RESEARCH

An Evaluation of UK Online Computer Training

BMRB Social Research
in conjunction with
ECOTEC

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Introduction

In Spring 2000, a new initiative 'UK online Computer Training' was launched by the Department for Education and Employment. The initiative aimed to provide basic ICT skills to 50,000 unemployed and economically inactive people. At the outset, it was intended that the target group would largely comprise those claiming JSA, who were on the 18-24 New Deal and New Deal 25+, but also disabled people claiming Incapacity Benefit and lone parents claiming Income Support.

Courses were delivered through existing training providers in the UK under the branding 'UK online Computer Training'. Training providers came from both the private and public sector and were based in a range of locations throughout England. The training providers themselves varied in their set-up and size, ranging from large colleges already delivering ICT courses, to small voluntary organisations with more limited facilities.

Training providers were allocated funds for each participant taking part in UK online Computer Training, so the course was offered free to those attending. Funding was provided for courses lasting 40 hours. Training providers were given flexibility about how to deliver the course itself, with some adapting existing qualifications. Most based the course around existing qualifications such as CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology) and ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence).

This document reports on research designed to evaluate the initiative UK online. A key aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of providing basic ICT training to benefit claimants who are 'information poor', and the extent to which providing this training helps them to come off benefits and go into positive outcomes, such as employment. More specifically, the original objectives of the study were to:

- Identify all individuals participating in the training and their subsequent destinations;
- Identify the extent to which individual and other factors are related to participation and successful/unsuccessful completion of the course;
- Identify and assess the factors which contributed towards those on training coming off benefit and going into employment;
- Identify the extent to which courses have been effective in getting people into employment, compared to what would have happened if individuals had not been on these courses.

The programme of research was carried out by BMRB in conjunction with ECOTEC. Research amongst participants and training providers was carried out, with research taking place between October 2000 and May 2001. Both quantitative and qualitative research was carried out and the findings of both are presented in this report.

Further information on the research method, questionnaires, topic guides and participant database forms can be found in the Appendices to this report.

Explanatory Notes

Multi-coded questions

The percentages in some tables and charts may not add up to 100% as some questions were multi-coded, meaning that respondents could give more than one answer.

Rounding

In tables and charts percentages have been rounded to the nearest final digit. Therefore the constituent items may not add up exactly to the total. Total percentages are also quoted in the text of the report so in some cases, these may not match the sum of constituent items in the relevant charts and tables.

Table symbols

The symbol '*' in tables denotes a value that is less than 1% but greater than 0.

Summary of findings

Research method

Data presented in this summary is based on a programme of research designed to gather information from both course participants and training providers. Data on participants was collected from three sources: a database of all participants starting a UK online course, a quantitative survey of a large sample of participants and a qualitative survey of a smaller sample of participants. Data on training providers was collected from a qualitative survey of trainers and training managers. These data collection methods have been summarised below:

Participant database – Forms containing details about participants were collected by training providers and sent to the DfEE for entry into a database. At the time of writing this report, details of 34,510[1] participants who had started a UK online course had been entered onto the database.

Quantitative survey of participants – This began with a face-to-face survey of 1,348 participants in January and February 2001 and continued with a follow-up telephone survey of 958 participants in May 2001.

Qualitative survey of participants – Depth interviews were carried out in participants homes between January and April 2001. In total, 140 participants in six areas were interviewed.

Qualitative survey of trainers/managers – Face-to-Face depth interviews with trainers and managers from 40 training providers in October/November 2000 were carried out. 44 follow-up depth interviews then took place in April 2001.

About UK online participants

The participants of UK online Computer Training comprise a diverse group. In terms of economic status, 41% of those who took part in the quantitative survey said they were unemployed when they began the training. The participant group also included those who were retired (18%), looking after the family or home (11%) and permanently sick and disabled (7%). Some were also working (10%), however the qualitative survey indicates this was often in voluntary work. Correspondingly, a range of benefits was being claimed at

[1] The final number of starts was around 47,500 which takes account of returns from providers up to the last minute.

the start of the training, most commonly JSA, income support, child benefit and retirement pension.

According to the participant database, one in six participants are from ethnic minority groups, while the age range is broadly in line with the national adult population. The database recorded one in seven participants as having a disability or health problem; however when interviewed, a higher proportion (one in three) said they had a health problem or disability that they expected to last more than a year.

Other than those who were retired or permanently sick or disabled, most respondents in the quantitative survey said they were looking for work, or (if not currently looking) would like to work in the future. Eight per cent of survey respondents said they had a problem with reading or writing English, and six per cent with numbers or simple arithmetic. The study as a whole found no significant differences in experiences of and attitudes to the training among disabled participants or those with a literacy or numeracy problem.

A third of course participants in the quantitative survey had never used a computer before the course; where they did have experience, this was often limited to specific functions/packages. Attitudes to computers and technology were similar to those we have observed among the general public, although the participant group appear slightly better disposed towards technology than the public as a whole. Before starting the course, participants in the qualitative research reported two main reasons for lack of or limited use: fear of or lack of confidence in using computers, and lack of access or opportunity. As the report shows, the course certainly helped the majority of respondents in addressing the first issue, although a resolution of the second problem has been more variable.

Participants' Experience of the Course

Participants in the quantitative and qualitative survey were likely to have found out about the course through the local paper, Jobcentre or friends/family. Most participants said that they decided to go on the training themselves, and were not influenced by anyone else; others reported influence either from personal contacts, Jobcentre/benefits office or the training provider.

There were two broad reasons for going on the training. The first was employment related, to gain ICT experience and/or a qualification to help in applying for and finding work. The qualitative research indicates that often this stemmed from a general acceptance that ICT is needed in many types of work and that the training would help them, rather than meeting a specific need for a particular line of work or sector. The second broad reason was a general desire to find out more about computers, gain experience and confidence. In

addition, the course was seen as a general introduction to computers which could lead to further training.

Participants in the qualitative and quantitative surveys reported variation in the use of taster sessions and needs assessments; some providers did not offer taster sessions, and needs assessments varied in terms of their content and formality. These aspects were generally valued by participants, as giving an introductory flavour to what was involved, although where they were definitely committed to the course, they were not always seen as necessary. However, lack of or limited assessments were sometimes seen as a factor leading to the wide diversity of ICT experience among participants and problems this could cause.

The location of the training was not a problem for those who completed the course, although the qualitative research suggests that this may have been more of an issue for those that did not complete or start the course in the first place. In particular, the need to pay travel expenses could be seen as a barrier to starting or completing the course.

Overall, attitudes to the training were very positive: in the quantitative survey 85% said they were satisfied with the training, and this positive view applies consistently across different groups of participants. In this respect, the training has been successful in offering something positive to a diverse group of participants. In particular, the course was valued as helping participants to become more familiar with computers and increase their confidence.

Positive aspects of the training, highlighted in the qualitative and quantitative surveys were:

- Training staff: in most cases, participants valued the quality of training and the helpful approach of the trainer;
- Teaching methods: the flexible training method allowed participants to go at their own pace, and open learning allowed participants to fit the training in with other commitments;
- Training manuals and worksheets were valuable;
- Friendly atmosphere and support from other participants.

Negative aspects often related to individual providers:

- Some training staff were not seen as helpful;

- Where there were no dedicated tutors or a number of different staff were involved in a course, this could be unsettling for participants;

- In terms of course content, the main criticism was the limited time allocated to Internet and email, which was a main interest of many people entering the course.

Given that the course was often viewed as a stepping stone to further options, participants valued advice during and after the course.

The quantitative survey indicates that 18% of participants left the course before completing it. Personal circumstances were the main reason for leaving: work, family circumstances or health problems. Where the reasons were course-related, these often relate to the level of the course, as being either too basic or too difficult. Around half of all participants passed and had received a qualification or certificate, although 8% either had not actually received this or were waiting to hear whether they had passed. One in six did not think the course led to a qualification. Where participants gained a qualification or certificate, this was generally viewed positively, as either an advantage when looking for work, or more generally as marking a sense of achievement. Equally, there was frustration where they had not been received or where participants were waiting to hear.

Best practice – Views of Participants

Whether a delivery style was considered best practice by participants really depended upon their preferences and needs. In general, respondents placed value in having flexibility and accessibility in all aspects of delivery and especially providers' capacity to tailor provision. More specifically, they valued:

- **At course entry**

    - Assessment of needs and expectations;

    - Choice of course;

    - Choice of teaching styles;

    - Choice of hours, days and weeks to attend course.

- **During course**

- Flexibility to include specialist packages people are interested in e.g. DTP[2], PowerPoint;
- Inclusion of Internet and email;
- Regular feedback and monitoring;
- Workbook/manual on the course to allow practice outside the training centre;
- Assistance if there is a difference between software used at home and that in the learning centre;
- Access to training facilities to practice outside teaching hours;
- Follow-up of absences;
- Flexibility to have time off and pick up the course again;
- Relaxed and friendly atmosphere – where possible facilities to 'take a break';
- No jargon.

- **At course exit and afterwards**
  - Exit interview and full options for pursuit of further training provided;
  - Supported/free access to further courses;
  - Help choosing a computer to buy;
  - Feedback and guidance on what/where next? – at any time after completion.

The Views of Training Providers

Courses were generally provided at providers' existing centres; occasionally new venues were used. In most cases, providers said that they already had sufficient IT resources in house, although there were some new IT purchases reported mid-way through the course. The payment to providers was generally seen as an appropriate amount. In general,

[2] Desk Top Publishing

providers used existing courses rather than design new ones, although in some cases they were modified to reflect the participant group of UK online.

Providers approved of the combination of national advertising and local initiatives to recruit participants. However, it was felt that the national campaign did not tend to encourage unemployed participants; local initiatives and referrals from Jobcentres were seen as more effective in targeting this group. More generally, some providers were surprised at the number of older or retired participants.

Some providers offered taster sessions, and these varied in contact and formality. All providers said they carried out needs assessments (although not all participants agreed with this). Some needs assessments were formal, others informal.

Courses were exclusively part-time, although providers varied in how rigid they were in setting times for participants. Initially, some respondents reported that they had reduced the scope of the training to reflect the 30-40 hours course duration, although by the second stage of fieldwork, some providers said they had allowed participants more hours on the course, and were also more flexible in terms of the hours available.

In most cases, courses were taught either by work sheets/task sheets or by an automated computer program/audio-tape. In these cases, the teacher would be available to participants for help as required. Some trainers had remained in contact with participants after the course to see how they were progressing.

In general, providers were very positive about the course, and felt it offered participants valuable training and a useful qualification.

Best Practice – Views of Training Providers

Trainers made a number of suggestions on how best to deliver the courses and limit participant drop-out. This included:

- Probe participants' expectations at the outset including what they want from the courses, what subject matter they expect it to cover and whether the hours are suitable;
- Provide suitable taster and introductory sessions that allow participants to see how the course will be taught, what it will cover and the types of people attending the course;
- Provide crèche facilities for people who require it;
- Pay travel expenses;

- Provide facilities such as a coffee room for people to socialise during the course;
- Provide greater access to PC's outside of course hours and after the course has been completed, for people to brush up on their skills;
- Develop better local contacts and links to obtain more referrals i.e. with local Jobcentres, community centres, etc. It was also suggested that UK online could be linked in with other Government programmes such as New Deal;
- Create closer links between providers to share best practice;
- Give providers prior notice of national advertising campaigns so that they can combine it with local marketing and employ trainers to deal with the surge in demand;
- Integrate UK online with life skills training and basic literacy and numeracy e.g. include production of a CV, jobsearch support;
- Provide "next stage" courses for participants;
- Include Internet and email as part of the training;
- Provide exit interviews and discussion;
- Courses should lead to a qualification, but providers should send out certificates promptly;
- Provide flexibility in the course hours offered;
- Minimalise technical jargon that is used in the courses;
- Provide suitable support for course providers in terms of definition of course guidance, administration requirements, and advertising/marketing, that allows for local adaptation.

Impact of the Course

There are a number of ways of measuring the impact of the training on participants.

Impact on employment

For participants who were looking for work, the training was perceived as useful in providing relevant skills. At the main quantitative survey, a half of those who were not

working but economically active at the start or the training felt that the course had improved their job prospects at least a fair amount. The training was also seen as important in getting future work – at the main quantitative interview, 46% of those looking for work, or wanting to do so in the future, said the course was very important in this respect.

Where participants had found work since the training, a third said the training was very or fairly important to them in getting the job.

The survey provides limited information on the actual impact of the training on employment activity and employability. Among the respondents who were unemployed at the start of the training, a half were in work at the time of the quantitative telephone interview, and 52% of these had worked in a job using a computer. However, this does not necessarily represent the additional impact of the training, since many of these respondents had also worked in the period prior to the training and used a computer in their job.

Further use of computers and confidence

More generally, 81% of participants from the main quantitative survey had used a computer since the training. The home is the most common location, and home access is clearly a key factor in sustained use, particularly for those who are not working or studying. Where participants have used a computer, it is likely to be on at least a weekly basis (31% of users do so every day and a further 40% once a week).

A half of participants felt that the training had increased their confidence a great deal in using computers, and a further 28% said it helped them a fair amount. Findings are even more positive among regular users.

Further training

A quarter of those who completed the course have gone on to further computer training (as at the time of the telephone interview). This is most frequent among 25-34 year olds (34%).

Overall the study suggests that, despite the wide-ranging participant group, the training has been successful in increasing the confidence of most participants – whether this is in using computers generally, or in finding work.

1. About UK online participants

This chapter examines the characteristics of participants taking part in UK online training courses. This is to give an overview of the types of individuals that went on a UK online course, which is important to consider when evaluating the initiative. The chapter starts by looking at demographic characteristics of participants such as sex, age and ethnicity. The second section goes on to look at participants' activities and working status when they started the training. The last two sections report on participants' attitudes towards learning and their knowledge and attitudes to ICT before starting a UK online course.

Summary

The participants of UK online Computer Training comprise a diverse group. In terms of economic status, 41% of those who took part in quantitative survey said they were unemployed when they began the training. The participant group also included those who were retired, looking after the family or home and permanently sick and disabled. Some were also working, however the qualitative survey indicates this was often in voluntary work. Correspondingly, a range of benefits was being claimed at the start of the training, most commonly JSA, income support, child benefit and retirement pension.

According to the participant database, one in six participants are from ethnic minority groups, while the age range is broadly in line with the national adult population. The database recorded one in seven participants as having a disability or health problem; however when interviewed, a higher proportion (one in three) said they had a health problem or disability that they expected to last more than a year.

Other than those who were retired or permanently sick or disabled, most respondents in the quantitative survey said they were looking for work, or (if not currently looking) would like to work in the future. Eight per cent of survey respondents said they had a problem with reading or writing English, and six per cent with numbers or simple arithmetic. The study as a whole found no significant differences in experiences of and attitudes to the training among disabled participants or those with a literacy or numeracy problem.

A third of course participants in the quantitative survey had never used a computer before the course; where they did have experience, this was often limited to specific functions/packages. Attitudes to computers and technology were similar to those we have observed among the general public, although the participant group appear slightly better disposed towards technology that the public as a whole. Before starting the course,

participants in the qualitative research reported two main reasons for lack of or limited use: fear of or lack of confidence in using computers, and lack of access or opportunity. As the report shows, the course certainly helped the majority of respondents in addressing the first issue, although a resolution of the second problem has been more variable.

1.1 Demographics

Data from both the participant database and the quantitative face-to-face survey have been used here to present a picture of those participating in UK online Computer Training courses. This section outlines the demographic characteristics of participants. Table 1.1 shows the profile of participants in terms of sex, age and ethnicity. Data on this for the UK population is also shown for comparison.

Table 1.1 Age, sex and ethnicity of Participants

Base: All participants (Database; 34510)/UK population 46,581,000[3]		
	Participants	**UK population 16+**
	%	**%**
Sex		
Male	48	49
Female	52	51
Age		
16- 24	10	13
25-34	19	19
35-44	20	19
45-54	18	16
55-64	15	13
65+	19	20
Ethnicity		
White	86	93
Black Caribbean/African/Other	6	3
Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Chinese	5	3
Other	3	1

[3] Percentages shown for UK population age bands are calculated using all those aged 16+.

The participant group was split quite evenly in terms of sex (48% men and 52% women). The age profile of the participants group was broadly similar to that of the UK population aged 16+. However the participant group contained slightly fewer young people aged 16-24 and slightly more people aged 45-64. 16-24 year olds formed 10% of the participant group, compared with 13% of the UK population aged 16+. 45-64 year olds formed 34% of the participant group compared to 29% of the UK population aged 16+.

In terms of ethnicity, the majority (86%) of participants were white, whilst one in six (14%) were from an ethnic minority group. In the UK as a whole, ethnic minorities comprise 6% of the population, so ethnic minorities were slightly over-represented amongst the participant group.

Table 1.2 below shows marital status and presence of children in the household. This is based on participants who took part in the face-to-face quantitative survey. Half (50%) of respondents were married, three out of ten (29%) were single and two out of ten (21%) were divorced, widowed or separated. Three out of ten were living with children aged under 18.

Table 1.2 Marital status and presence of children

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)	
	Participants
	%
Marital Status	
Single	29
Married or living with a partner	50
Divorced/Widowed/Separated	21
Presence of children in household	
Yes	30
No	70

1.2 Working status/attitudes towards employment

This section looks at working status of participants when they started the UK online course, benefits they were receiving at that time, their employment history and their attitudes to employment.

Working status at training start date

During the face-to-face quantitative survey, participants were asked about their main activity when they started the training. Table 1.3 shows that the most common status of participants when they started the training was 'unemployed and looking for work': two fifths (41%) of respondents interviewed were unemployed at the training start date.

Table 1.3 Working status at training start date (self-assessed)

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)/ UK population 16+ (46,581,000)		
	Participants	**UK population[4]**
	%	**%**
Status		
Unemployed and looking for work	41	3[5]
Retired	18	12[6]
Looking after family/home	11	5
Permanently sick/disabled	7	5
Employed Full-time (30+ hrs per week)	5	45
Employed part-time (<30 hrs per week)	5	15
In Full-time education	3	2
On a Government Scheme	1	<1
Other	7	13

The qualitative study can provide more insight into participants' circumstances. Those who took part in the qualitative stage included those who were unemployed and seeking remunerative work; those who were happy working within the intermediate labour market (often in voluntary work); and those who were economically inactive. Respondents were economically inactive due to factors such as age and health/disability or had taken the view that they would not be able to find work due to their age, thus taking early retirement (e.g. post-redundancy).

