opportunities due to the visibility of key companies such as BBC Nottingham.”

8.2 The intervention proposal and creative approaches

The proposal for the intervention produced by Changing Media in November 2008 clearly focused on features that would support creative endeavour, such as:

- personal stories of people who can inspire or offer role models
- mechanisms for getting these stories created as videos as well as photos/text
- local media partners to help produce or publicise material

- opportunity to 'interview' mentors/role models about what they do and record the interview.

However, by January 2009, discussion of the initiative had taken on the shape of a more distinct activity, the creation of a multimedia or visual CV. Although the trainers did not focus on this aspect alone (also focusing on the creation of 'passion pieces'), comments about the initiative from some LA and support worker groups suggest that their perceptions of the initiative focused very largely around the multimedia or visual CV activity. This did have implications. Some research has highlighted that youth workers are often concerned with a broader and longer perspective of engagement and change. A narrowing of concerns for youth workers in this initiative could well have hindered the development of the initiative as a whole, with the perception being that it would need to be addressed in simply utilitarian ways (and become more of a target-meeting enterprise). A shift of this form could well shape a change from a creative to a more practical focus. In relation to young people who are NEET, Connexions PAs and other youth workers have targets to reduce the number of young people who are NEET, which demands a practical focus; however, many of these youth workers have backgrounds in careers advice and guidance and understand the concept of seeing people 'holistically.'

In this initiative, the young people who are NEET themselves might have been focused on the creation of a multimedia or visual CV, but support worker perceptions of the initiative might have further reinforced this focus. The area manager who championed the initiative was involved in trying to recruit people onto the summer schools, and admitted that he found it hard not to focus on the creation of a multimedia CV. He found that trying to explain 'creative endeavour' was something that was hard to do with young people who did not feel they had 'a lot going for them' and simply wanted to work. To ask them to give up four afternoons of their time to do this in August was also not easy. When young people who attended a training session for Go Create in August 2009 were asked what they had expected to get out of the course, 17 of the 24 participants specified "a good CV", "a better CV" or "a visual CV" as their expectation (see Appendix A for a list of individual responses), with many mentioning their interest in the CV as a tool to help connect them with employers and get a job.

While evidence in Section 3 indicates that some young people felt they benefited from involvement with creative activity, it is likely that the creative culture surrounding these young people may be limited. There is a case here for considering the need to identify the requirements for developing and supporting a creative culture to a greater extent. This aspect ties in to approaches to new employment; where traditional employment is limited, creative endeavour is recognised as being an important means to support the interests of individuals and to provide opportunities to engage in or develop employment.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

Evidence from the intervention study run in Sunderland LA provides a positive 'proof of concept', as well as providing indicators of valuable benefits to be gained for young people who are NEET.

The Go Create initiative produced measurable outcomes for the young people who were directly trained in creative technologies and supported to develop their confidence with creative approaches. Although this does not mean that these young people are now 'off the NEET register' (a measure not intended as part of this intervention), it does mean that they achieved something that they had not achieved before.

Interviews with young people who produced multimedia material showed that they enjoyed learning new ICT skills, developing their creativity, interacting with support staff and producing a multimedia CV. However, without timely feedback from support workers and potential employers on their work, the young people identified the value of the items they produced to be low. For longer-term success of this initiative, there is clearly a need to engage support workers and employers more deeply, so that they are committed to looking at work on the website, providing rapid feedback, and suggesting additional forms of 'follow on'. To effectively support implementations of this nature further research should investigate the ways in which support workers understand the nature of the tasks that they see themselves as needing to undertake, what an intervention such as this might have to offer, and what further support might then be needed in order to shift and maintain their focus on the concerns of the intervention (concerning core attitudes to themselves and their capabilities on the part of the young people).

Evidence from the support worker training indicated that technological issues present significant barriers to deeper engagement of support workers in implementation of the initiative. These include a lack of ICT confidence on the part of many support workers, as well as a lack of time within the scope of the training to practice and integrate the learned technologies. This raises the question of whether competence and confidence with modern technology should be considered a core skill for support workers, requiring workers to commit the necessary time to develop these skills.

Following the training, some support workers did cite the benefits of developing their skills, networking with other youth groups and adapting elements of the Go Create facilities to the needs of their programmes. However, support workers also stated a number of obstacles indicating a lack of 'buy in' to various elements of the intervention: low perceived value of the activities; lack of measurable outcomes from which to start; lack of interest; the need to 'sell' the ideas to others; the lack of fit with interests of youth workers (and their perceptions of interests of young people); and lack of funding to cover staff costs.