Amongst the long term unemployed who took part in the qualitative research, attitudes towards computer training varied considerably. There were those who were highly

[4] Data source is Year 2000 Labour Force survey.

[5] This figure represents those who are economically active and unemployed/available to start work.

[6] This figure represents those of pensionable age (i.e. men aged 65+, women aged 60+).

motivated to learn and/or who wanted to add new and marketable skills to their repertoire and those that were less motivated. A number of different situations can be identified:

- Some in this group appeared to have been on many courses and seemed to regard the training as a means to fulfil another benefit/JSA criteria;

- Others appeared to be putting off work until they felt they were adequately trained but seemed to continually move their learning goal posts. As a result they had become '*course junkies'* or '*course hoppers';*

- The more determined of this group were concerned about their image to others, particularly employers and were keen to be viewed as doing something: they could say 'I am training';

- For others, although they were not in work, they were still active and had something to talk about, which seemed to be important to their self-esteem.

Among those **unemployed** at the start of training, reasons for unemployment (as described in the qualitative work) included sector shut down (no jobs in field of expertise), relocation (people moving with partners who had moved to undertake employment), and those who had chosen or by circumstance had the choice to take a break from working. This last group saw UK online as an opportunity to seek new skills and take control of their career direction.

Qualitative research highlighted a further group of participants, who had been recently made redundant, in the last one or two years. They wanted to up-skill or retrain skills; some of these participants had worked in traditional industries and needed to retrain for service sector jobs. They had a good perspective on what skills were required by the current labour market, but were aware of the fundamental difficulties in changing direction and upskilling in order to once again be employed.

After those unemployed and seeking work, the next most common status for participants when they started the training was **retirement**. One in five (18%) respondents interviewed in the quantitative survey were retired when they started the training. This is higher that the proportion of those of pensionable age in the UK (12%).

Another group that was well represented amongst the participant group were those looking after the family or the home. One in nine (11%) of those taking part in the quantitative research were looking after family or the home when they started the training. The qualitative research suggests that the majority of women training under the auspices of UK

online were usually returners to the labour market, having been caring for families for a number of years. They were looking for something from the training which would give them the leverage to re-enter the job market at a level suitable to their skills and abilities.

Other groups that were represented in the participant group were those who were employed either full-time or part-time (10%), however the qualitative study indicates that employment was often in fact in voluntary work. Those who were permanently sick or disabled (7%) were also represented in the participant group. In the qualitative study, this group were often receiving incapacity benefit, and many in this group felt they were unlikely to work again, at least in the short term.

Disabilities/Health problems

One in seven (14%) participants identified themselves as having a disability or health problem which affected their ability to carry out normal day to day activities (as recorded on the participant database). During the face-to-face quantitative survey, a higher proportion (35%) said they had a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than one year. This figure rises to 44% among male respondents, and also increases with age. Of this 35%, three quarters (75%) said this affected the kind of paid work they were able to do and three fifths (64%) said this affected the amount of paid work they were able to do.

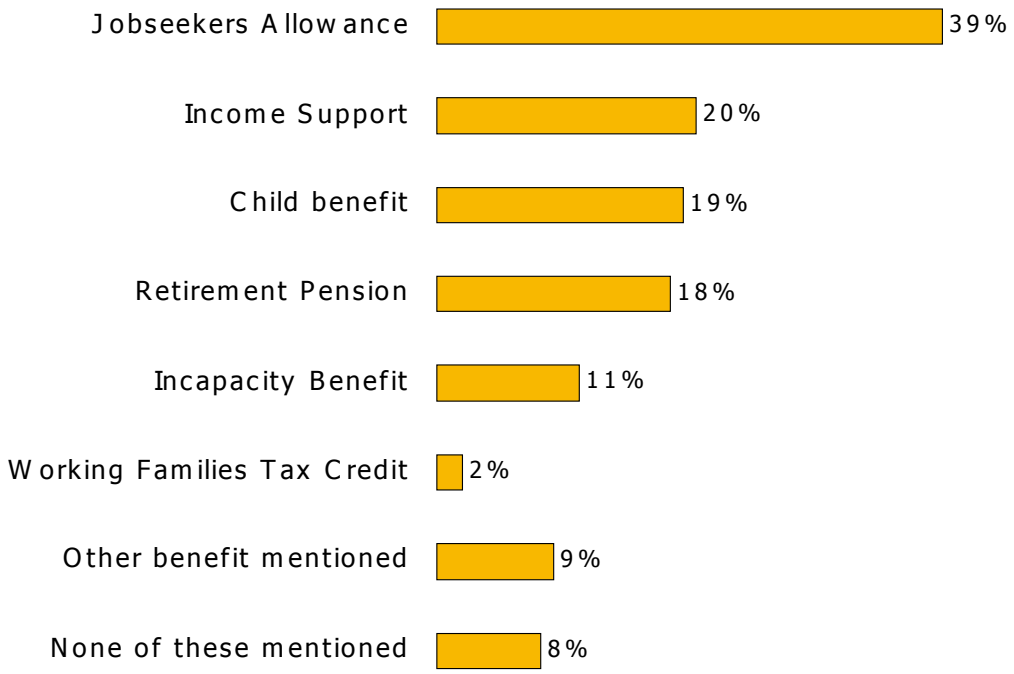
Benefits received at training start date

At the quantitative interview, respondents were read out a list of benefits and asked if they were receiving any of them when they started the training. As one would expect, most participants were receiving at least one benefit at the training start date (see chart 1.1). Nine out of ten (92%) were receiving benefits of some kind, with Jobseekers Allowance being the most commonly mentioned: two-fifths (39%) of participants said they were receiving Jobseekers Allowance when they started the training. Other benefits mentioned, each by around a fifth of respondents, were Income support (20%), child benefit (19%) and Retirement Pension (18%).

This range of different benefits, as well as the variation in economic status, indicates the diversity of the participant group.

Chart 1.1: Benefits receiving at training start date[7]

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)



Employment history

At the face-to-face quantitative interview, participants were asked to sum up their entire experience of employment. They were read out a list of statements and asked which one most applied to them. Table 1.4 shows the response to this question. Three fifths (58%) of participants said they had spent most of their working life in steady jobs, whilst a fifth (20%) said they had never worked. The remaining fifth had either spent a lot of their adult life looking after family or the home (4%), been in and out of work several times (5%), mainly done casual or short term work (5%), been mostly self-employed (4%) or had spent more time unemployed than in work (3%).

[7] This was a mulitichoice question asked of participants, i.e. more than one benefit could be mentioned.

Table 1.4 Summary of Employment

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)	
	Participants
	%
Statement	
I have spent most of my working life in steady jobs	58
I have spent a lot of my adult life looking after family or the home	4
I have been in and out of work several times	5
I have mainly done casual or short term work	5
I have spent most of my working life self-employed	4
I have spent a lot more time unemployed than in work	3
Never worked	20
	100

The varied employment experience of participants was also apparent in the qualitative research. The qualitative sample included the following:

- Those who had never worked (including some who were highly academically qualified); some recent graduates; some who had experienced work placements but no permanent jobs;
- Skilled professionals who had left work, due to sector closure, retirement or ill-health;
- Semi-skilled office workers, who had experienced some contact with VDUs or specific computer packages;
- People who had experienced a range of roles within the service industries but had no real specialist area of work;
- People who had previously worked abroad; and
- Those who had worked as self-employed.

Attitudes to employment

At the quantitative face-to-face interview, those who were not working, retired or permanently sick or disabled were asked whether they were looking for work or would like

to work in the future. Respondents tended to answer quite positively, saying they would like to move into employment.

Chart 1.2: Participants' attitudes to Employment

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)

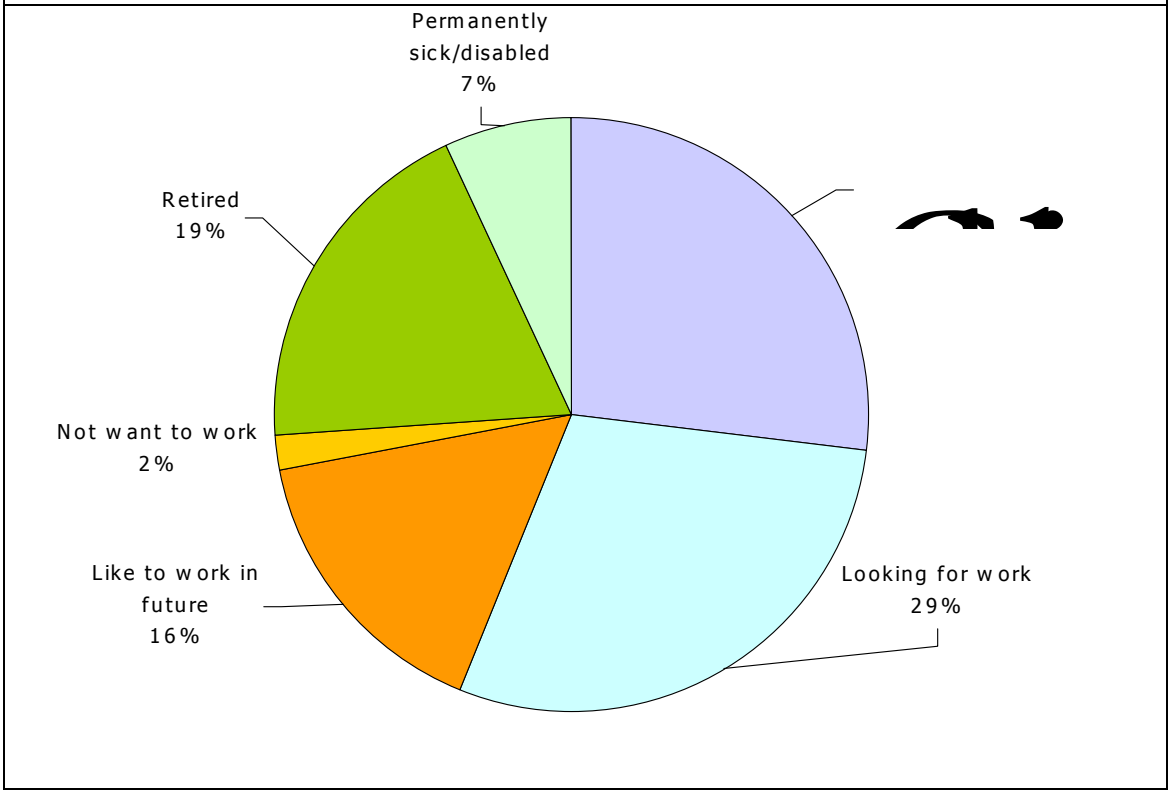


Chart 1.2 above shows that whilst three out of ten respondents (27%) were actually employed at the face-to–face interview (more than at the training start date), a further third (29%) were looking for work and one in six (16%) said they would like to work in the future (although were not currently looking).

For those people who took part in the qualitative research and who were new to being unemployed, and had experienced steady employment for most of their adult lives, the position they were faced with could be extremely demoralising. Taking the step to advance their ICT skills was felt to be a positive move in achieving employment once again. Some respondents were reasonably positive about their own and their locality's job prospects, while others were not as positive, particularly in the Cumbria area. Most felt that with the right training/reskilling they should find a reasonable job without too much trouble. Gaining up-to-date qualifications that were recognised and wanted by employers was seen as a sure way of securing employment. Even where people did not really like computers

they were viewed as a means to an end and there was a necessity to gain ICT skills to be able to compete in the job market.

"Need to have lots of qualifications to get a good job"

"I was aiming to get a job, I wanted to make best use of my time"

Those participants who had experienced a gap in their working history or did not have a consistent history of working showed much concern about the image employers would have of them and were negative about how this might affect their chances of gaining employment.

"I don't know how employers are going to perceive me"

Further details about unemployment are included in Chapter 4.

1.3 Attitudes towards learning

This section looks at participants' attitudes towards learning. As well as their general attitudes towards learning, it will look at basic skills levels and qualifications. It will examine participants' experience of learning before starting a UK online course, and discuss any support needs they have and any barriers they may have to learning.

Most participants taking part in the qualitative research had a positive attitude towards learning and genuinely wanted to improve their skills. Respondents can be grouped into the following categories:

- Those with a thirst for knowledge and learning who have found confidence and achievement through education;
- Those who had gained some form of qualification in the past, who were generally positive about learning;
- Those who had experienced in-house company training of various styles;
- Those who had shown no interest in learning until they reached a point where there seemed to them a need to gain ICT skills;
- Those with a negative image of learning, obtained through negative experiences at school or of vocational courses/employability courses prescribed by the Jobcentre.

Experience of learning

For qualitative respondents, experiences of learning varied, with some partaking in no formal learning since school and others who were qualified with a degree and post-graduate level. However, many felt that their skills or qualifications in ICT were insufficient to be worth mentioning to an employer or to use a computer confidently.

Some qualitative respondents were actively involved in learning, both for enjoyment and to raise employability. Many of the older learners had taken part in evening classes before and so displayed a willingness to continue learning; many of these respondents also mentioned that keeping the mind active was the only way to remain healthy and in contact with the world.

A minority of qualitative respondents had a history of attending courses to 'fill time'. In some cases this appeared to be used as a means of delaying the search for employment.

Literacy/numeracy needs

A small proportion of participants had a literacy or numeracy need. From the database figures, one in twenty (5%) participants were identified by their training provider as having a literacy need. However a slightly higher proportion (8%) of participants taking part in the quantitative survey said they had problems with reading or writing English (5% had problems reading English and 5% had problems writing English). For almost one in ten (8%) taking part in the quantitative survey, English was not their first language. 6% of respondents said they had problems with numbers or simple arithmetic.

Qualifications

In terms of qualifications, 23% of participants interviewed during the quantitative survey did not have any qualifications at all, either vocational or academic. However, 65% did have academic qualifications of some kind, of whom 10% had a degree/equivalent qualification. Just over half of participants (51%) had a vocational qualification of some kind, and one in seven (14%) had qualifications from government schemes.

1.4 Attitudes towards ICT

This section looks at participants' ICT knowledge and their experience of using computers before going on a UK online course. Also covered are their general attitudes to technology.

ICT knowledge and use before the course

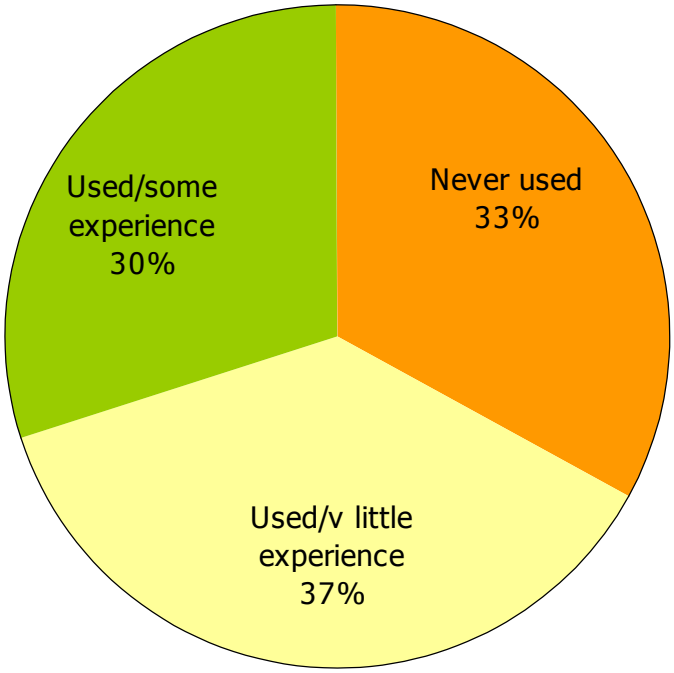
A large proportion of participants who took part in the qualitative research reported having some contact and experience with computers and company software packages before attending UK online. Very few had used computers while at school because of their age. Of those who reported using computers at work, most had been specifically trained to input data and use certain packages, and not had broad training in PC usage. Most had not used the Microsoft software and packages such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Very few of the respondents reported having a level of proficiency in using the computer. Examples of computer usage included:

- Ownership of a computer – but little experimentation;
- Limited training in specific teaching packages;
- Limited packages used at work;
- A number of respondents had used old IT systems.

Many participants interviewed as part of the quantitative research also had some experience of computers before attending a UK online course. Chart 1.3 shows that a third of respondents (33%) said that they had actually never used a computer before the course, whilst two fifths (37%) had a little experience with computers and three out of ten (30%) had had some experience with computers.

Chart 1.3: Use of computers before the course

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)



Those who had never used a computer before the course were more likely to be women: 36% of women who took part in the quantitative research had never used a computer compared to 29% of men. Only 6% of those aged under 25 had never used a computer, while retired respondents were more likely than average to a have never used a computer before the course (44%).

PC Use and Ownership

As many as three fifths of participants who took part in the quantitative research (58%) had a PC at home at the time of the face-to-face interview. This is higher than the figure for GB households, of whom 44% contain a PC[8]. For those who had used a computer before the course, just under half (47%) had used one at home, just over two fifths (44%) had used one at work and a third (34%) had used one at college. One in six (17%) had

[8] Data taken from Russell N and Drew N (2001), *ICT Access and Use*, DfEE Research Report RR252 (August 2000 fieldwork amongst 4039 respondents).

used a computer at a friend's/relative's house and one in six (17%) has used one at a public facility.

Some participants who took part in the qualitative research already owned a computer or said there was one in their home. Some had attempted to use books such as 'Computers for Dummies' but lacked the confidence to get started, or had a fear of breaking an item that had cost so much.

Attitudes to technology

During the face-to-face quantitative interview, participants were read out a number of statements about technology and asked how they agree or disagree with them. Table 1.5 below shows that, generally speaking, participants had a fairly positive attitude to technology. For instance over half (51%) felt that 'having a computer at home is essential'. Participants' views about technology were quite similar to that of the general population and, if anything, were a little more positive. For example, participants were less likely than the general population to agree that 'computers are only for the young' (3% of participants agreed with this compared with 12% of the UK population).

Table 1.5 Participants attitudes to technology

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348), UK population 16+ (1072)

Statement (negative statements are italicised)	**Participants** % agree	**UK Population 16+**[9] % agree
Computers are only for the young	3	12
I find it hard to keep up with new technology at work	25	28
I find it difficult to program a video recorder	28	31
Technology creates unemployment	42	51
I would rather use a cash machine than get service from a cashier	47	52
I don't like leaving messages on answering machines	47	54
Things often go wrong with new technology	49	62
Having a computer at home is essential	51	40
I find email useful as a way of communicating	60	42
Teletext or ceefax is a convenient way of finding information	84	83
I like trying out new things	88	81
I have a good idea of what the Internet can be used for	88	76
I am willing to try new things if they make my life easier	95	90

Amongst participants taking part in the qualitative research, initial attitudes (before going on the course) to technology varied, as did experiences of accessing and using ICT. Some participants were initially very 'techno-phobic' and reluctant to touch a computer without direct supervision. These participants doubted their own abilities and skills to use computers effectively and felt they would damage the equipment, seeing it as fragile and complicated.