Any wider rollout of the Go Create initiative should attempt to facilitate implementation by engaging strategic support from an LA at early stages. Management processes to increase commitment, belief and interest—and to enhance confidence and competence with the technologies and their uses in the field—would all be likely to support such an initiative positively. Ideally, such strategic support would emphasise the creative (alongside the social and practical) elements of the approach and would provide for system-wide integration of the initiative.

9.1 Taking forward this form of initiative

Some key points arising from the evidence have indicated features that should be considered to take forward this form of initiative beyond the stage reached in October 2009.

- **Longer-term measures are needed:** Benefits from the study are indicative of short-term intervention only at this time. There is a need to look at how to take the intervention forward so that benefits with young people can be measured after longer-term intervention has taken place.
- **Take a dual approach:** A focus in further interventions in other localities should consider approaches that offer immediate opportunities for involvement of young people together with longer-term integration of support worker activity. This dual approach is likely to meet the status quo with regard to the competence and confidence levels of young people (which are often high technologically but low socially) and support workers (which can be the opposite of those of the young people) at this stage.
- **Champion widely:** In localities where this intervention is implemented, the championing of creativity widely (across the LA, across support groups, and with young people) should be adopted as an element of the intervention.
- **Give rapid feedback:** In terms of a continuing intervention, mechanisms to provide rapid and more continuous feedback (through the online system) to young people who have created and presented material online need to be put in place.
- **Monitor gains of support workers:** Young people's gains can be identified after short time periods as well as after long time periods. The gains of support workers need to be monitored in the mid-term and beyond, and if there is a lack of follow-on by support workers, reasons need to be identified and addressed appropriately.
- **Allow time for support worker training:** Initial training of some four sessions for three hours at a time is likely to be adequate for young people. Training for many support workers may well need to last for at least twice this amount of time.
 - Training for support workers needs to integrate time for personal creation of 'passion pieces' using video and imagery. They also need opportunities to trial support work with young people themselves (and

to gain from positive outcomes of those who have tried it and gained successful outcomes with young people).

- Training for support workers on how to get young people in front of a camera, and how to offer ideas of how to create a 'passion piece', needs to be integrated for those who have had limited experience in supporting young people making video.
- **Have a variety of examples:** Increased ranges of exemplars, both from young people and from support workers, would be likely to be of value.
- **Celebrate outcomes:** Events to share and celebrate outcomes of young people (and support workers) are fundamental, and need to be built in much more, including the building of these into the online environment.
- **Actively address support worker concerns:** Any fears and barriers that are raised by support workers need to be identified regularly, and mechanisms need to be put in place to address these as they arise.

9.2 Issues and recommendations for LAs

In taking this form of initiative forward at a systemic level, LAs need to be aware of the additional drivers required and the existing drivers in place within their own mediation 'system'. The lists in Appendix C may well provide a form of checklist. Overall, for LAs wishing to consider implementation of this form of initiative, the following are points to consider.

- **Involve a local production company:** This initiative may well require the development of appropriate concepts as well as practices across the support, training and employment network. Such a development may well benefit from having an on-the-ground producer involved in: discussion and liaison, appropriate organisation of vital events, monitoring and picking up when support workers need additional help and finding ways around this, and supporting an LA or Connexions champion. This initial intervention study involved a production company of high standing but at the other end of the country; involvement of a local production company would support easy access to location and lower costs.
- **Make clear the relevance to providers and employers:** In regions where there are few media opportunities, the support and provider community might feel that the benefits of a media-based programme are of limited value. However, in today's knowledge economy, knowledge workers are at the heart of traditional sectors such as steel-making or retailing. A clear communication to all within the support and provider systems about the economic benefits and relevance for employers would be likely to facilitate the success of this initiative.
- **Legitimise this approach:** Young people need to be involved in systemic approaches with this intervention. There needs to be a recognised legitimacy for them undertaking creative endeavour that is celebrated and recognised positively.