"Until I went on that course I was scared, because you think you might press a button and it will go up"

"I have always had a fear about computers"

"I'd never touched a computer"

"I am frightened of computers, and I was so frightened of doing something wrong you know, so I hoped it would familiarise me"

[9] Data taken from a BMRB face-to-face omnibus study of 1,072 adults in the UK. Fieldwork took place in August 2000.

However, most of those taking part in the qualitative interview who had not used computers before the course had just never had the opportunity or need to, and so lack of usage was not for reason of fear or apprehension. All qualitative respondents felt that ICT was going to form the basis of most jobs in the future and therefore it was crucial to be able to use ICT and have evidence of this to secure employment.

"They're getting more popular and a lot of companies use them now"

"They're used for everything that we come into contact with, from our working life to shopping and, they're just life, it's run by computers now and you really need to understand them"

"*I don't think you can get a job without computers today"*

"Computers are the future, everything's going to be bought in that way so I just thought it would be a good thing to have"

However, another important motivation was ICT usage outside work. Respondents indicated that it would be advantageous to have ICT knowledge for personal use, communication purposes, training and expanding knowledge.

"I wasn't really bothered about getting or being certified, all I wanted to do was gain some knowledge on the computers and that's certainly what I got"

2. About UK online courses – the view from participants

This chapter looks at the actual training course that was being run as part of UK online. It reports on the views and experiences of those attending the course.

Summary

Participants in the quantitative and qualitative survey were likely to have found out about the course through the local paper, Jobcentre or friends/family. Most participants said that they decided to go on the training themselves, and were not influenced by anyone else; others reported influence either from personal contacts, Jobcentre/benefits office or the training provider.

There were two broad reasons for going on the training. The first was employment related, to gain ICT experience and/or a qualification to help in applying for and finding work. The qualitative research indicates that often this stemmed from a general acceptance that ICT is needed in many types of work and that the training would help them, rather than meeting a specific need for particular line of work or sector. The second broad reason was a general desire to find out more about computers, gain experience and confidence. In addition, the course was seen as a general introduction to computers which could lead to further training.

Participants in the qualitative and quantitative surveys reported variation in the use of taster sessions and needs assessments; some providers did not offer taster sessions, and needs assessments varied in terms of their content and formality. These aspects were generally valued by participants, as giving an introductory flavour to what was involved, although where they were definitely committed to the course, they were not always seen as necessary. However, lack of or limited assessments were sometimes seen as a factor leading to the wide diversity of ICT experience among participants and problems this could cause.

The location of the training was not a problem for those who completed the course, although the qualitative research suggests that this may have been more of an issue for those that did not complete or start the course in the first place. In particular, the need to pay travel expenses could be seen as a barrier to starting or completing the course.

Overall, attitudes to the training were very positive: in the quantitative survey 85% said they were satisfied with the training, and this positive view applies consistently across different groups of participants. In this respect, the training has been successful in offering something positive to a diverse group of participants. In particular, the course was valued

as helping participants to become more familiar with computers and increase their confidence.

Positive aspects of the training, highlighted in the qualitative and quantitative surveys were:

- Training staff: in most cases, participants valued the quality of training and the helpful approach of the trainer;
- Teaching methods: the flexible training method allowed participants to go at their own pace, and open learning allowed participants to fit the training in with other commitments;
- Training manuals and worksheets were valuable;
- Friendly atmosphere and support from other participants.

Negative aspects often related to individual providers:

- Some training staff were not seen as helpful;
- Where there were no dedicated tutors or a number of different staff were involved in a course, this could be unsettling for participants;
- In terms of course content, the main criticism was the limited time allocated to Internet and email, which was a main interest of many people entering the course.

Given that the course was often viewed as a stepping stone to further options, participants valued advice during and after the course.

The quantitative survey indicates that 18% of participants left the course before completing it. Personal circumstances were the main reason for leaving: work, family circumstances or health problems. Where the reasons were course-related, these often relate to the level of the course, as being either too basic or too difficult. Around half of all participants passed and had received a qualification or certificate, although 8% either had not actually received this or were waiting to hear whether they had passed. One in six did not think the course led to a qualification. Where participants gained a qualification or certificate, this was generally viewed positively, as either an advantage when looking for work, or more generally as marking a sense of achievement. Equally, there was frustration where they had not been received or where participants were waiting to hear.

Best practice

Whether a delivery style was considered best practice by participants really depended upon their preferences and needs. In general, respondents placed value in having flexibility and accessibility in all aspects of delivery and especially providers' capacity to tailor provision. More specifically, they valued:

- **At course entry**
    - Assessment of needs and expectations;
    - Choice of course;
    - Choice in style of teaching;
    - Choice of teaching styles;
    - Choice of hours, days and weeks.
- **During course**
    - Flexibility to include specialist packages people are interested in e.g. DTP, PowerPoint;
    - Inclusion of Internet and email;
    - Regular feedback and monitoring;
    - Workbook/manual on the course to allow practice outside the training centre;
    - Assistance if there is a difference between software used at home and that in the learning centre;
    - Access to training facilities to practice outside teaching hours;
    - Follow-up of absences;
    - Flexibility to have time off and pick up the course again;
    - Relaxed and friendly atmosphere – where possible facilities to 'take a break';
    - No jargon.

- **At course exit and afterwards**
    - Exit interview and full options for pursuit of further training provided;
    - Supported/free access to further courses;
    - Help choosing a computer;
    - Feedback and guidance on what/where next? – at any time after completion.

2.1 Pre - attendance

This section looks at participants' experiences and attitudes towards UK online before the course actually started. It will start by looking at how they found out about the course and why they decided to go on it. It will then go on to look at their experiences of signing up for the course, including taster sessions and needs assessment.

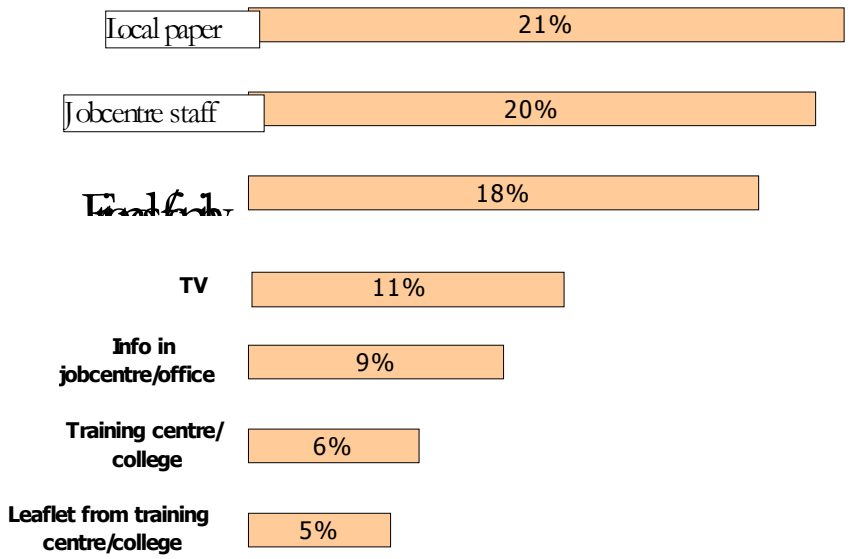
How Participants found out about UK online courses

The quantitative data shows that participants found out about UK online courses from various sources (see chart 2.1) but most commonly mentioned were local newspapers, Jobcentre staff and friends/family.

A fifth (21%) found out about the course from the local newspaper, 20% found out about it from Jobcentre staff and just under a fifth (18%) through friends/family. Other sources included TV (11%), information from the Jobcentre (9%), training centres/colleges (6%) and leaflets from training centres/colleges (5%).

Chart 2.1: How participants found about UK online courses[10]

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)



Results from the quantitative survey also showed that the ways that participants found out about the course did vary slightly by age. The more noticeable differences occurred when looking at those who found out about the course from local and national newspapers, friends and family and TV. Older respondents were more likely than younger ones to have found out about the training from a local or national newspaper. A third (32%) of participants aged 65 or over found out about the course from the local newspaper, compared to one in six (17%) of those aged under 25. One in ten (11%) of those aged over 65 found out about the course from a national newspaper, compared with only 2% of those aged under 25.

Those aged over 65 and those aged under 25 were more likely than other respondents to have found out about the training from friends or family. A quarter (24%) of those aged over 65 and two fifths (22%) of those aged under 24 found out about the course this way, compared with one in six (16%) of those aged 25 to 64.

[10] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

Those finding out about the course from TV were most likely to be aged 25-44. 15% of those aged 25-44 found out about the course this way, compared with 11% of all participants.

Many participants from the qualitative study said they had heard about the course through word-of-mouth recommendation.

"It was advertised in the local paper, but I missed that, it was this friend that said…"

A few were directly offered the course by their Jobcentre; others had to request the Jobcentre to send them on an ICT course or specifically a UK online course. In some cases the Jobcentre seemed extremely knowledgeable about the course and could advise the person about who to train with and even arrange the appointment or supply a card/leaflet with all the details of the provider. In other cases the Jobcentre were not familiar with UK online and people came to a dead end when they enquired about the course. For some participants the Jobcentre was a key factor in recommending and arranging attendance on the course, with very little motivation from the individual themselves. Others preferred to make their own enquiries and maintain an element of control.

"I was in the Jobcentre looking for work when I picked up one of the leaflets and I phoned up"

Advertising in local newspapers was variable in its approach, although the essential point people did pick up on was that courses were free. Local advertising was mainly conducted by colleges and well known providers. Where newspaper advertising was most successful, it tapped into particular target groups so that they could relate to the service on offer and feel that it was something that they could actually do.

However, respondents noted that most of the newspaper advertising was noticed *after* they had begun the training course, since it was only then that they were likely to recognise the brand.

"We have the Telegraph and the Guardian but I'm sure I've seen it somewhere, in a national, probably at the weekend or something, but not locally"

For those who were attracted by the advertising campaigns, all commented that the advertising was very encouraging as it stressed that programmes would be a good starting point for those with limited or no ICT skills. One respondent saw an advertisement featuring a lone parent wanting to restart her career once her child started school – this echoed the woman's experience - *"I felt the advert was aimed at somebody just like me"*

"I came across it on the television, saw an advert on UK online and thought 'I'm unemployed so I should be able to tap into that"

Ways to attract other learners

Respondents taking part in the qualitative research showed great concern that other people in their position may not find out about such 'free' IT courses due to a perceived lack of advertising and referral to the providers. They suggested that leaflets through the door might be helpful, others felt that the Jobcentre was the best place to market the course.

"The obvious thing to do would be to have notices in where they are signing on…… And if they are getting [benefits] paid by post, to stick it in the little envelope"

One respondent commented that not all benefit claimants attend the Jobcentre and therefore people in his position would be excluded from being party to the offer of 'free' IT training provision.

"The Jobcentre is the obvious way, but on my particular benefit, there's no access to anything, there's no face to face"

Branding of UK online

Many qualitative respondents were unaware that they had participated in a UK online course or were aware of how the course had been funded. Very few were aware that this was part of UK online training programme, largely due to the fact that learning centres often promoted themselves rather than UK online.

What influenced participants to attend a UK online training course

In the face-to-face quantitative survey, participants were asked what had influenced them to go on the training. Table 2.1 below shows that seven out of ten respondents (71%) said that no-one had influenced them (qualitative respondents were also likely to say that they took the initiative themselves to enrol on a course). However one in six (17%) said that family, relatives or friends had influenced them and one in seven (15%) said that the benefits office or Jobcentre staff had influenced them.

Table 2.1: What influenced Participants to go on the training[11]

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)	
	Participants
	%
No-one, I decided on my own	71
Family, relatives or friends	17
Benefits office/jobcentre staff	15
Training provider/college staff	4
Private employment agency	<1
Other	1

Older participants were slightly more likely than younger ones to say that no-one influenced them to go on the training. Eight out of ten (78%) of those aged over 65 said no-one influenced them, compared to three fifths (61%) of those aged under 25.

Motivations and reasons for going on a UK online course

During the face-to-face quantitative interview, respondents were read out a list of reasons why they might have decided to go the course and were asked if any of them applied to them. Results are shown in table 2.2.

The most commonly mentioned reason was 'to improve chances of getting a job', mentioned by three fifths (58%) of participants interviewed. Those unemployed at the start of the training were more likely than other participants to say this: 78% of those unemployed when they started the training said they went on the course to improve chances of getting a job.

[11] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

Table 2.2: Why participants decided to go on the course[12]

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)	
	Participants
	%
To improve chances of getting a job	58
I just wanted to find out how computers work	52
Wanted training on specific aspect e.g. word processing, databases	26
Stepping stone to other computer courses	24
To use Internet/email (e.g. to communicate, access information)	18
Keep in contact with friends/family	6
Other	3

Of those looking for employment in the qualitative interviews, the majority had a sense that without IT skills many doors would be shut in their face and with these skills many would be opened. Though few qualitative respondents were knowledgeable about the kinds of jobs these skills may lead to, there was awareness that IT was now important in many sectors of employment. For some, the dominance of ICT in the world of work was the only reason they wanted to do computer training and they took little pleasure from using a computer. There was a small number of qualitative respondents who felt that the Jobcentre had pushed them into doing the course. In these cases it was common to find negative attitudes towards training.

"Seeing if I could get employment out of it, but also knowing I'd got something better to put down on my CV"

"I'm obviously not up to date with the latest technology. I've been applying for jobs left, right and centre and I'm not getting anywhere, so it was getting to a depressive state. That's when I decided to do the CLAIT course - because it'll be more of computer technology.. Things that have advanced in the region"

"I don't think I'd have got that receptionist job that I got, or this job at the pharmacy if I hadn't been on the computer course"

"IT is a road to getting into business"

[12] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

"If I can get a job through it, well it's a bonus. Even if I don't I'm still glad I did it"

"I started this one because I had an idea for a business. That's how I got on to the computing course - because I wanted to start a business and it was actually to do with computing"

As well as gaining employment skills in IT, qualitative respondents wanted to increase the success of their self-marketing to employers either through adding more qualifications to their CV or simply being able to design and create a CV.

"I did need to prove that I've got 'this, that and the other' knowledge"

"I wanted to put my CV on to a computer….. so that now when I start looking for work, I can present it to them"

"To improve myself and be able to say 'right, I can do an office job' because everything is related to computers"

However, the qualitative research suggests that the primary purpose for undertaking the UK online training was often not to find work, although some people had specific opportunities in mind once they had completed the course.

The next reason most commonly cited by quantitative participants was 'I just wanted to find out how computers work', mentioned by just over half (52%) of respondents. Those who were retired when they went on the training were more likely than respondents in general to say this is why they went on the course: 75% of those retired at the training start date said they went on the course because they wanted to find out how computers work.

Generally, qualitative respondents said they had wanted to know more about computers, but had not had the chance and UK online was *'just the thing'* they had been looking for. The fact that the course was free, and that their attendance did not affect their benefits, meant that participants had nothing to lose and that they felt they could walk away if it was not for them. Participants did not have to prove they had reasons to want to join the course or be highly motivated – they could just go along to try it out.

"I didn't know whether I wanted to do it, like, as a career or for personal reasons"

"I thought 'well if I'm no good at it I can just stop doing it'. – because it was free"

Retired respondents taking part in the qualitative research had a number of reasons for participating in UK online. These included:

- To use computers as a hobby;

- Wanting to keep up with the world;
- As a means of getting voluntary work;
- To provide a way of contacting grandchildren.

Some wanted to learn how to use ICT for their own purposes and did not want to stop learning. Several had access to a PC at home and were highly educated or had been professionals during their working lives (e.g. ex-teachers). Many retired people wanted to stay mentally active as they had retired early either due to voluntary redundancy or ill-health; they felt that they did not want to 'give in' too easily to retirement and that ICT was a way of '*keeping their hands in*'.

Women returners had high expectations of the course and in turn were strongly motivating themselves to succeed. They wanted the course to be a boost to their confidence and a foundation upon which they could build. Many of these individuals had a good background of employment and education, but wanted to gain new ICT skills to propel them back into the labour market.

Other reasons why participants taking part in the quantitative survey said they went on the course included 'wanted training on specific aspect', 'it was a stepping stone to other computer courses' and 'to use Internet/email', mentioned by 26%, 24% and 18% of respondents respectively.

The qualitative research also suggests that for those people with some experience and proficiency in using computers, their motivation was often to gain a qualification to prove their abilities, to refresh skills or to gain learning from a specific element of the course.

"My other motive was that rather than keep writing 'I am fully proficient in word processing'; I can actually say I've got a qualification which is what people want"

"It's a good qualification to have if you haven't had any experience on a computer before"

Taster sessions

At the introductory stage, for many participants who took part in the qualitative research, the worry was that they did not know what the course would involve, and what they would actually learn, apart from having a general notion that it involved basic IT. A small proportion reported having a full induction, involving introduction to very basic concepts, such as switching on the computer and using a mouse. This was very useful for those who felt they needed it or who were techno-phobic. For those who would be learning through

the use of a workbook, it also formed a good introduction to the type of learning and the type of support they would receive, thereby enabling them to make an informed decision about whether to pursue the course.

"A good starting point to find out if I liked the course"

There was some blurring between taster sessions and assessment; qualitative respondents did not know if they were being assessed or were trying out the course. Two-fifths (42%) of respondents who took part in the quantitative study thought that they had had a taster session.

Experiences of Tasters

In the cases where qualitative respondents said they had experienced a taster session, the format was variable and respondents' views of their experiences were also variable. Respondents felt the tasters had several purposes:

- To test the facilities *"To examine the facilities available";*
- To meet the tutors *"Meet the tutors, see what they are like"*;
- To see whether computing was for them;
- To find out what the course would involve, and
- To get a general feeling for the training environment.

Some had high expectations of the introductory taster session and felt disappointed that there was not more support and guidance in these early stages of using the machine.

"*It was disappointing … left to press buttons, not a proper introduction"*

Other qualitative respondents were more positive about the taster courses - these tended to be people who felt they had actually learnt something on the course. The sense of achievement gained from the taster, for these people, had been a fundamental reason as to why they had pursued the whole course. Others enjoyed meeting other participants, and finding out about the method of learning.

"I felt I learnt from the taster so I should continue"

"I think I made an appointment to go back and have an introduction session, then when I did go back, there was quite a few of us there, all at the same stage. It was interesting, relaxing - I enjoyed it, because you were all at the same stage. Very informal"

No taster received

Taster sessions were not necessary in areas where access to pre-CLAIT beginner courses was a pre-cursor to joining the UK online course. Many qualitative participants had been referred from other learning centres and so did not need a taster, e.g. the disabled participants had completed a six-week taster at another centre.

Other qualitative respondents were already enthusiastic about the full course and clear about what they wanted from it. They did not ask for a taster and if it was offered, they declined it. The majority had a short initial interview to assess ability and were then placed on the training course. Respondents were usually happy with this, especially if they had some prior experience of computers and were keen to get started.

One or two centres offered no induction or initial assessment interview. Some qualitative respondents were given a workbook and left to get on with the course, without any help. This appears to have taken place at centres that tended to provide less support for individuals.

Where assessment/interview was absent from the course, there was a varied response from qualitative respondents: some felt this allowed them to 'get on with completing the course'; others felt that their group had such widely differing levels of ability and proficiency that it made it difficult to get support when it was needed.

"An introductory course would have been very valuable and actually saved me, and I'm sure other people, quite a lot of time"

"They just asked if I'd used a computer before, do I know how to use a keyboard, do I know how to turn it on and off and can I do word processing"

"They started me off and they said you can come in any day you want, any time to suit you and that was it"

Needs assessment/how well training needs were identified

Three fifths (57%) of respondents taking part in the quantitative survey thought they had had a needs assessment prior to beginning a UK online course.

In the quantitative survey, those with literacy or numeracy problems or a long term disability/health problem were not significantly more likely then other respondents to have received a needs assessment.

Qualitative research shows that the form of assessment used differed by provider, though most used an informal interview procedure. Qualitative respondents reported being asked about their experience of using computers, and in some cases previous education and training, but none reported actually performing assessment tests of basic skills. However some felt that the taster may have been a test of their IT Skills.

There was much disparity between qualitative respondents as to whether they had been consulted about what they actually wanted to gain from the course, though very few reported having any input or control about the content of their training. Some specifically asked for Internet/email, Desktop Publishing or PowerPoint, and in most cases this aspect was left to the end of the course or was not actually part of the learning which was accredited under the qualification.

The perception of some qualitative respondents that they had not undergone any form of assessment does not marry completely with reports from trainers and managers. It is feasible that the informal nature of the interview may have led people to believe that it was not an assessment or it may purely be that the time between starting the course and the interview meant that they could not recall this initial assessment.

The small number of qualitative respondents with a disability and/or access need in using the training facilities had varying accounts of their needs being recognised or met. None reported being asked if they had any access needs or of undergoing any form of access assessment. Providers seemed to participants to assume that where people had accessed computers previously they would make their needs heard and would know what equipment or alterations they might need.

Qualitative respondents with sight impairment remarked that they had experienced greater difficulties due to icons being small, but some had been able to increase the font size to improve visibility of the screen. However, others who suffered from impaired eyesight commented that *"I am short sighted and the icons are a bit small"* implying that they had not had their PCs set up so that fonts were larger or been provided with magnifying screens. A participant with hearing impairment reported that, due to frequent changes in tutors, he had to repeat to each tutor how best to speak to him in order that he could comprehend answers to his questions.

Experiences of signing up

The qualitative research indicates that signing up was a straightforward process in general, particularly where participants said they had not been on interviews or assessment tests to predict suitability for the course. This helped to a certain extent, in reassuring some that anyone was 'allowed' to take the course and that it would start at beginner's level so that no one would be confused or lost. The majority signed up alone and were doing it for their own needs and as a result of their own motivation, but there were a number of cases where pairs of friends or relatives joined either together or in succession.

Many qualitative respondents were unaware that there was a choice of providers in their area and in most cases it was only those who had found out about UK online through the helpline number or through *learndirect* who had made an informed choice about which provider and which site would best suit them.

"I actually rang up the Adult Education, they said 'we've also got sites at' and gave me some options to see what was the best one for me"

"There wasn't really a choice, only one place that was offering it"

Travelling to training centres

During the follow-up telephone survey, respondents who completed the course were asked how they travelled to the training centre and how convenient the location was for them. Table 2.3 below shows that almost half of respondents travelled by car, three out of ten walked and a quarter went by bus. Respondents completing the course tended to feel that that training location was convenient, with 72% saying it was very convenient and 24% saying it was fairly convenient. Not surprisingly, those who travelled to the training by car or who walked were more likely than those who travelled by bus to say that the training location was very convenient (71%, 86%, 60% respectively said the location was very convenient).

Table 2.3: How travelled to course on most occasions[13]

Base: All who completed the course (follow-up telephone survey: 791)	
	Participants
	%
Car	47
Walked	29
Bus	26
Bicycle	2
Train	2
Taxi	1
Got there another way	1

However, the above findings are based on those who had completed the course. In addition, there may be people who left the course early, or who never went on the course, because of the inconvenience of the location. These people may have had very different views to those who completed the course.

For some participants who took part in the qualitative research, the distance to the training venue was a potential barrier. Comments such as *"local college is many miles away"* or there was *"a distance of a 14 miles round trip"* indicates that provision was failing to stretch out into some areas and was serving as a negative factor in attracting participants to the training course. Travel costs were also mentioned as a significant barrier to access to training provision especially where it meant for example, a couple of bus journeys to reach the centre. Where travel costs were paid for by the provider, participants noted that without this subsidy there would have been very little incentive for them to attend because the cost in relation to the benefits claimed was too great.

"I think it would have been better if the travel expenses had been paid for, the fact that it was targeted for unemployed people"

Other qualitative respondents said that the area the provider was based in was a 'turn-off' (e.g. providers located in disadvantaged communities) to signing-up and/or attending, and in one case this had led to them leaving the course prematurely.

[13] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

"I'm discriminated about because of where I live … the online was for that area because it's a bad area and they want to get people to work, and at the same time, you know, there's people in this area that want to do computing as well"

When asked about physical access to facilities during the qualitative interview, most participants felt that this was reasonably acceptable. However one participant commented that the training room *"was up quite a few stairs which was fine because I've not got a disability but if I had I don't think I could have accessed that area".*

2.2 The course itself

This section reports on participants' experiences of the course sessions themselves. It will start off by looking at the types of courses participants went on and what was covered in the sessions. It will then go on to look at participants' views of the training providers, facilities and resources, staff and teaching methods and training materials. This section will look at whether the course met participants' needs, overall satisfaction, positive and negative aspects of the course and lastly, best practice recommendations.

ICT qualifications as part of UK online

CLAIT, levels 1&2 were the most common type of course that UK online participants went on. Table 2.4 shows that just under three fifths (57%) of participants went on a CLAIT course. The next most popular course was the European Computer Driving Licence, 9% of whom went on this. These figures are taken from the participant database.

Table 2.4: ICT qualification working to as part of UK online

Base: All participants (Database; 34,510)

	Participants %
CLAIT (Levels 1&2)	57
European Computer Driving Licence	9
City and Guilds 7261, Skill level (1&2)	2
Other agreed ICT qualifications	32
	100

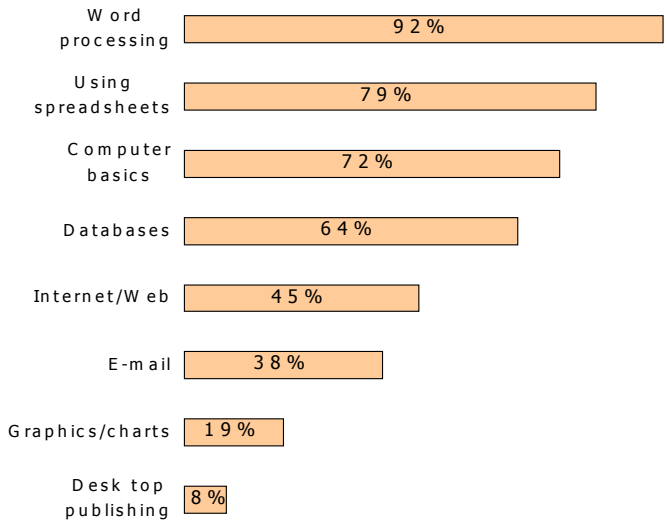
Some participants interviewed as part of the qualitative study were not sure what course they were taking. In addition, the name of the course ECDL was felt to be quite confusing for people.

Topics covered during training courses

During the face-to-face quantitative interview, respondents were asked what was covered in the training course. Chart 2.2 below shows that word processing, spreadsheets, computer basics and databases were the most common areas covered.

Chart 2.2: Topics covered during training[14]

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)



Over nine out of ten respondents (92%) said their course involved word processing, eight out of ten (79%) said it covered spreadsheets and seven out of ten (72%) said it covered computer basics. Less commonly mentioned were Internet and email. 45% of respondents said the Internet was covered in their course and 38% email.

Facilities/resources

Apart from a small number of specific cases, most qualitative respondents said computers were available for everyone in the sessions. The main difference between providers was

[14] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

whether the UK online facilities were shared with other learners, or whether there was a dedicated room for the course or dedicated times when UK online users only were allowed access to the facilities. In cases where facilities were shared with children or young people, there were more reports of vandalism to machines and things going wrong with machines. Where facilities were shared with other learners at the same time, it was felt strongly by respondents that this factor was responsible for the low level of interaction between participants and the fact that there was little socialising between group members. The fact of not knowing if another user was on UK online or not discouraged participants from asking questions or passing pleasantries, whereas on other courses this aspect was mentioned as a major benefit of attending.

Most qualitative respondents described the computers as being relatively adequate but in cases where people had recently bought a computer of their own, their version of Microsoft Windows was often more advanced than the providers version, e.g. WindowsNT as opposed to Windows 98. Facilities varied according to the individual learning centre. Some centres were described as 'shabby', generally unclean with poor/outdated equipment, broken chairs etc. However, most centres were felt to be generally satisfactory, facilities were clean and comfortable and computers were available when learners needed them – although they sometimes needed to be booked in advance, which learners did not mind.

"It was all modern, comfortable, nice chairs, what you'd expect from a computer room…"

"It was comfortable and everybody had use of the computer, the printer and the facilities were very good"

Participants taking part in the qualitative survey were generally disappointed where they were denied or had limited access to facilities outside of the set 30 hours of teaching time. It was felt that this hampered learning and retention of learning acquired in previous sessions, as there was little or no time to practice the skills which were so very new to them. Availability at convenient times was an essential part of how the facilities were viewed. As noted in Chapter 4, those without access to a computer at home or work sometimes struggled to maintain frequent use of computers outside of, and after, the course.

"There was no access outside sessions and this wasn't encouraged"

In a minority of cases, respondents felt strongly that the quality of provision or standard of teaching and support did not reflect the standards of the facilities and PCs.

"That much was made of the training centre looking good, but the content was poor"

Where provision was for specific groups only, e.g. women, this was felt to be very positive, and in some cases essential to them feeling reassured and safe in that environment.

Beyond the actual computer rooms, facilities such as a café near the training rooms was considered a good part of attending the course since they allowed social interaction. Where crèche facilities were provided, it was appreciated.

"They were very helpful actually because they've got a crèche for the day"

Staff/teaching methods

When asked about how good they felt the staff were who gave the training, respondents who took part in the quantitative survey answered quite positively. Almost half of respondents (45%) said training staff were fairly good, with a further third (35%) saying they were very good. Those who were satisfied with the course overall were more likely to rate the training staff as good. Almost all (97%) of those who were satisfied with the course rated staff as good, compared to only half (49%) of those who were not satisfied with the course.

During qualitative interviews, there were many good reports on the tutors taking the courses:

"The quality of the staff and their product knowledge was great. Their approach, it was great and the products themselves were wonderful, and as I say, I can't praise them more highly"

"She was great…She didn't come across so much as a teacher... She was more of a friend….. She gave us lots of confidence"

However, negative comments often centred around the tutor *doing* and not facilitating; participants felt when they had a problem that the tutors often came up to them and went 'CLICK, CLICK, CLICK' with the mouse. As a result they could not follow how or why something had or had not worked.

"I found, some of the sections that I had to do the course, he actually did them for me because there wasn't enough time to show me properly"

Qualitative respondents said they could see the pros and cons of using ex-participants to teach or assist in teaching the course – for example they could relate to beginners. However, often they did not have teaching skills or higher level IT skills to explain or resolve problems. Tutors who were thought of as highly qualified were sometimes accused of 'techy speak' which turned some of the learners off.

It was felt that real problems lay with the providers who did not provide dedicated staff to the course so participants felt that there was 'no consistency of tutors'. People related to certain tutors more so than others, and therefore there was high demand for the sessions where these, more personable, tutors would be teaching.

"*The thing is you'd have different people depending on what day it was"*

"There was only one lady there that was really, really nice and she really went out of her way to help you, but you'd be really disappointed if you went in one morning and you couldn't see her"

In some cases respondents found the tutors totally unapproachable and this prevented them from asking questions and meant that they tended to muddle through or ask others in the group.

"You're asking silly questions to them that they think 'you should know this', you get that feeling that you don't want to ask because they're not very approachable"

"There were times when I really wanted to give up and I thought I don't want to go in any more because I feel really degraded, it was the way some of them spoke to you, some of them were really quite arrogant and treated you like you've just come out of schooling"

Style Of Teaching/Learning

Qualitative respondents were able to describe advantages and disadvantages of the style of teaching they received, be it classroom style, workbook interactive computer teaching or worksheets. Those who were extremely committed and enthusiastic were happy to teach themselves and progress at their own speed, others who were less confident wanted more supervision. Individual preference for traditional, class room style instruction with a teacher using formal, structured methods was counterbalanced by those who could not/ would not have attended without the flexibility to attend whenever it was convenient and learn at their own pace.

For many qualitative respondents, the training was and could only be compared to that which they had experienced at school. Therefore their perception of UK online often depended on whether they had positive or negative memories of school. Group classes caused problems for some of the slower learners, in that keeping up was an issue when the group was large. Some said that the pace was too fast for those who had not used ICT before, and that the range of experience in groups was not always handled well.

The most advanced learning centres had facilities which allowed individualised *guided teaching* where tutors could observe and individuals work and conduct interactive computer

teaching through messages on screen. Others had projectors that could be linked to a computer, so participants could actively follow what the tutor was talking about by following an example on screen. This is a new way of learning for many respondents, 'doing' whilst being taught.

Open learning was the usual method of delivery for qualitative respondents. They visited the learning centre as and when they could and learned at their own pace and convenience. This suited the overwhelming majority of individuals, many of whom had other responsibilities, e.g. childcare, job search etc. It enabled them to overcome fear of failure and nervousness about learning. Respondents valued the opportunity to experience a new style of learning and some specifically commented that now they knew what type of learning they would look for in the future should they pursue IT training or any other type of training.

"I don't think I'd go back to group training"

For many people the flexible, own pace learning style of UK online was the very first time they had come across this style of learning. Many were apprehensive as they assumed that they would need constant attention and be told what to do every step of the way; many were pleasantly surprised when they found it was so convenient and flexible.

"*It felt quite nice actually, because you didn't feel rushed and pressured like if someone was a bit quicker than you then you didn't have to worry about it, it was quite nice"*

Older people, those with a physical or mental disability, and those who found the concentration and getting back into learning quite difficult, were very appreciative of the fact that the flexibility allowed them to have a break whenever they needed to.

"The beauty of it is being programme learning, if there's anything that hadn't sunk in, you could go back and recap on it and I found it a very good way of working. If you pressed the wrong button or the screen went mad or anything like that all you did was just have a word with the supervisor and the supervisor came and sorted it out very willingly and very efficiently"

"Unless you were stuck there was no need for anyone to interact"

Where qualitative respondents had the flexibility to attend at will and work at their own pace from workbooks, it was more difficult for them to strike up friendships or communication with other participants, as they were all working on different modules. Some found that the lack of interaction was unhelpful when trying to learn a new skill because it could be frustrating not receiving encouragement from others, or knowing how others were coping.

A further disadvantage to flexible training was that to some there seemed to be a complete lack of structure – *"They had trays with sheets of work and you just go in and take a sheet, if you want to do word processing this hour then you can, if you want to do database you can do database, whichever"* Some qualitative respondents felt that the purely open style of learning relied heavily upon personal motivation and that they received less supervision or assistance than they would have had with traditional classroom learning.

"It was more your own initiative and getting on with it sort of thing and not having one-to-one help with it"

Training materials

Where workbooks/manuals were provided, qualitative respondents said they found them to be valuable: they added structure; people knew what was coming and what they would achieve; and they allowed home practice. In many cases the provider added an introduction to the computer at the front of the workbook which was useful for those who were confused about some of the terminology used e.g. hardware and software.

In some cases, worksheets were provided at the beginning of a session. Respondents noted that this was fine for the training session, but workbooks meant that you could add personalised notes and see progression. Those without handouts or workbooks mentioned that this was a drawback. People saw workbooks as supporting learning, as a way of tracking how a problem had been solved previously and a way of finding their own solutions. Although some felt support from tutors was essential, the act of finding your own way around the computer using a workbook and being able to tackle problems before asking for help was felt to be an important part of learning, and of finding the confidence to use computers alone in the future.

"you were left on your own to do it which is fine for some of the aspects of, say word processing that you were completely comfortable with. …… but when you became stuck, you had to wait for your help, which is fair enough but then sometimes if you had a piece of paper there that you could take away or crib sheets, ticks or whatever, rough guidelines, that would have been really useful"

"For me I think I would have preferred an actual work book with the exercises in, stage by stage, you just turn the pages"

Tutor Support

Feedback was an essential element of the course support provided to students and was experienced at various levels. Where tutors wrote comprehensive notes and tips on people's work and it was received by the time they returned for their next session, learners gained considerably from the feedback. This was even more the case if tutors actually took

the time to discuss progress with individuals on a regular basis. This kind of continual monitoring and feedback was of most use to apprehensive learners, those with little experience of learning and where the course was delivered on a self-taught basis.

Qualitative respondents tended to think that the majority of learning centres were well staffed. However some reported that they often had to wait too long for tutors to become available.