- **It may take time to see the benefits to young people:** Benefits for some young people from this form of intervention may arise quickly, but for some it may be likely to take longer and will not necessarily address immediately short-term targets to reduce numbers of young people who are NEET.
- **Focus on specific groups:** Focus of the intervention activity should be initially on specific groups of young people (the Go Create facilities have been designed for young people who are EER or NEER).
- **Get employer feedback on what young people have done:** Employers and support workers must be engaged in regularly viewing the items created by the young people that are on the website and giving regular feedback to young people. The role of multimedia CVs and other items placed on the website should be discussed with the key groups.
 - There is a need for young people to feel they are gaining regular feedback and are being involved positively.
- **Have a systemic model of integration:** All groups of support workers need to be aware and involved; a systemic model of integration is needed for this intervention to be fully successful.
- **Short-term action and long-term action are both important:** The roles and importance of short-term actions and provision, and longer-term actions and provision need to be made clear to all parties, and both need to be made legitimate. Not all young people who are NEET will be able to be provided with immediate answers or outcomes, but some will.
- **Support workers need to integrate this approach into their professional practice:** This form of intervention can support the developing professional practice of support workers, which national and local needs require. There is a need to allow integration of practice at a professional level so that support workers can legitimately commit some of their working time to this form of endeavour. Support workers need to recognise that this integration of practice is a requirement of their professional needs at the local level.
- **Have technical support:** It may be necessary to have some in-field technological support, especially where editing and video transfer is involved.
- **Know what success looks like:** Measures of success of initiatives such as this need to be carefully considered (for each separate group involved).
- **Plan ahead:** A one-year lead-time may be needed to embed an initiative of this form, but during that time fundamental discussions and actions across the LA and with support groups need to be undertaken.
- **Support workers are likely to need more training than young people:** Young people are likely to be able to take up this form of initiative much more quickly than are support workers; the latter will need longer-term involvement and training.
- **Make sure there is a champion:** There is a need to invest in a champion, possibly someone in a middle management position, someone who is

recognised for their professional practice, but positively sponsored by senior management in the LA, and provided with opportunities to contact individuals and groups widely.

- **Make sure champions have support:** Champions need adequate reassurance. Who needs to provide this reassurance, and how often, needs to be considered and accommodated.
- **Trainers need to be highly skilled:** Trainers involved need to be empathetic to their participants, have very good technological and problem-solving skills (especially in terms of editing and video transfer), and demonstrate abilities to engage and generate ideas for young people.
- **Integrate the project into existing practice:** Integration of the initiative within existing practice is fundamental to both sustainability and long-term goals and benefits. How this initiative works with other parallel initiatives needs to be considered and planned into ongoing and future strategy.

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Appendix A: Evidence base for the evaluation report and select responses

Evidence base

The evidence base for this evaluation is given here in two parts, corresponding to the two phases of the study.

1. Background evidence about the LA and young people who are NEET:

- Meeting observations and discussions – 3.
- LA website reviews – 2.
- Personal communications – 2.
- Data about young people who are NEET from Connexions Sunderland and the Tyne and Wear Hub – 14 sets.
- Data about young people from the Sunderland LA website – 2 sets.
- Relevant policy documents from the Sunderland LA website – 3.
- LA data from the Office for National Statistics – 1 set.
- Ofsted report on the LA.

2. Evidence about the implementation of the intervention:

- Email records – 40.
- Telephone discussions with the lead manager and other key personnel – 10.
- Interviews with Sunderland Connexions personnel – 8.
- Interviews with trainers – 2.
- Interviews with support workers – 6.
- Interviews with young people – 5.
- Questionnaires from young people – 27.
- Review of the Go Create website.
- Brief descriptors of young people who used the Go Create site.

Select questionnaire responses

Would you recommend this intervention to others? Why or why not? (24 responses)

- [one negative response]
- Yeah.
- Yes, because ...
- Yes and because it is good.
- Yes, as it gives a chance to be creative and create a CV to be proud of.
- Yes, helped my CV and was a good laugh.
- Yes, because it gives you a better opportunity to get a job by being recognised by your CV online.

- Yes, 'cause the staff were fun, helpful. Were all funny.
- Yes, because it learns you new things, things you didn't know you could be able to do.
- I would recommend it because it is a way of demonstrating to employers that you are different.
- Yes, I would coz it is a really good thing to do.
- Yes, you will gain a CV and good experience.
- Yes, makes CV easier to understand.
- Yes, I would for people who has not got a CV.
- Yes, will like to this course again.
- Yes, I would recommend it to all ages so people will be able to get a job.
- I would recommend it because it is a good experience.
- Yes, very good way for young people to create a multi-media CV building on their own technical and creative skills.
- Yes, really helps with CVs.
- Yes, anything to help get a job is good.
- Yes, it's an interesting way of creating a CV.
- I would recommend it because it was very helpful and I think my CV now looks very impressive.
- Yes, better CV, more chance of a job.
- Yes, because it gives a better look to the employer.