"I think they should limit the number of students at one time so they've got more man hours per individual - more lecturers to the number of students"

"Sometimes they just didn't have anybody there to help you out, they were all at lunch or whatever, and when you needed help there wasn't anybody around, or they would say, oh we'll come in a minute and five minutes later you're still waiting"

"It was flexible, it was good, but there wasn't a lot of lecturers at a time"

"More help from the lecturers, more confidence from them, support and a lot more things explained properly and thoroughly, that would have made me feel a lot more comfortable and feeling that you were welcome there"

One respondent reported: *"So he (the tutor) gave me this program on this computer and it was typing, you know, you just follow the letters. I did that for four days. He just left me. I mean I don't know what I should be doing. I assumed that's what I had to do for the course and they just left me. I sat for four days"*

"You just put on the computer and you put it onto the program that you are set for and basically you were just left to get on, on your own…That's what I'm saying, this is where I feel that I haven't learned anything because they didn't explain"

Many qualitative respondents noted the need for a happy medium between traditional and alternative forms of learning. The need for balanced levels of support was also highlighted as essential to learners finding their own solutions so that they could still experience the challenge and satisfaction of their achievements, but in a context in which support is available when needed.

Support from other learners

Fellow students formed a key part of learning and support. Peer learning and support was felt to be important by qualitative participants who learnt in an environment which promoted interaction, in particular from:

- Consolidating learning through explaining to others;
- Something being easier to understand because it had been explained in layman's terms by another novice;
- Because help came sooner than from a tutor.

Social support was also gained where learning centres had provision for participants to take a break together and talk over a coffee. Indeed, support and interaction with others was a core factor affecting how the course was rated and what people felt they had gained from attending. This finding was more pronounced where the primary motive for learning IT skills had not been to gain employment.

"The chance for group support is important - it's a good help if you feel you can approach them any time"

"*useful to help others and consolidate own learning"*

Attendance and hours taught

Contrary to the outline of delivery set by Government Offices in contracting with providers, qualitative respondents reported that courses covered a range of duration, from 30 hours to 100 hours plus. Those who delivered on a strictly 30 hour basis did so even if this meant that participants only completed modules and not the full qualification. Others moved the goal posts slightly so that taught time was 30 hours but participants were allowed unlimited practice time. Some courses were run on an extremely flexible/indefinite basis of attendance until and sometimes beyond the qualification.

The time limit was restrictive for a large proportion of qualitative respondents and especially those who were experiencing their first contact and training with computers. Even those candidates who gained the qualification felt that the time limit for the training had been of detriment to their learning and the longer-term retention of the skills used to pass the exams.

One participant felt extremely frustrated that although she felt she was grasping the essence of how to use the computer while she followed the workbook, the learning was not instilled and could not be recalled or utilised without the aid of the book.

"Not enough time to go into enough detail and 'really' learn it instead of just getting though the exam"

"Possibly they tried to teach you too much in the amount of time"

"it was a 30 hour course in total and I had to fit 30 hours in over 2 weeks, but that was it"

Classroom-style delivered courses seemed to be limited to 9am-4/5pm whereas self-taught courses generally allowed more flexible access to the training rooms. Flexible access was particularly important for some learners, often learners who had children or who were working found it easier for them to learn at night-time rather than during the day.

Learning between sessions

In the qualitative research, many said they tried to practise exercises and skills learnt on UK online in between classes so that they did not forget what they had learnt before the next session, although this practice was also to help learners progress through the course more quickly. However, differences in software between home and the provider such as the version of Microsoft Office was problematic, as it was very difficult to transpose learning 'up' or 'down' depending on whether their home computer was more or less advanced than that in the training rooms.

"I have a problem with the version of Microsoft not matching the one at home"

Where individuals had no access to a PC outside of the training centre they mentioned difficulties retaining learning in between sessions and felt that time was wasted '*catching up'* at the beginning of each session. Furthermore, concern was shown by many participants who did not have access to PCs that once the course finished they would lose their skills very quickly if they did not get a job using computers or move on to another course because they had no way of keeping their skills fresh.

"*because I'm not in work and I've not got the use of a computer, I'm not really getting up-dated myself"*

"if I had my own computer then I'd have got no excuse"

Positive aspects overall of UK online training courses

Benefits of participating in the training programme mentioned by qualitative respondents included getting confidence in applying for jobs and improving self-confidence. Increased levels of self esteem and motivation were experienced by many of the participants. The effect on self-esteem in turn had effects on people's health and their perspective on life.

"I was over the moon with it, I didn't realise how much they did for you, I thought it was brilliant, I was amazed. The help that's available is unbelievable, excellent"

"It helped with my depression because I was doing something. I was under the doctor's orders and they said to find something to do"

"*I suppose it just gave me the confidence really, rather than saying 'I can do it', I can say I have got a qualification so I don't have to explain it"*

"I'll go back and do computers again because they're good, I haven't decided yet but I'll go back. I believe in education no matter how old you are you can always learn"

Raised confidence and a change in attitude towards computers was a common gain for those who had initially been 'techno-phobes'.

"I'm not frightened of the computer and I've got UK online to be grateful for, it taught me a lot"

"I mean the computers themselves were great, you know, they just amazed me what you can do on a computer"

Completing the course gave people confidence in using computers and many course completers have purchased their own home computer. The renewed confidence and newly acquired skills meant for some that they felt empowered to look at what they could do and seek other training courses.

"I am now able to use the Internet and see what the fuss is all about"

"By gaining the qualification I feel more open to joining and completing other courses"

Many qualitative respondents felt that they had gained personally from taking part in the training either from the social contacts and support or from simply getting out of the house and having an interest in something. Attending group training for many people had been an excellent way to make new friends who were in similar situations to themselves; it developed a social circle of support.

Those who were retired viewed the course as something that had given them a link to the modern world, given them a new skill, involved them in learning and provided a route to relating with, and in some cases, communicating with their family. Most important of all the course had given them the ability *"to remain active*".

Women returners who took part in the qualitative research felt that they faced many barriers in re-joining the labour market and that attending and completing the UK online course was a first step in overcoming these barriers. The course helped them to do something for themselves, make time for themselves, and to develop skills for their return to the labour market, so that they can get better paid jobs. One woman felt strongly that it had been vital for her to have a break from her children and think about her needs – *"It gives you a break as well when you've got kids, it's quite nice"*

Table 2.5 shows responses to the quantitative survey, where respondents were asked what they liked about the course. Positive comments were most likely to focus on staff (31%).

Table 2.5: What participants liked about the course[15]

Base: All participants (face-to-face survey; 1,348)	
	Participants %
Training staff/tutors were supportive/encouraging/patient/helpful/friendly	31
Friendly atmosphere	15
Could go at your own pace/liked the pace/were not rushed	15
Any other positive comment about training staff/tutors	8
Training staff/tutors taught the course well/applied good teaching methods/explained things well	8
Course was easy to understand/was too basic for me	8
Good course/liked course	7
Learnt something new/different	7
The course was flexible/flexible hours/the hours suited me	7
Liked course content/what was taught/subjects that were covered	7
Liked a specific aspect of the course – learning about basic computer functions	7
Course equipment/computers/resources	5
I enjoyed it/it was fun	5
Liked specific aspect of the course – Word /word processing /typing	5

Negative aspects overall of UK online training courses

Attending the UK online training programme was not always a positive experience for people. Some found the experience disappointing and off-putting as far as computers are concerned.

"I still can't say I am completely computer literate"

[15] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

Disappointments usually related to the poor service from particular learning centres or to the fact that certain aspects of ICT were not included in the training, in particular email and Internet. Most respondents had done the CLAIT course and pointed out that this gave no training in the Internet or email, and so fell short of their requirements and expectations.

"The only reason I did a bit on the Internet was because I requested it and that was done after the course was finished, they give you half an hour on the Internet and I found that 'unuseful' because I didn't really learn anything"

The lack of follow-up support after the course was commonly commented upon negatively by participants. Without access to a computer at home or at work the impetus gained while on the course in terms of developing people's confidence could wear off in a matter of weeks. At the time of interview many people felt that they were 'back to square one', could not really remember what they had learnt and had not, in their view, reaped any benefits from their hard work. This left them feeling demoralised about ICT and training.

"I was very enthusiastic immediately and now I think, well, I don't know whether there's any point"

Table 2.6 shows findings to the quantitative survey.

Table 2.6: What participants disliked about the course[16]

Base: All participants (face-to-face survey; 1,348)

	Participants
	%
Needed longer on each subject/rushed/covered too much	10
Not enough training staff for number of students	9
Large mix of abilities	5
Lack of very basic training for beginners	4
Didn't like tutor/unhelpful/poor attitude	4
Training materials/literature	4
Too difficult/pace too fast	4
Not enough (working) computers	3
Staff didn't use good methods/didn't communicate well	3
Too easy/basic	3
Nothing	37

[16] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

Overall satisfaction/usefulness of the course

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the course and thought that it had covered what they had wanted. Over eight out of ten (85%) of respondents to the quantitative survey said they were satisfied with the course and over a quarter (27%) were completely satisfied.

Respondents also tended to feel that the course was useful. 86% of respondents interviewed face-to-face said the course was useful. 92% of those re-interviewed over the telephone agreed that the course suited their needs, although one in six (16%) felt that that they spent too long doing things they weren't interested in.

Findings on these questions were very consistent across different sub-groups, indicating that the training managed to appeal to the diverse groups of participants.

The qualitative research indicates that in most cases, expectations were met. Typically, a trainee who had no prior experience of computers (and might even be afraid) now reported increased confidence and understanding, new skills and a general enthusiasm about learning more. Greater interest had been raised in participants where providers had taken the time to look at the relevance of the exercises in the workbook and make these more *'learner friendly'*. This was a critical part of the case the ease of learning and enjoyment for many learners.

Where obvious friction and/or poor management was observed within the provider organisation, this impacted upon the trainee's involvement with the centre and the course. Participants would attend to follow their learning package but to a certain extent refrained from asking questions or liasing with staff because they felt they had *"enough problems already"*. This was apparent for a few providers in each area.

Where tutors took the time, either formally or informally, to discuss progression beyond UK online, participants appreciated the support and guidance. Many took up the advice of tutors to pursue further IT training either with the provider or other organisations in the area. Those who did not receive this kind of advice or exit interview felt that they had nothing to move on to.

"*After the first course, I almost felt as though they had taken you so far and then dumped you, it just stopped"*

A small number of participants felt that UK online was being used solely as a vehicle to encourage people into signing-up for other courses at the learning centre. Some participants felt they were being pressured by the provider and that things were being held

back from them within the UK online course so that they would need further training e.g. Internet and email.

Finally there was substantial disappointment and frustration where certificates had not been received. People were reluctant to put the qualification on their CVs or job application forms because they had not received the qualification so there was a certain amount of feeling that they had been 'held back'. Although non-receipt of certificates was not widespread, the effect was extremely negative where it occurred. This is discussed further in section 2.3.

Whether course met participants needs

In the quantitative survey, half (49%) said the training had fully covered what they wanted and a further two fifths (43%) said it partly covered their needs. When asked what they would have liked more training on, the most common topics were Internet and email: almost half said they would have liked more training on the Internet (47%) and two fifths said email (38%). This confirms the qualitative findings above on the negative aspects of the course.

In the qualitative interviews, many participants reflected that the course had been free so *'what could you expect?'*. In cases where people had experienced poor training, they commented that they would not have put up with it had they paid for it.

There was a general lack of information given to participants at the beginning. Many were unaware of exactly what course they were doing, were not informed that there would be tests and/or were not given a choice of course. Due to the lack of information given to participants at the outset of the course, they often had no benchmark of what they could expect.

Best practice

Whether a delivery style was considered best practice by participants really depended upon their preferences and needs. In general, respondents placed value in having flexibility and accessibility in all aspects of delivery and especially providers' capacity to tailor provision. More specifically, they valued:

- **At course entry**
    - Assessment of needs and expectations;
    - Choice of course;

- Choice of teaching styles;
- Choice of hours, days and weeks;

- **During course**
  - Flexibility to include specialist packages people are interested in e.g. DTP, PowerPoint;
  - Inclusion of Internet and email;
  - Regular feedback and monitoring;
  - Workbook/manual on the course to allow practice outside the training centre;
  - Assistance if there is a difference between software used at home and that in the learning centre;
  - Access to training facilities to practice outside teaching hours;
  - Follow-up of absences;
  - Flexibility to have time off and pick up the course again;
  - Relaxed and friendly atmosphere – where possible facilities to 'take a break';
  - No jargon.

- **At course exit and afterwards**
  - Exit interview and full options for pursuit of further training provided;
  - Supported/free access to further courses;
  - Help choosing a computer to buy;
  - Feedback and guidance on what/where next? – at any time after completion.

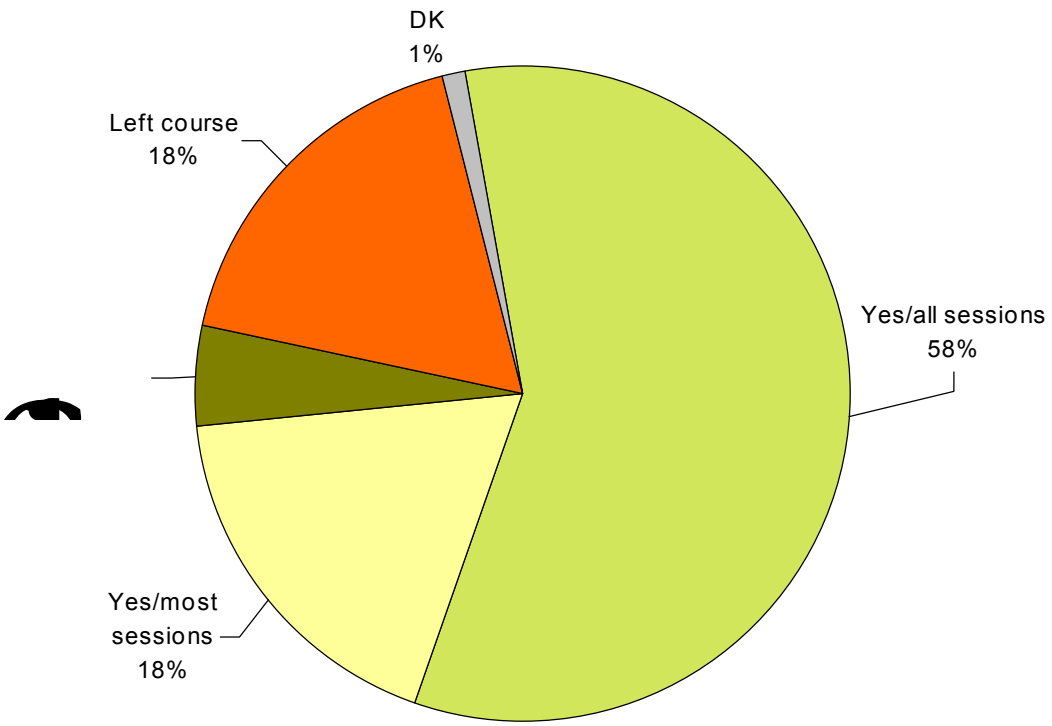
2.3 Completion rates and qualifications

When participants were interviewed during the face-to-face quantitative survey, a third (32%) had not completed the course whilst seven out of ten (68%) had. However at this

point, some respondents were still on the course and this is why they had not completed it (5% gave this as a reason for non-completion). At the follow-up telephone interview some four months later, respondents were asked again whether they had completed the course. Chart 2.3 shows that of those who were successfully re-interviewed over the telephone, a fifth (18%) had left the course, one in twenty (5%) were still on the course and eight out of ten (77%) had completed most or all of the sessions.

Chart 2.3: Completion rates at follow-up quantitative stage

Base: All respondents (follow-up telephone survey; 964)



Ethnic minorities were twice as likely as white people to leave the course early; 29% of ethnic minorities left the course early compared with 16% of whites. This may be related to the fact that ethnic minority participants were more likely to come from London than any other region. 42% of ethnic minorities who took part in the follow-up telephone interview were from the London area. Those from the London area (white and ethnic minorities) were slightly more likely than average to have left the course early (26%, compared to 18% overall). Of those who did complete the course, those from London were also least likely to have completed all of the sessions (39% compared with 58% overall). Ethnic minorities were more likely to have had literacy or numeracy problems

than white participants. However, there is no significant difference in completion rates between those with and without literacy or numeracy problems.

Course completion was generally consistent by other demographic sub-groups (sex, age, qualifications and economic status at the start of training), as well as in terms of disabilities. Those who had not used a computer before the training were only slightly more likely to have left the course early than those who had: 22% of those who had not used a computer before the course left the course early, compared with 16% of those who had used a computer before the course.

The 171 respondents who had left the course early were then asked how many of the sessions they had actually attended and why they had left the course early. Just over a fifth (22%) had attended up to two sessions, a third (33%) had attended more than two but less than half of the sessions, whilst two fifths (41%) had attended more than half of the sessions.

Among some qualitative respondents, course completion was attributed to the self-teach style. The flexible nature of this kind of provision meant that participants had been able to work at their own pace and eventually complete the course. Where there was no time pressure to complete and people could attend as much or as little as needed, completion depended very much on people's internal motivation. However if participants could observe their progress every time they attended, this fuelled their will to complete. The most keen went almost every day and completed the course in a few weeks. Others went less regularly and completed over several months.

When asked why they had left the course early, a quarter (24%) of respondents at the quantitative survey said this was because they had got a job or returned to work. Table 2.7 shows other reasons people gave for leaving the course early.

Table 2.7: Why participants left the course early[17]

Base: All those who left the course early (follow-up telephone survey;171)	
	Participants %
Work	24
Wasn't getting anything out of it	18
Family/personal circumstances	12
Too difficult	12
Became ill	11
Childcare arrangements	7
Inconvenient times/dates	5
Lack of time	3
Difficulty getting to course	1

For those in the qualitative research, the most common reasons for leaving the course were practical ones not related to the course content. These included:

- Employment;
- Illness;
- Childcare;
- Caring responsibilities;
- Travel problems;
- Money;
- Access; and
- Change in location.

[17] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

In terms of those factors leading to non-completion that were course-related, some participants complained that the style of learning did not suit them and the pace was too fast. One trainee commented that the course was *"not appropriate to enable people to learn, and units were whizzed through"*. Some participants dropped out because they felt the course content was poor and irrelevant. Two participants in particular moved to other providers where delivery was more staggered and where they felt the content was more appropriate to their needs; they felt the emphasis at their 'new' providers was on learning rather than completion in the fastest time possible.

Some participants felt their course was too basic. Conversely, other participants found training, e.g. CLAIT, to be too advanced and would have preferred to be on a course that started from the basics and guided people through much more slowly before beginning exercises and tests. Some participants said that they began to feel lost, as the rest of the group began to pick up speed. They felt increasingly left behind, and also felt guilty and stupid because they kept asking for assistance; they felt they were stealing the tutor's attention from others in the group.