What did you like about the course? (24 responses)

- The chance to be creative.
- Taking pictures.
- [R]'s humour.
- All of it.
- I like learning new things.
- Everybody was friendly and it allowed me to access my creative side while producing something that would help me.
- It was chilled out and there wasn't loads of people doing it.
- Meeting new people.
- Was fun and spent all the time on the computers.
- Easy to follow.
- That it was good experience doing a multimedia CV.
- Not the computers. Making my movie.
- To learn the different skill and *Go Create* and CV.
- It helped me learn how to do a multimedia CV.
- Everything like the staff and being on the computer.
- Working out how to use windows *MovieMaker*.

- All of it apart from the computers.
- Tutors were very approachable with a laidback attitude who were able to engage learners and keep them on task throughout the various activities they were asked to complete.
- *MovieMaker*.
- The *MovieMaker*.
- Using computers and technology.
- I thought it was really fun and relaxed and the programme was really interesting.
- Help of people to make a better CV.
- I had the chance to show employers what I'm like and my interests before I meet them (if I do).

What did you expect to get out of the training course?

- A better looking CV that was also more interesting to read.
- Free stuff.
- Free vouchers.
- A CV showing who I am.
- I didn't expect to come out with more experience with new things.
- Hopefully another way in which I could demonstrate to potential employers how good I would be for their company.
- Help with a CV.
- A visual CV.
- A visual CV and some more computing experience.
- A better CV.
- A good CV.
- A good CV.
- I take picture to Go Create to get a video to get on the internet.
- A good CV.
- Basically a nice CV so I can get a nice job that I will enjoy.
- Multimedia CVs.
- Don't know.
- More in depth knowledge of how to use Go Create and visual cv.com.
- A good CV.
- A more professional CV.
- A visual CV.
- An updated CV that is accessible to employers.
- A better CV.
- A more presentable Curriculum vitae.

Appendix B: Step-by-step development of the Go Create initiative proposal

Development of the Go Create initiative can be broken down into a step-by-step sequence of activities, beginning with the conditions that led to its development:

- The commissioner introduced members of a possible consortium to each other.
- The project was procured and commissioned.
- The commissioner identified an LA willing to work with the consortium.

Activities involved in conceptualising the intervention were:

- discussion of prior research study findings and how they might be developed into an appropriate intervention to support young people who are NEET and those supporting them
- introductory discussions with key personnel in the LA
- production of an intervention proposal
- discussion of the proposal with the LA
- creation of working elements
- development and training of support workers
- interactions with young people
- creation of outcomes by young people.

Development of the initial intervention proposal was completed within a few months from the start of the initiative. Changing Media, the executive producers of the intervention, described the components of the intervention in November 2008 as:

- “a web-based tool rich in relevant content”
 - online “wheel of life”
 - a fun-based Cosmopolitan style questionnaire to help profile NEETs
 - psychometric questions to reinforce understanding of capabilities and link to potential areas of employment
 - serendipitous offers
 - personal stories of people who can inspire or offer role models
 - mechanisms for getting these stories created as videos as well as photos/text
 - local media partners to help produce or publicise material
- “an online tool matching NEETs and mentors”
 - appealing web-based interface for the database that can be browsed with the help of a Connexions officer or from home
 - means of matching people based on interests and outlook
 - graphical means of representing users

- opportunity for professionals to introduce themselves
- anonymous messages service until people feel confident sharing their details
- mentor and mentee coming together with Connexions officer
- “An SMS alert service for timely information and support”
 - timely alerts to events for NEETs
 - ability for NEETs to communicate with mentors when they have the urge
 - ability for NEETs to communicate in such a way that the telephone numbers are anonymised
- “Real-world events (upstairs in a pub, at shopping centre): speed mentor matching event”
 - opportunity to meet some of the ‘community’ and develop deeper connections
 - opportunity to ‘interview’ mentors/role models about what they do, and this is recorded
 - best pieces are put on the site and win prizes
 - prizes could be laptops or camera
 - NEETs learn about communication at the same time as having fun and learning about particular opportunities.

The intervention proposal content and implementation were intended to be widely embracing, taking into account the needs for social, creative and practical endeavour. Other interventions did exist prior to this particular intervention, and others were developed during the period of this intervention, but none of these included the breadth of dimensions proposed by Changing Media and TwoFour Knowledge in the above list. For example, Lemos and Crane (2009) developed Blue Salmon, which is described on their website as a provision of three modules to engage young people in thinking about certain areas of life skills:

“Blue Salmon is an online self-assessment and portable planning tool that helps people to think about their lives and decide their goals for the future. Only clients who are members of subscribing organisations are given access to Blue Salmon. Once they have registered with the site, clients have access to the following modules:

- Identity module: Thinking about interests and sense of personal identity
- Relationships module: Thinking about relationships - for example with boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands, wives or other loving partnerships
- Family and friends module: Thinking about links with family and friends

As clients go through the modules, they have the chance to add points to their action plan. Each module should take about 15-30 minutes to complete. When a client has completed the modules they can look at the action plan. This interactive tool helps users to break down their long-term ambitions into manageable short-term goals.”

Having defined the initial proposal for Go Create (an initiative that took alternative perspectives), Changing Media met with a range of key workers from projects across Sunderland LA in March 2009 to offer details and to gather feedback for further design. It was found that there was a definite need for events where they could continue to meet each other and where employers and young people who were NEET could feel part of the same initiative. As a consequence of both positive and negative feedback, Changing Media reported “making adjustments to the user journeys and experiences in the light of some of the very useful comments we’ve received”. Following are some key elements of feedback arising from the meeting:

- “Most people entered into the spirit and filled in the yellow (information we should be aware of) and green (problems with suggested solutions) sheets. There was quite a bit of enthusiasm and a lot of very helpful suggestions.
- “There were comments such as ‘Good way to engage young people’, ‘attractive to young people, re events, social networking etc.’, ‘will make learning enjoyable and improve skills’ and ‘good for personal development’.
- “Most of the red sheets (hard problems with no suggested solutions) came from Connexions. This could be because they have useful insights as a result of their front-line experience and we’re being careful to take account of each comment very carefully. Overall, the reaction from most tables was positive or sometimes non-committal while the reaction from [some] staff seems to me to be neutral or in some cases, very negative. For example:
 - Concern over online bullying and policing of content.
 - Anything that young people do with social networking will become out-dated.
 - The skills taught are not those required by employers.
 - Won’t raise aspirations long term.
 - Needs too much co-ordination.
 - Will be too expensive.
 - People have tried all this before.
 - There aren’t enough job opportunities in the Sunderland area (with the implication of ‘so, what’s the point of raising hopes?’).
 - Many employers won’t accept or want multimedia CVs (MCVs)”.

Changing Media responded to these issues and concerns, and ensured that the proposal continued to focus through its original concept: “a large part of the purpose of this project is to help young people through a process and to give them elements of which they can use elsewhere, which they will have thought about and have ready.” Following are key elements that Changing Media identified from the meeting, which were highlighted as aspects to consider and accommodate within the final form of the intervention:

- The production company should involve Sunderland people wherever possible.
- Suggestions from various voluntary sector bodies indicated what they might be able to contribute.
- Any funding needed to support the intervention would need to be considered by parties involved.
- The flyer describing the intervention to young people should not state a focus on a CV.
- Some young people might not want to go to a further education (FE) college for Stage 2 training, which might sensibly be offered in other places.
- Suggestions for rewards, such as telephone top-ups or HMV vouchers.
- Some literacy challenges would be great, so support would be needed from support workers and tutors.
- Video should not be overplayed at the expense of still photography.
- Calling items 'passion pieces' might generate explicit content or innuendo.
- There are a lot of reward and recognition events already taking place in Sunderland, so distinctive marketing will be needed.
- Employers should be briefed and invited to events once they can see what is in place.

Appendix C: Implementation drivers (political, cultural and technical) required for this form of intervention