"A couple of times I was going to leave, I said at the end of each, because I'd been doing things, following the instructions, but it didn't mean anything to me"

In some cases participants complained about a lack of clarity over how they were to be assessed and accredited. Some respondents, all of whom attended the same training provider, had been told that they had completed the course successfully by their tutors, only to be written to later to ask if they would repeat the course as they had failed an aspect.

Some participants did not complete their course because they were seeking to learn only certain aspects of the course anyway. Some ended up dropping out before these aspects were reached. In fact, those people who wanted to learn something specific were often frustrated that they had to go through elements they were familiar with before they got to the section of the course that had actually motivated them to come along in the first place. In some cases, participants' motivation waned after achieving a specific module of the course they were interested in e.g. DTP, PowerPoint or Excel, and this caused them to leave the course prior to completion.

"Eventually I would have ended up going on the Internet but first they wanted you to go through the whole lot from word processing right through"

As noted earlier, some people did not complete because they did not like the area where the learning centre was based, to them it did not feel safe or they did not want to be with people from a 'bad area'.

"The area that they put the course in, is kind of - it's people that you don't really actually want anything to do with"

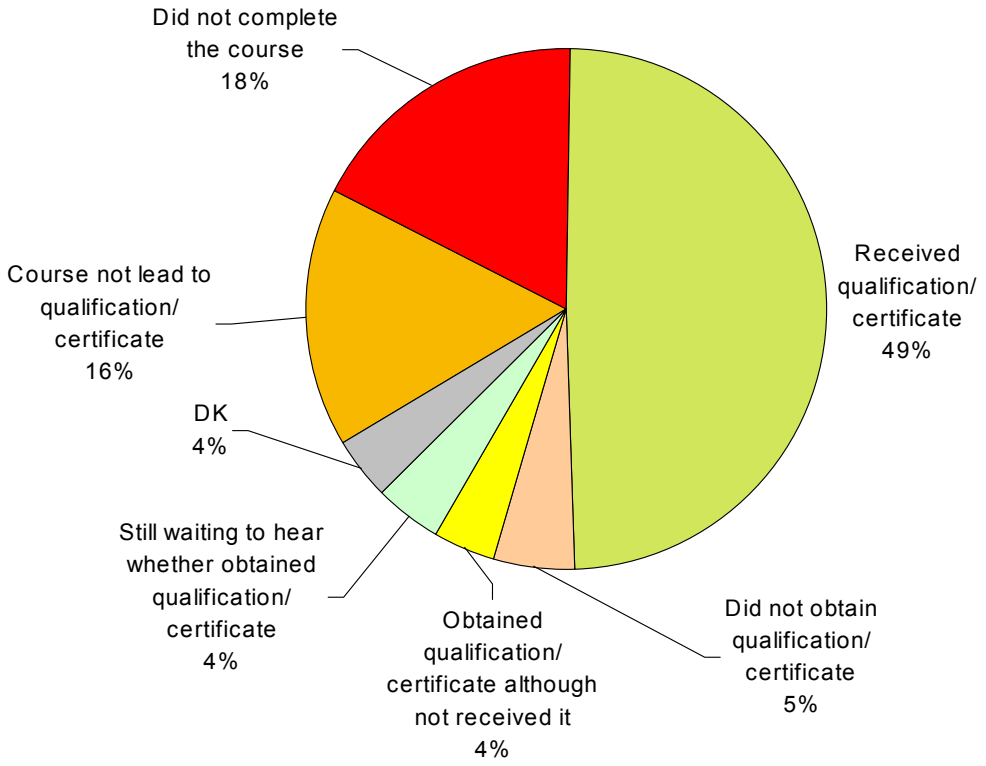
Some of the participants from one provider did not complete because the computers kept breaking down and the course was being taught on paper.

Qualifications

Of those who were re-interviewed at the telephone stage, almost half (49%) had actually receive a qualification or certificate as a result of attending a UK online course (see chart 2.4). However, a further 8% were still waiting to hear or had not received their qualification. One in six (16%) said their course did not lead to a qualification/certificate and one in twenty (5%) said they did not obtain the certificate/qualification their course led to. Those who gained a qualification/certificate as a result of attending a UK online course included a mix of participants and were not inclined to have any particular characteristics.

Chart 2.4: Qualifications achieved

Base: All respondents (follow-up telephone survey; 964)



In the qualitative research, positive comments about certification centred around having achieved something. For some people it was their first qualification. For others a certificate gave them something to sell to employers.

"The fact that it was just a CLAIT course, I don't think that's really that great but at least it's a start, a stepping stone to go on further"

Many comments about certification related to failure/delay in receiving the certificate and the problems and frustrations this had caused. Participants were generally reluctant to include the qualification on their job applications without a certificate. The delay led some participants to question if they had actually passed at all.

"I did the course last July and I was told I would receive a letter in September, October time to come and pick my certificate up ….I still hadn't received it …. and I've still got nothing…. I've called three times

and the last time I called was just before Christmas and I was told I should get it in the New Year, so I'm letting January pass and then I'll probably give them a phone"

"I'm getting fobbed off on the phone now when I'm ringing up about my certificate, nobody seems to know the answer"

"We put the hours in and we know we passed and we just want our certificate"

"I haven't got no proof of it other than just my word"

3. Training Providers

This chapter contains feedback from training providers. The research included two phases of interviewing with the same providers.

Summary

Courses were generally provided at providers' existing centres; occasionally new venues were used. In most cases, providers said that they already had sufficient IT resources in house, although there were some new IT purchases reported mid-way through the course. The payment to providers was generally seen as an appropriate amount. In general, providers used existing courses rather than design new ones, although in some cases they were modified to reflect the participant group of UK online.

Providers approved of the combination of national advertising and local initiatives to recruit participants. However, it was felt that the national campaign did not tend to encourage unemployed participants; local initiatives and referrals from Jobcentres were seen as more effective in targeting this group. More generally, some providers were surprised at the number of older or retired participants.

Some providers offered taster sessions, and these varied in contact and formality. All providers said they carried out needs assessments (although not all participants agreed with this). Some needs assessments were formal, others informal.

Courses were exclusively part-time, although providers varied in how rigid they were in setting times for participants. Initially, some respondents reported that they had reduced the scope of the training to reflect the 30-40 hours course duration, although by the second stage of fieldwork, some providers said they had allowed participants more hours on the course, and were also more flexible in terms of the hours available.

In most cases, courses were taught either by work sheets/task sheets or by automated computer program/audio-tape. In these cases, the teacher would be available to participants for help as required. Some trainers had remained in contact with participants after the course to see how they were progressing.

In general, providers were very positive about the course, and felt it offered participants valuable training and a useful qualification.

Best practice for course delivery

Trainers made a number of suggestions on how best to deliver the courses and limit participant drop-out. This included:

- Probe participants' expectations at the outset including what they want from the courses, what subject matter they expect it to cover and whether the hours are suitable;
- Provide suitable taster and introductory sessions that allow participants to see how the course will be taught, what it will cover and the types of people attending the course;
- Provide crèche facilities for people who require it;
- Pay travel expenses;
- Provide facilities such as a coffee room for people to socialise during the course;
- Provide greater access to PC's outside of course hours and after the course has been completed, for people to brush up on their skills;
- Develop better local contacts and links to obtain more referrals i.e. with local Jobcentres, community centres, etc. It was also suggested that UK online could be linked in with other Government programmes such as New Deal;
- Create closer links between providers to share best practice;
- Give providers prior notice of national advertising campaigns so that they can combine it with local marketing and employ trainers to deal with the surge in demand;
- Integrate UK online with life skills training and basic literacy and numeracy e.g. include production of a CV, jobsearch support;
- Provide "next stage" courses for participants;
- Include Internet and email as part of the training;
- Provide exit interviews and discussion;
- Courses should lead to a qualification, but providers should send out certificates promptly;
- Provide flexibility in the course hours offered;

- Minimalise technical jargon that is used in the courses;

- Provide suitable support for course providers in terms of definition of course guidance, administration requirements, and advertising/marketing, that allows for local adaptation.

Overview

As noted above, the research with providers was conducted in two stages. It should be noted that in the follow-up stage it was apparent that many of the staff had left or changed jobs, reflecting the temporary nature of the contracts that they worked under.

Overall, trainers felt that ICT training provision in most areas was reasonable prior to UK online, although many of these pre-existing local courses had a cost associated with them, with a few providing reduced prices for the unemployed. Providers did not feel that they had much liaison with other providers about the computer courses offered in their local area.

3.1 Reasons for applying for UK online

The decision to become involved with UK online was usually made at a senior level. Many of the managers and trainers interviewed were often not involved in this decision making process and only heard about UK online late in the bidding process. Furthermore, others joined the organisation after the bid was won or were recruited as a result of winning the UK online contract.

For some providers the decision to bid was made at the 'last minute', close to the deadline for submitting the bid. However, providers did not feel this had unduly affected the decision on the contract. Although providers did not see the bidding process as laborious, the time taken to prepare a bid varied from one day to one month.

Providers felt that winning the bid was seen as a great success for them, and had very positive expectations about what the course could provide in terms of:

- Boosting IT skills levels;

- Increasing employability;

- Increasing overall confidence; and

- Providing a sense of achievement.

"When we applied for the contract it was quite clear that we had to provide the basic skills assessments, and that's something that we've offered to every trainee that's ever come here so it's just part of our provision, I don't know whether it's normal or not but it's certainly normal for us"

3.2 Setting up the Course

Overall, UK online courses were mainly conducted at the existing centres of providers, although in a few cases new venues were obtained. In more rural areas, some of the providers provided outreach teaching to other sites such as schools. One of the voluntary providers interviewed offered outreach teaching at another site to encourage older participants to attend the course.

Providers felt that before the courses began they had sufficient in-house IT resources, although this was disputed by some of the participants attending the courses. The private training companies in the sample appeared to have greatest access to IT facilities, such as more up to date computers and printers. A few of the colleges that provided teaching on other courses and teaching to FE students experienced some problems booking out IT facilities for UK online as there were many demands on their facilities.

Despite the perception that providers had sufficient in-house facilities there were some instances from the second stage interviews where there had been further IT purchases mid-way through the course, partly due to technological problems.

Most of the trainers interviewed were aware that their provider received around £400 per attendee, but were less aware as to how this broke down according to starts, completions and qualifications. Generally this sum was felt to be suitable for such a course, although some expressed concern as to whether this was viable once the courses had commenced. There was a perception from some of the providers that if they had not had adequate IT resources at the beginning of the course, then the money provided would not have been enough.

Across the sample there was limited evidence of courses that had been designed specifically for UK online. Providers felt their currently offered courses would be well suited to UK online, and that they would be able to use their existing teaching material. However, some courses had been tailored and 'tweaked' in terms of their content and delivery. This included:

- Simplification of some of the course material to meet client need;
- Supplementing the course with basic skills training; and

- Catering for a new client group such as pensioners.

In the second stage interviews it was apparent that courses were being modified over time as a result of client feedback and experience of teaching.

A few trainers felt that the original brief from UK online did not encourage providers to incorporate basic skills such as numeracy and literacy into their proposal. Indeed, there was felt to be a lack of guidance from central resource when putting the bid together and setting up the course, which led to a perceived lack of coherence, consistency and best practice - *'left to our own devices'*.

Concerns expressed by staff on setting up the course included whether the 'official' 30-40 hours of study would be sufficient for students. In addition, some trainers were worried that the disproportionate number of 'older' people that had expressed an interest in attending the course would have an impact on overall outcomes.

Overall, trainers had experience of dealing with a broad range of clients, including job seekers, and so did not have any issues about teaching this group.

3.3 Views about Advertising and Marketing

Across the sample of trainers there was some awareness of nationally driven initiatives, although there was limited recall of advertising content. However, there was some criticism of the nationally driven campaign which included a belief that the TV campaign did not seem to be tailored to the unemployed. Indeed some trainers felt that the adverts were particularly effective in generating a response from pensioners, especially the adverts in the Daily Telegraph! In the second stage interviews many commented about the campaign for UK online centres that was running and how the branding of this and the UK online course is confusing people.

"This week there's been a national advert that said there was free training, which wasn't really handy because it didn't actually say free training for people on benefit, so that's caused quite a lot of confusion"

However, trainers noted that they received surges of referrals with national advertising campaigns. Although these referrals were welcomed, it meant that numbers of participants fluctuated, which impacted on their need for trainers. Trainers would have liked more notice of national campaigns so that they were not *'caught on the hop'*.

The national campaign was supplemented by trainers through a range of local initiatives. This combination was deemed effective by trainers since local campaigns were felt to

provide essential local information and a sense of familiarity, whilst the national campaign legitimised the courses. Trainers used a number of initiatives including:

- Local newspaper ads;
- Leaflets and posters placed in community centres, Jobcentres, local government offices, libraries and post offices;
- Information sessions and stands in places like Jobcentres; and
- Mail-outs.

Some course providers felt they only had limited resources for their own marketing and would have liked some assistance and guidance from a central resource. It was suggested that this could provide local and national contact names, or could have been materials that were centrally produced that providers were able to distribute locally with suitable local contact details.

Trainers felt that both the local and national advertising were successful in attracting applicants to the courses, in particular the adverts in local papers. Some providers also felt they had had a number of referrals from local Jobcentres, which was a result of a rapport and liaison they had built up with staff in Jobcentres. Those that did not have good contacts with local community centres or Jobcentres felt this had impacted on the number of attendees for the courses. Where there was poor enrolment on courses, local marketing was increased.

Trainers also felt that word of mouth was an important factor in attracting people to attend courses, and was becoming more important over time, the longer the course ran. Some trainers felt that while the national campaign attracted more pensioners, local campaigns were more effective in generating unemployed attendees.

3.4 Initial Enrolment and Taster sessions

Generally, trainers felt that the initial contact from participants was made to the course administrator who would gather background information and filter participants. They expected the administrator to inform participants about any taster session and gauge their eligibility for the course for example whether they were unemployed. Some of the voluntary providers did not have any administrative staff, which meant it was difficult to deal with enquiries.

Taster sessions were offered by some of the providers, and normally provided on the same day as the initial needs assessment, although some trainers felt there was some blurring between taster sessions and needs assessment. These taster sessions varied in length from two hours to a one day introductory course. Other tasters were less formal e.g. leaving attendees to 'play' with the computer while waiting for their assessment results.

Some of the training providers interviewed did not provide taster sessions. This was for the following reasons:

- The associated costs in providing these sessions; and
- A perception that needs assessments were effective in determining the skills and eligibility for the course and therefore tasters were unnecessary.

However, for those that did provide them, tasters were believed to serve a couple of important functions:

- They provided a valuable insight into attendees and their potential; and
- They enabled attendees to gauge whether the course would be suited to their needs and therefore minimised any drop-out on main course.

Trainers reported that needs assessments were carried out prior to attendees joining UK online – this was disputed by a number of participants in the study. These assessments varied in nature with some providers carrying out formal needs assessments, others carrying out informal needs assessments and some carrying out both.

Formal needs assessment tended to be initiated by a trainer or manager at the outset and was a written assessment of numeracy and literacy. These formal needs assessments tended to last from around twenty minutes to an hour.

Informal needs assessments were carried out either alongside or instead of the formal assessment, and tended to be an initial one-to-one chat to gauge literacy skills and overall demeanour. In these chats, any previous IT experience was discussed as well as attainment on a more formal assessment test. Informal needs assessments were sometimes used to route participants on to basic skills courses in addition to UK online, or a more advanced course if participants displayed a lot of IT knowledge.

Some trainers felt that informal assessments reduced 'drop-out' from courses as people were placed on the most appropriate course. In addition, some providers felt that informal assessments were less demeaning for 'mature' people than a formal assessment. A few of

the providers used the informal needs assessments to draw up a formal action plan which defined the course and illustrated future study or employment options.

3.5 Views on participants

Some of the trainers interviewed were surprised by the number of 'older' participants and 'women returners' taking the courses, although the proportion of ethnic minorities that enrolled on the courses was felt to reflect regional demographic differences, rather than a difference in interest and uptake. Trainers reported that participants' employment histories varied including both the long-term and intermittently unemployed.

Trainers felt that participants had varied reasons for enrolling. These included:

- To improve overall job prospects;
- To develop personal skills/confidence;
- To develop IT skill and 'keep up with the rest of the world';
- A desire to learn how to use email/Internet;
- To gain a qualification; and
- Something to do (a free course).

Older participants were felt to place less importance of gaining a qualification as this was of limited use at their age. However, trainers reported that some older participants felt proud upon receiving the qualification. For the younger participants getting an official qualification was seen as a key outcome, as it was something to add to the CV and increase employability. Typically the certificated courses provided reflected the courses that trainers had experience in delivering and included CLAIT, variations on the European Computer Driving Licence, RSA and ICT basic skills. Some providers rejected courses that were not funded.

"Is it about raising general IT skills and awareness of the UK public. On answering some of the calls personally it is great to hear someone on the end of the telephone and you ask their age as you are taking down some basic details and they say 'I am eighty', I am really interested, and you think this is brilliant this person is really alive, has a real genuine interest to learn"

3.6 Methods of teaching

Courses were exclusively part-time, and, although providers knew that they had to be between 30 - 40 hours in total, some of the providers were being more flexible, in terms of length and structure of the course, by allowing respondents to take as long as they wanted, depending on their learning speed. However, some of the providers were more rigid and delivered the course over a fixed period, e.g. a period of 6 weeks (2 hours a day, 1-2 days a week).

Providers, particularly those who operated on a voluntary basis, felt that the allotted time (30-40 hours) was insufficient, especially as participants had limited experience of using IT and required greater study hours. As a consequence, some providers felt it necessary to narrow the range of topics they provided training on or extend the training period. By the second stage interviews, some of the providers had become more flexible, allowing participants more hours.

"To a certain extent we change it for every group that comes in because it depends on the composition of the group. With IT key skills a lot of time is spent at the beginning working out what levels everybody's at"

Across the trainers, class sizes and pupil-teacher ratios varied, although it tended to be between 6-12 attendees per tutor and between 1 and 3 tutors per class. The presence of more than one teacher per class was felt to assist less able participants and to enable teachers to better address and differentiate between participants' needs.

Classes sometimes included both UK online and non-UK online (fee paying) students, although participants were not normally made aware of this (although participants did recognise this when it happened!). Trainers did not believe that participants were aware that their course was UK online, despite being told. Some tutors wore UK online name badges to reinforce the brand.

Providers tended not to use 'whole-class' teaching methods as they felt IT training required participants to work independently on a computer and because participants learn at different speeds. Participants were therefore generally taught using one of the following two methods:

- working through a work book/task sheets; and
- an automated computer program which provided instruction, supplemented by audio learning.

In such situations, teachers tended to operate as a resource that participants could draw upon as and when. Trainers expressed a range of views on mixing ability groups – some felt that the mix could stretch the tutor too much, whereas others felt that it helped peer support.

In the second stage interviews it was apparent that trainers were providing greater flexibility in the range of course hours offered such as weekends and evenings. In addition, the course content was often refined and adapted with innovations such as tailored tutorials, and giving attendees the option of what sections to undertake e.g. Word plus Internet. Some extended the qualifications they offered, in particular by offering Internet CLAIT, as CLAIT did not include any Internet or email topics.

3.7 Examinations

Participants were assessed by examination at varying points in the course, including ongoing assessment between modules, and an examination at the end of the course. There was a tendency for voluntary providers and some of the colleges to adopt a more holistic view to learning, supplementing basic Online training with other skills. Some providers referred participants with acute basic skills needs to other bodies such as community education groups.

Some of the participants were perceived to have special needs e.g. mental health and learning difficulties which were either identified during the needs assessment or midway through the course. Those who spoke English as a second language were not felt to significantly affect course delivery and simply required trainers to reduce the pace at which they taught.

Providers reported adopting a range of methods to overcome participants' fears and low confidence. This included:

- use of mock examinations;
- attendees unknowingly sitting the exam, and then being told afterwards; and
- ongoing modular exams which also made it easier to complete assessments in 'dribs and drabs'.

3.8 Administration tasks

The administration tasks for DfEE were not seen to be overly onerous – indeed some noted that this was one of the most straightforward contracts they had operated under.

These tasks tended to be carried out by the course managers and administrators, although some providers felt these were more problematic to compile when there was no dedicated admin resource.

In the second stage interviews, some of the providers reported that they had been audited, although this had not caused any problems. Overall, there was felt to be little liaison between providers and Government departments. Indeed, awareness of Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) and their role within UK online was minimal.

3.9 Completion of the Course

Some trainers had remained in contact with some of the participants after course completion either by writing to them, or telephoning them to see how things were progressing. Some had allowed participants to use their facilities outside of course hours and after the course had been completed – in the second stage interviews there seemed to be more of this occurring. Some providers said participants were now taking more advanced IT courses and one provider recruited an ex-online participant as a trainer!

In the second stage, some of the providers reported that their targets had been revised downwards and their numbers reallocated to other providers, as they were not getting enough enrolments.

3.10 Views about impact of the course on participants

Trainers thought that participants viewed UK online very positively and enjoyed taking the course. Participants were achieving relatively high levels of attainment, usually leaving the course with a qualification. Trainers perceived UK online as a *'stepping stone'* to further training rather than a *'means to an end'* and reported that many participants had gone on to further courses i.e. diplomas/NVQs often with the same provider.

"Some people go on to do further courses, some people go onto higher education, but we generally do complete an Action Plan for all our students who complete, identifying what their possible progression routes are, any financial assistance that they may require for paying for courses etc"

Trainers reported the following outcomes for participants:

- Employment;
- Enrolment on further courses;
- Increased computer skills;

- Social contact;
- Self respect;
- Provided structure to day;
- Increased confidence; and
- Reset negative images of learning.

"I have to say I think it is an extremely successful, fits a niche in the market where there was a problem with it before. It is a very flexible type of delivery which appeals to the client group that you are aiming at, it increases employability"

3.11 Best practice for course delivery

Trainers made a number of suggestions on how best to deliver the courses and limit participant drop-out. This included:

- Probe participants' expectations at the outset including what they want from the courses, what subject matter they expect it to cover and whether the hours are suitable;
- Provide suitable taster and introductory sessions that allow participants to see how the course will be taught, what it will cover and the types of people attending the course;
- Provide crèche facilities for people who require it;
- Pay travel expenses;
- Provide facilities such as a coffee room for people to socialise during the course;
- Provide greater access to PC's outside of course hours and after the course has been completed, for people to brush up on their skills;
- Develop better local contacts and links to obtain more referrals i.e. with local Jobcentres, community centres, etc. It was also suggested that UK online could be linked in with other Government programmes such as New Deal;
- Create closer links between providers to share best practice;
- Give providers prior notice of national advertising campaigns so that they can combine it with local marketing and employ trainers to deal with the surge in demand;

- Integrate UK online with life skills training and basic literacy and numeracy e.g. include production of a CV, jobsearch support;
- Provide "next stage" courses for participants;
- Include Internet and email as part of the training;
- Provide exit interviews and discussion;
- Courses should lead to a qualification, but providers should send out certificates promptly;
- Provide flexibility in the course hours offered;
- Minimalise technical jargon that is used in the courses;
- Provide suitable support for course providers in terms of definition of course guidance, administration requirements, and advertising/marketing, that allows for local adaptation.

4. Impact of the course

This section examines the impact of the course on participants. In doing so, it is important to recognise the broad-ranging nature of the participants and the varied reasons that participants had for attending the course. Some have gone on the course specifically in the hope that it will help them find a job, or a better job; others have a more general aim of finding out more about computers and being able to make better use of them. In addition, some participants viewed the course a stepping stone leading to further training.

This section considers these issues separately, firstly looking at the impact the course has had in looking for work; then we examine the more general impact of the course – whether people have used a computer subsequently and whether it has increased their confidence; finally we see whether participants have gone on to further IT training. This section draws mainly on the quantitative findings, with additional information included from the qualitative research, as appropriate.

Summary

There are a number of ways of measuring the impact of the training on participants.

Impact on employment

For participants who were looking for work, the training was perceived as useful in providing relevant skills. At the main quantitative survey, a half of those who were not working but economically active at the start or the training felt that the course had improved their job prospects at least a fair amount. The training was also seen as important in getting future work – at the main quantitative interview, 46% of those looking for work, or wanting to do so in the future, said the course was very important in this respect.

Where participants had found work since the training, a third said the training was very or fairly important to them in getting the job.

The survey provides limited information on the actual impact of the training on employment activity and employability. Among the respondents who were unemployed at the start of the training, a half were in work at the time of the quantitative telephone interview (8-12 months after starting the training), and 52% of these had worked in a job using a computer. However, this does not necessarily represent the additional impact of the training, since many of these respondents had also worked in the period prior to the training and used a computer in their job.

Further use of computers and confidence

More generally, 81% of participants from the main quantitative survey had used a computer since the training. The home is the most common location, and home access is clearly a key factor in sustained use, particularly for those who are not working or studying. Where participants have used a computer, it is likely to be on at least a weekly basis (31% of users do so every day and a further 40% once a week).

A half of participants felt that the training had increased their confidence a great deal in using computers, and a further 28% said it helped them a fair amount. Findings are even more positive among regular users.

Further training

A quarter of those who completed the course have gone on to further computer training (as at the time of the telephone interview). This is most frequent among 25-34 year olds (34%).

Overall the study suggests that, despite the wide-ranging participant group, the training has been successful in increasing the confidence of most participants – whether this is in using computers generally, or in finding work.

4.1 Impact on Working Status and Employability

As noted in the section on research method, the design for the study precludes a measurement of the net impact of the training on labour market activity. However, we can use descriptive analysis to examine progress into employment and the use of computers in work, as well as participants' perceptions of the impact of the course.

4.1.1 Economic Status of Participants over Time

Table 4.1 shows the status of participants at specific points in time: 6 months before training start date, at the training start date, at the time of the face-to-face interview, and at the time of the telephone interview. In each case, figures are shown for respondents to the telephone interview who had completed the course or were still on the course at that time (these respondents have their status recorded at all of the various points). For the majority of participants, the face-to-face interview took place 3-8 months after they started the

training. The follow-up interview then took place approximately 4 months after the face-to face interview.[18]

Table 4.1: Economic status of participants over time

Base: All completed or still in training at follow-up telephone interview (follow-up telephone survey;791)

	6 months before training	Training start date	Face-to-face interview	Follow-up Telephone interview
Status	%	%	%	%
Full-time work (30hrs+)	12	4	14	19
Part-time work (16-29 hours)	4	2	8	10
Part-time work (under 16 hours)	3	3	3	3
Full-time education/training	2	2	4	5
Government scheme	1	1	2	2
Unemployed, looking for work	31	46	22	17
Looking after children/home	10	7	10	6
Temporarily sick/disabled	4	3	5	5
Permanently sick/disabled	8	7	7	7
Retired	20	22	22	23
Other	5	2	0	2

This shows that 8% of the sample were in work at the start of the training, while 46% were unemployed and 22% retired. By the time of the face-to-face interview (up to 8 months after the training started), the proportion unemployed had fallen to 22%, and the number in work had risen correspondingly (25%). The numbers in other economic status categories remained similar. This pattern is extended by the time of the telephone interview, with 17% unemployed and 32% in work.

[18] On this and other questions where we examine activities before the face-to-face interview, we are relying on respondent recollection of activities and the dates that they took place. Figures on what respondents recall doing at the start of the training and six months before the training should be analysed in this context.

We now examine some of these groups in more detail: firstly those who were unemployed and looking for work at the training start date; then other economically active participants.

4.1.2 Progress of Unemployed Participants

We now look in more detail at participants who were unemployed and looking for work at the start of the training (specifically those who took part in the telephone interview and who completed or were still on the training at this time, a group we are able to track over time). The profile of this group is as follows.

Table 4.2: Profile of unemployed participants

Base: Unemployed at training start date and completed/still on course at follow-up telephone interview (367)	
	Participants
	%
Sex	
Men	48
Women	52
Age	
Under 25	13
25-34	20
35-44	23
45-54	30
55-64	14
65+	*
Children	
Yes	32
No	68
Ethnicity	
White	88
Ethnic minorities	12
Length of unemployment at training start date	
Less than 6 months	35
6 up to 12 months	25
12 months +	39
Employment history	
Mostly steady jobs/self-employed	63
Mixture of work/not working	22
Never worked	15

We can now look at the progress of this group over the course of the study.

Table 4.3: Progress of Unemployed participants

Base: Unemployed at training start date and completed/still on course at follow-up telephone interview (367)

	6 months before training	Training start date	Face-to-face interview	Follow-up Telephone interview
	%	%	%	%
Full-time work (30hrs+)	18	-	22	32
Part-time work (16-29 hours)	3	-	13	16
Part-time work (under 16 hours)	2	-	2	4
Full-time education/training	3	-	7	6
Government scheme	1	-	3	1
Unemployed, looking for work	54	100	38	33
Looking after children/home	7	-	7	2
Temporarily sick/disabled	3	-	3	4
Permanently sick/disabled	2	-	2	0
Retired	*	-	*	2
Other	6	-	3	1

So, of those unemployed at the start of the training, 37% were in work when they were interviewed in the face-to-face interview, and 52% were in work at the time of the telephone interview.

In addition, when interviewed at the follow-up telephone interview, a further 11% said that they had worked at some point since the training, giving a total of 63% who have worked at all since the training. These figures can be analysed by length of unemployment (as of the training start date). As might be expected, longer-term unemployed people (unemployed for a year or more) were less likely to have found work since the training (40%, compared with 69% who had been unemployed for six months to a year, and 86% who had been unemployed for less than six months).

As noted above, we cannot make a direct link between the progress of participants into work and the effect of the training. This is underlined by the fact that 23% of this group were in work six months before the training, and a further 21% were in work at some point

in that six-month period. Also, the analysis in this section is based on respondents who have completed the course and have been tracked through to the telephone interview. In addition, a number of those who left the course did so to take up a job – 24% of all respondents to the telephone interview.

We can examine this issue further by looking at the jobs that respondents had before and after the training, and their perceptions of the effect of the training. These issues are discussed below.

4.2 Progress of other economically active participants

In addition to those unemployed and looking for work, an assessment of employability needs to include other groups – specifically those who (at the training start date) were in work, looking after the family or home, in full-time education, on a government scheme, and those temporarily sick or disabled. Individually, these groups contain a small number of respondents, so it is not possible to undertake detailed analysis; we have summarised the progress of respondents in three of these groups (the numbers in full-time education and on a government scheme are too small for any analysis):

- In work (65 respondents): those who were working at the start of the training were mostly still in work at the face-to-face and telephone interviews (41 and 47 respondents respectively)

- Looking after children or home (59 respondents): in many cases, respondents were still doing this at the face-to-face and telephone interviews (36 and 37 respectively). Six were working at the time of the telephone interview. 25 of this group had never worked.

- Temporarily sick or disabled (27 respondents): 6 of this group were in work at the face-to-face interview, and 8 at the telephone interview; around half still described themselves as temporarily sick or disabled at these interviews (14 at face-to-face interview, 15 at telephone interview). 3 of this group had never worked.

4.3 Details of jobs since training

The following analysis examines the jobs that people started since the training. This includes data from both the face-to-face and telephone surveys, and covers all respondents who have started a new job since the training. In the next section, we compare this with jobs that started before the training.

While the majority of jobs since the training are permanent and full-time, 32% are non-permanent jobs and 37% are for 29 hours or fewer per week. 12% are managerial/supervisory. Respondents who had been unemployed for over a year are more likely to have taken temporary or part-time work.

Table 4.4: Jobs started after training

Base: All individual jobs that participants began after starting UK online training but before the follow-up telephone interview (467)

	Jobs
	%
Status	
Employee	94
Self-employed	6
Manager/supervisor	12
Type of job	
Permanent	68
Seasonal	23
Contract/temporary	8
Other non-permanent	1
Hours per week	
1-15 hrs	9
16-29 hrs	28
30+ hrs	62

We can compare the SIC[19] (Standard Industrial classification) and SOC[20] (Standard Occupational Classification) codes for these jobs with data from the Labour Force Survey[21] (published July 2001).

[19] SIC is a standard industry classification. It is a means of grouping companies together into various categories, according to the type of business they conduct. The 1992 classification has been used here.

[20] SOC is a standard occupational classification. It is a means of grouping occupations into various categories, according to the type of work they involve. The year 2000 classification has been used here.

[21] The Labour Force Survey is large-scale national survey of adults conducted on a continuous basis. The Office for National Statistics publishes results every quarter.

Table 4.5: SIC and SOC codes

Base: All individual jobs that participants began after starting UK online training but before the follow-up telephone interview (467)		
	Jobs since training	**LFS**
	%	%
SIC		
Agriculture, fishing	*	2
Energy and water	1	1
Manufacturing	11	14
Construction	6	6
Distribution, hotels & restaurants	29	23
Transport, storage, communication	7	6
Finance and business services	16	19
Public administration, education and health	25	23
Other services	5	6
SOC		
Managers/senior officials	5	15
Professional	4	11
Associate professional and technical	9	10
Administrative and secretarial	21	16
Skilled trades	8	10
Personal service	10	12
Sales and customer service	17	9
Process, plant and machine operatives	9	9
Elementary	17	8

The industry profile is similar. In terms of occupation, the jobs in this survey are generally more likely to be lower down the occupational scale: specifically with more jobs in sales/customer service (17%), elementary occupations (17%) and administrative/secretarial jobs (21%), and fewer in managerial (5%) or professional (4%) positions.

A half of respondents who have worked since the training use(d) a PC in their job (52%), in many cases every day (this applies to 42% of all jobs held by participants). Daily use of a PC is more common among those who were unemployed for less than 6 months (53%, compared with 44% for those who had been unemployed for 6-12 months and 31% for those who had been unemployed for more than a year).

The table below shows what respondents use(d) a PC for in their job.

Table 4.6: Use of computer in jobs[22]

Base: All individual jobs that participants began after starting UK online training but before the follow-up telephone interview and PC's are used in that job (241)

	Jobs
	%
Word processing/typing letters	63
Database	52
Spreadsheets	42
Email	36
Internet	29
Graphics/charts	25
Games	7

4.4 Comparison of jobs before or after the training

The survey also asked about jobs that respondents had in the six months before the training. We have limited the analysis of these jobs to those respondents who had jobs both before and after training (265 in total), so that we can examine any differences.

The general characteristics of jobs before and after the training are similar, indicating that the work started after the training is not significantly different to what respondents were doing beforehand. The number using a computer in the job is higher after the training (50% compared with 41%), although it is possibly surprising that as many as 41% were using a computer in a job before they went on the training. However, as noted in section 2.5, use is often limited to certain specific functions (e.g. inputting data) rather than broad training in PC use. The applications (word processing, email, etc) in jobs before and after the training are similar.

[22] Respondents could give more than one answer when asked this question.

4.5 Perceived Helpfulness of Training

In general, the previous section suggests that the training is not having an immediate impact on the types of work people are doing, although a slightly greater number are using a computer as part of their work. However, this analysis is limited and the survey is not able to assess accurately the additional impact of the training on employment destinations[23]. Given these limitations, it is important to consider respondents' own perceptions – whether they feel that the training has helped them to get the job, and has given them useful skills. The analysis below is based on all who have started a job since the training (at both face-to-face and telephone interviews).

When asked how important the on-line training was in getting the job, one in six (17%) said it was very important, and another 15% fairly important. The remainder felt it was not very (17%) or not at all important (50%). Those who had been unemployed for a year or more were more likely to say the training was very important (27%). We saw earlier that this long-term unemployed group is less likely to have found work since the training, but this indicates that where they have found work, many see the training as an important factor.

"*Seeing if I could get employed out of it but also knowing I'd got something better to put down on my CV*"

Those who use a PC in their work were (not surprisingly) more likely to say that the training helped them to get the job. This particularly applies to people who use a PC every day at work: 37% say the training was very important, 22% fairly important, and 37% not very/at all important; this last figure reflects the fact that many respondents also used a PC in their job before the training.

Respondents who had started a job since the training were also asked to what extent the job made use of the skills they gained as part of their training. One in six (17%) said it made use of these skills to a great extent, and just over a quarter (26%) to some extent. In this question, there is no difference by previous length of unemployment. However those using a PC every day at work are much more likely to say the job made use of course skills to a great or some extent. (71% compared with 43%).

[23] It is possible that jobs participants were in prior to starting the training had an impact on jobs starting after the training. As little information on previous work was collected, it is difficult accurately assess the impact of the training alone.

Table 4.7: Extent to which job has made use of course skills

Base: All individual jobs that participants began after starting UK online training but before the follow-up telephone interview (467)	
	Participants
	%
To a great extent	17
To some extent	26
Not very much	13
Not at all	45
	100

Looking more generally beyond individual jobs, the survey asked how important the training will be in getting work, and whether it will improve people's job prospects.