Category of feature identified	Additional drivers required	Drivers already existing
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions that are implemented for the first time are not 'proven', but evidence that exists should be made available to those involved • The intervention needs to run for a reasonable period of time (more than a year), so that outcomes have time to accrue • Wide ranges of support workers need to be aware and positively involved • The mediation 'system' supporting young people who are NEET is complex and diverse, but needs to be engaged as a whole • Targets for support workers may not be directly met by the initiative, but this should not be seen as an obstacle • Targets may not be met within short periods of time, but this should not diminish the need to monitor what is being gained • Efforts will be needed to develop a systemic approach to ensure interventions with young people are consistently described, focused and endorsed by all involved • In a complex system with many support workers involved, there is a vital need for opportunities for meeting and discussion • Senior manager support and sponsorship needs to be evident to key workers • The position of the initiative needs to be considered so that it receives appropriate strategic direction and 'clout' • A production company involved needs to be able to monitor and pick up issues that arise locally • Support workers need to have a clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiative meets elements of government policies to reduce numbers of young people who are NEET • The initiative meets elements of government agency policies to implement an e-strategy for all young people • The initiative met elements of the LA 14-19 Action Plan to support young people who are NEET • Some aspects of the initiative were seen by some support workers as being of potential benefit and interest to young people • The initiative was defined on the basis of previous research • The initiative has now been 'proven' in terms of concept • Specific resources are provided at no cost • The intervention takes a 'systemic' approach • A great deal of time and effort was provided by a middle manager champion • Contacts made with individuals and groups were extensive • Many groups and individuals became aware of the initiative • Some support workers

	<p>idea of the purpose and practices of the initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support workers need to recognise benefits even if they lie outside their immediate remit to satisfy targets and employer needs • Support workers need ideas of how to conceive the project and put forward measures to identify its impact that are consistent with those intended • Support workers need ideas of how to take the initiative forward beyond an initial expression of interest • Support workers need time and opportunity to develop an appropriate long-term vision of the initiative • Short-term targets that support workers need to meet need to be balanced with a need to integrate long-term initiatives into their practice • Short-term funding and funding patterns for support workers may limit their vision for longer-term initiatives • Perceptions of short-term projects might encourage a focus on end-dates rather than integration of practice • Support worker time and effort needs to be considered in terms of existing capacity • Costs for equipment and training need to be a part of the intervention • A requirement for support workers to integrate new initiatives into their professional practice should be considered as an element of terms of conditions • Involvement for those not familiar with the technologies often require higher levels of time commitment and effort • The initiative needs to be considered alongside and integrated with other parallel interventions • Time and opportunity to discuss parallel initiatives needs to be supported by organisational structures • 'Buy in' needs to be monitored and supported 	<p>started to integrate elements of the initiative into their programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs are not likely to be prohibitive as this initiative falls within the professional remit of individuals within the system
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Follow on' needs to be monitored and supported • Employers need to become involved at the earliest possible stages • The concept of a multimedia CV needs to be discussed and clarified • The intervention needs to be driven by Connexions, but in ways that avoid young people seeing it as 'authority' 	
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiative needs to be in place long enough to address core issues for those involved • The initiative needs to be fully understood by all support workers and young people in terms of intention and outcomes • Engaging young people may be time consuming and may require additional resources • Creative endeavour needs to be fully understood so that it becomes a part of the lexicon of all support workers • Creative endeavour needs to be identified, widely developed and celebrated regularly • Young people may need a great deal of help if they feel they do not have much they can offer initially • Support workers may need help to see that barriers have solutions • Young people need to feel comfortable about the level of feedback about their work • There needs to be rapid feedback for the young people when they produce online items • Exploring innovative practice needs to be placed as a higher level need for support workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation integrated local context and feedback • The production team involved people who were of similar age • The initiative matches interests of young people, and focuses on development of relevant skills and capabilities • Most young people involved felt they had benefited positively
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early single interventions are easier to set up than a systemic series of interventions, but the latter is required to support this intervention • Support workers may need training in how to use the technology with young people (particularly how to get them in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiative provides a coherent long-term series of actions to involve key categories of young people who are NEET • An appropriate training

	<p>front of a camera, how to generate ideas to create a 'passion piece', and how to develop online presentation exposure techniques)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An approach that cascades interventions through support workers requires very adequate training in applications of use with young people • Support worker confidence and competence in using technologies to support young people needs to be built to a consistent minimum level • Most existing uses of technologies by support workers do not apply to or prepare them for this initiative, and their concepts of transformational uses of technologies may well need to be developed • The online resources provided are not specifically designed for use by support workers or employers, and use of existing facilities needs to accommodate this current limitation • Appropriate exemplars of outcomes need to be offered at the outset • Editing and video transfer techniques need to adequately addressed in the training of support workers • There may be a need for technical back-up for support workers in the field 	<p>course has now been developed for initial engagement of young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct training of young people engaged them positively • Training young people directly led to positive outcomes • Young people saw the value of using technology for creative purposes and to show their expertise to others • Young people produced exemplars that could help others to see what can be achieved
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