At the face-to-face survey, we asked about the extent to which the training had improved respondents' job prospects. This was asked of respondents who were not working but were potentially able to work (not retired or permanently sick/disabled). Around half (49%) thought that it had improved their job prospects at least a fair amount. Of those unemployed at the training start date, the same proportion (49%) thought it had improved their job prospects at least a fair amount. However, those unemployed for a year or more were particularly likely to say it had helped their job prospects a great deal.

Table 4.8: Extent to which course has helped job prospects

Base: All respondents except working, retired or permanently sick/disabled (face-to-face survey; 638)	
	Participants
	%
A great deal	20
Fair amount	29
A little	24
Not at all	22
Don't know	6
	100

At the telephone survey, the question was slightly different: "to what extent do you think the training *will* improve your future job prospects", and those who were working were also included in the question. Responses were more positive to this stage, with 68% saying their job prospects will improve at least a fair amount. Those who were unemployed at this time and had completed the course were slightly more likely to say the training has improved their job prospects at least a fair amount, than those in work who had completed the course (70% compared with 60%).

Analysing individual responses between fieldwork waves, many people became more positive in the second question. This tends to confirm earlier findings: that while the training may not have had an immediate, noticeable effect on employment, respondents feel that they will gain a more general or long-term benefit.

The telephone survey followed up by asking why respondents thought the training would alter their future job prospects. Positive comments focus on the relevance of the skills they have learned, and the widespread need for computer skills in the workplace. When respondents are negative, this is either because computer skills are not relevant for the work they are doing, or because they feel that the skills they gained were too basic.

Table 4.9: Reasons why training will alter future job prospects[24]

Base: All who say will affect job prospects (follow-up telephone interview; 535)	
	Participants
	%
Positive:	
I've learned skills I can apply/will be useful	24
Everyone needs computer skills	21
Employers expect computer skills/more jobs need skills	16
Having computer skills means you can get a better job/certain types of job	9
Helpful to have a qualification/certificate	7
Negative:	
Don't need computers in my job/job I'm looking for	9
Didn't learn anything/enough	7
Course was too basic/employers don't value course/qualification	5
I'm too old/nearing retirement age	4
Course will not help for all types of job/not all jobs need computer skills	1

Respondents who were currently looking for work – or say that they want to work in the future - were asked how important they think the training will be in getting work. Nearly half (46%) saw it as very important, and 34% fairly important. In particular, those who were looking after the home or family at the start of training felt that the training would be very important (56%). Even among non-completers, 36% think the training will be very important.

The same question was asked at the telephone interview – here, an even higher proportion (60%) said the training will be very important. When analysing individual responses across the two interviews, 26% give a more positive answer, 59% give the same answer, and 15% give a more negative response. This indicates that participants have continued to see a value in the training, often some months after it has finished.

[24] Respondents were asked to describe in their own words how the training would alter future job prospects. This table groups similar responses together (coded).

Nevertheless, the qualitative research found instances of respondents who were interviewed a number of months after completion, and not in training or employment at that time, where it was apparent that the effects of increased motivation and confidence had worn off over time.

The above findings suggest that many people have a positive view of the impact the training will have for them. While this may not be borne out conclusively by the factual details about jobs (the types of job before and after the training are similar, and use of computers has risen only slightly), confidence is clearly an important issue, and this indicates that many respondents feel more confident about finding work and in their ability to use computers at work. This picture is confirmed by the qualitative findings, as indicated below.

Qualitative findings: Impact of the course on employability

In many ways attending the UK online course had effected positive changes in attitudes to work and to employability. For some the increase in confidence and skills had already led to employment. One trainee had got a job as a retail associate in an opticians: they used their new skills "every day … everything's on computer"

For one participant being able to complete the DTP element of the course had been essential to her securing her new job which involved producing a monthly newsletter. She commented:

"I had learnt some more skills but ultimately the reason I did it is because I needed the qualification, a piece of paper - rather than saying 'I can word process at', I was able to say 'I have a CLAIT qualification'"

This response was not typical of all respondents, however; in very few cases had the course itself been sufficient to enable the trainee to secure a job. Nevertheless, those respondents looking for work who had completed the course successfully felt that the course had improved their job prospects. The full benefit of the training in terms of employment was usually only gained when the trainee continued onto other training. For example, one trainee had gone on to complete several more advanced courses and was now training to become an adult tutor of basic IT skills. In general, the training was just one, albeit important, element in improving job prospects.

Some success stories could not be put down to any one reason, participants just knew that somehow it had made a difference and their efforts to find work had been productive:

"I'd been looking for work eighteen months before I went on the course and then when I'd finished the course, at the end of the term - I finished in the August - I got my interview … and I started work on 19th August. What does that tell you?"

However, others noted that the course provided only elementary skills, and some people still faced a barrier to employment where more specialist or advanced IT skills were needed.

"many of the jobs are management level"

"limited number of opportunities for people with basic IT skills"

"many advertised jobs where they wanted the computer literacy"

For some respondents, the barriers to work had become more specific to the kinds of IT posts actually available:

"most jobs in IT would mean travel or moving"

"It's all IT and receptionist work, that's all it is"

Also, the lack of a consistent approach to providing IAG[25] after course completion, and individuals' lack of resources to finance further training, were seen by some as significant barriers to increasing employability.

The qualitative research also picked out specific aspects of the course that could have been more helpful in increasing employability. Assistance with producing a CV was one thing missing from the course. Some people felt that this was a significant omission – "*When I first became unemployed I said, 'Can I have some help with regard to CVs or letters, occupations?' 'No, there's no help available until you've been unemployed 13 weeks'. How daft is that?"*

Also, some respondents commented that the course did not provide a work reference, and this meant that this was still a major hindrance for some people. For them only temporary jobs were seen as a realistic option – *"I was made redundant in '87, the place closed down and I'd been there from '73, so who's going to give me a work reference"*

Other barriers to employment were more specific to the region/area, and beyond the possible impact of the training:

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[25] Information, Advice and Guidance.

"this is a bit of a depressed area… but there doesn't seem to be work, the work that there is, is very low paid, between three and four pounds an hour"

"I don't think Liverpool is too wonderful really for work, I think the work is there if you've got a profession…. I think if you're wanting to get in to marketing or sales or accountancy, recruitment, anything like that you really have got to go down South"

Area specific barriers still remained for many people e.g. jobs in Hereford and Worcester were limited to the farming industry and this may mean a limited and competitive number of available jobs based around the use of computers.

"local job area is rural (farming/agricultural) not IT"

4.6 ICT Use since the course

This section examines use of computers by participants since the training.

At the face-to-face interview, 81% said that they had used a computer since the training. This figure is 85% among those who completed the course, 71% among those who did not complete. If respondents had used a computer before the training, it is likely that they continued to do so afterwards (in 87% of cases); among those who had not used a computer before the training, 71% had done so subsequently.

Where used a computer

Use at home is most common (among 56% of the sample), so home access is clearly important to sustained use of computers. Other respondents used a computer at college, work, a public facility or elsewhere. Older and retired respondents are particularly likely to have used a computer at home.

Table 4.10: Where used computer since course

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1348)

	Participants
	%
At home	56
At college	19
At work	15
Public facility	9
Other	12
Not at all	19

Where respondents had used a computer since the course, this is likely to be at least once a week (71%); a third (31%) said they use a computer every day. Men are more likely to be regular users than women (37% every day compared with 26%); otherwise use is similar across different demographic sub-groups. Those with a PC at home also tend to be more regular users (40% every day, compared with 10% who do not have a PC at home). As noted above, use since the training is related to use before the training, and this also applies to frequency: those who had used a computer before the training are more likely to be daily users (34%) than those who had not done so (24%).

Table 4.11 How often used a computer

Base: All who have used a computer since the training (face-to-face survey;1098)

	Participants
	%
Every day	31
At least once a week	40
Once every 2-3 weeks	10
Once a month	4
Less often	14
Don't know	*
	100

Around three in four (78%) said they use a computer for typing/word processing, while the Internet and email are used by around a half (52% and 46% respectively). Those using a computer at college are likely to use a number of applications (rather than just one or two). Those using a public facility are particularly likely to use the Internet (in 70% of cases), while use of databases is higher than average among users at work.

Table 4.12: What computer used for

Base: All who have used a computer since the training (face-to-face survey; 1098)

	Participants
	%
Word processing/typing letters	78
Internet access	52
Email	46
Games	37
Spreadsheets	36
Database	30
Graphics/charts	21
Don't know	*

In the qualitative interviews, there seemed to be a feeling among a few first time users of computers that the course missed something fundamental because they still did not understand about the machine itself, only about certain packages. Some participants felt that the lack of this knowledge about how a PC worked was vital to using a computer in the future.

"I learnt how to use the packages they teach you on CLAIT but it didn't teach you anything about the computer itself, people talk about software and hardware"

4.7 Changing Attitudes

The majority of participants felt that the training had increased their confidence in using computers. In the face-to-face survey, 51% said it had increased their confidence a great deal, and 28% a fair amount. The figures remained very similar at the telephone survey, indicating that this does not just represent an immediate reaction after the course, but a feeling that continued over a period of time.

Analysing this question by use of computers since the training, responses are most positive among more regular users (those who use a computer at least every two to three weeks); of whom 57% said the course increased their confidence a great deal. There is then a drop among less regular users (once a month or less), 44% of whom say the course has increased their confidence a great deal and then again among those who have not used a computer at all since the training. However, even with this last group, 34% feel the course increased their confidence a great deal. Results do not vary significantly by demographic sub-groups.

The qualitative interviews confirmed that, in the majority of cases where participants wanted to gain confidence in using computers, the course was felt to be useful. Even if the person felt that they did not want to pursue any further training or actively seek to use the skills learnt, they had conquered a fear of computers and should they ever have to use a computer they would not be afraid to try.

At the telephone survey, we also asked whether people agreed that they "made good use of the skills they learnt during the training". Over half (56%) agreed strongly with this, and 20% agreed slightly. One in five (20%) disagreed. As one would expect, results differ significantly by use of a computer since the course: those who have not subsequently used a computer are likely to disagree with the statement (60%). Related to this, results also vary by ownership of a PC (a key determinant on use): those with a PC at home mostly agree with the statement (85% agree and 13% disagree), but 37% of those without a PC at home disagree (54% agree). Regular access to computers is clearly important to making sustained use of the training.

4.8 Further Training

The course was often perceived by participants as a stepping stone to further training, and at the telephone survey, 24% said that they had gone on to further training. This figure includes 3% who said it was training organised by their Jobcentre or the Employment Service, and 1% as part of a job. The 25-34 age group was most likely to have gone on to further training (34%), but otherwise findings are consistent across different sub-groups. The coverage of the further training was broadly similar to that of the UK online Computer Training; for example over three quarters were doing some form of word processing.

Table 4.13: Coverage of further Training

Base: All who have been on further training (follow-up telephone survey; 195)	
	Participants
	%
Word processing/typing letters	78
Spreadsheets	73
Graphics/charts	59
Internet access	42
Email	40
Database	19
Something specific to job	10
Desktop publishing	7
Games	4
Web design	2
Computer maintenance	2
Other	13

In the qualitative research, those who completed the course felt that it had opened up training opportunities for them to pursue their IT skills and/or look at what else they could achieve. For many people, UK online had been the spur to start learning in the first place and having completed the course, they were now more enthusiastic about continuing.

"The CLAIT qualification provides access to more advanced ICT training programmes, which would lead to better job prospects"

Even those people who felt computers were not for them were pleased at having achieved something and were considering further training in another subject area.

There were three barriers to following further training: knowing what to do; financing it; and having a more immediate need to find employment and earn money. People mentioned that if a job came up they would have to abandon the training unless they could pursue it in the evenings or at weekends. Some participants were disappointed that they could not follow the beginners' course with further training though UK online – they felt they had reached a dead end.

"I did contact the college and asked them if they were doing a second stage, and they said no, otherwise I was going to consider taking it further. They said I need to contact the local college or do it other than on the UK online"

In practice, some respondents chose to take a break from training after the course, and in these weeks many lost motivation and lost contact with the training organisation. This placed them in the position of having no one to point them in the right direction or to encourage them. These people may have benefited from an exit interview and from being given information about other providers. A follow-up call 1-2 months after the course may also have been very positive for some participants.

Where participants had looked for further training, in quite a number of cases they had not had a choice of provider for this second stage and had been forced to seek courses available at the local college. This often meant large groups and less support/feedback. There was a belief among respondents that IBT2[26] was the next level for them to take and this would give them the best opportunities of gaining employment. This line of thinking may have come from the training provider and may in some cases have limited individual's confidence to seek employment based on e.g. CLAIT.

Participants who had a clearer idea of how they wanted to use their computer skills from the outset or had sought advice from tutors had looked for training that contained other vocational elements e.g. *"somewhere with placement opportunities alongside it" or "a business admin course with jobsearch included"*.

4.9 Impact on participants in other ways

In addition to the impacts covered above, the training was viewed positively by some qualitative respondents in the following ways:

- Adding structure to the day – participants got into the habit of doing something;
- Being able to have a reference from training provider/professional;
- Increasing email/Internet proficiency (for any purpose); and
- For some long-term disabled people, the training was seen as giving a focus in doing something.

[26] Integrated Business Technology Level 2.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Research Method

In order to gain a balanced view of UK online computer training, information was gathered from both course participants and training providers. Data on participants were collated from three sources: a database of all participants starting a UK online course, a quantitative survey of a large sample of participants, and a qualitative survey of a smaller sample of participants. Data from training providers were collected through qualitative interviews with trainers and managers. Details of the participant database, the quantitative survey and the qualitative survey are outlined below.

1.1 Participant database

Creating a database of participants was important in tracking individuals signing up for a UK online course. Details of individuals starting a UK online course were collected by training providers and returned to the DfEE for entry into the database[1]. At the time of writing this report, 34,510[2] participant records had been entered on to the database. Information held on the database includes:

- Sex, age, and ethnicity of participants;
- Participant addresses;
- Benefits received;
- Disabilities/Literacy needs;
- Training provider name;
- Training provider location;
- Course name;
- Referral route;
- Training start date;
- Whether completed training;
- Training completion date;
- Whether qualification achieved.

Analysis of these characteristics has been provided during the course of the study.

[1] Data was collected using paper forms filled in by participants and training providers. Copies of these forms can be found in Appendix 2.

[2] The final number of starts was around 47,500 which takes account of returns from providers up to the last minute.

1.2 Quantitative research method

The quantitative research was designed to gather the views of participants and assess the impact of UK online training courses. Originally, the intention was to include a comparison sample in the design, in order to assess the "net" impact of the course on participants in terms of work and employability. However, it was decided to focus on participants only, for the following reasons:

- The profile of participants included a proportion of retired people and others who were not economically active. In addition, policy interest was focused not only the impact of the training in terms of work and employability, but also on the more general issue of encouraging use of and confidence in using ICT. As a result, the role of a comparison sample was less critical to the study.

- In practical terms, it was problematic to identify and use a comparison sample, because of the diverse profile of the participant group.

A pilot study was carried out in November 2000 and the main quantitative fieldwork took place in January and February 2001. It was decided to conduct main fieldwork at this time so that participants who had recently completed a UK online course could be interviewed. Main fieldwork was conducted face-to-face in participants' homes. A follow-up quantitative survey was then conducted in May 2001. Respondents who took part in the face-to-face survey were re-contacted over the telephone to assess the more long-term impact of UK online training. Details of the main and follow-up survey are presented separately in this appendix.

1.2.1 Face-to-face quantitative survey of participants

In total, 1348 participants were interviewed at home as part of the main quantitative study. The pilot which took place in November 2000 was used primarily to test the questionnaire. Sampling for the main stage took place in November 2000 and fieldwork took place in January and February 2001. The majority of interviews were completed in January, with those participants who had not yet been contacted revisited for interview during February.

Sample

The sample of participants used for the quantitative survey was taken from the database of UK online participants held by the then DfEE. When sampling was carried out, the participant database held 7010 records of participants who had signed up for a UK online course. Training start dates for the majority of participants in the database were clustered

between May and September 2000, so the majority of participants in the database had completed the course by the time they were interviewed at the start of 2001. Because of the numbers involved and the practicalities of face-to-face fieldwork, it was not possible to restrict the sample, for example to those starting the course in a single month/three-month period.

The 7010 participant records used for sampling were sorted by postcode district so that geographically clustered sampling points could be selected. This is so that realistic assignments could be given to interviewers (each sampling point converted to one interviewer assignment). In order to maximise the number of sampling points that could be used during fieldwork, it was decided to define each one as a single postcode district or two adjacent postcode districts that contained at least 20 participants. If more than 20 participants lived in an area defined as a sampling point (one or two postcode districts) 20 participants were randomly selected to form an interviewer assignment. In a few cases, sampling points contained just under 20 participants. In total, 2173 participants records within 111 geographically clustered sampling points were selected for fieldwork.

Fieldwork

Participants within the selected sampling points were sent letters prior to the survey informing them about the research. Letters were sent out on DfEE branded paper, asking individuals to write to BMRB if they did not wish to take part in the research. In total, 98 participants 'opted out' of the study by responding to this letter. These individuals were removed from interviewer assignments so they were not approached for an interview.

Fieldwork was conducted by BMRB interviewers who were instructed to attempt to interview all participants that formed part of their assignment. They visited the participant addresses at different times of the day and on different days of the week to increase the chance of making contact with participants.

The interviews themselves were conducted in participants' homes using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The interview consisted of mainly pre-coded questions and lasted 27 minutes on average. Data from completed interviews were electronically returned to BMRB, via modem links.

The overall response rate achieved from the face-to-face survey was 70%. This figure is calculated taking out participant addresses that were 'out of scope' (see Table A). During fieldwork, 10% of the 2173 participant records issued to interviewers were 'out of scope'. These consisted of participants who said they had never been on the training (34), those that had died (3) and addresses that were incomplete or could not be found (184).

Table A: Fieldwork figures from face-to-face quantitative survey of participants

	No. of Participants	%
Named contacts issued	**2173**	**100**
Total out of scope, of which:	**221**	**10**
– Never been on training	34	2
– Died	3	<1
– Incomplete/wrong address	184	8
Total in scope	**1952**	**100**
Total interviews	**1368**[3]	**70**
Office refusal (opt-out)	**98**	**5**
No contact at address	**209**	**11**
Refusal	**163**	**8**
Other Unsuccessful, of which:	**114**	**6**
– Broken appointment	25	1
– Ill/Incapacitated at home	9	<1
– Away/In hospital	59	3
– Other unproductive	21	1

Regional profile

Table B shows the regional profile of those interviewed during the face-to-face quantitative survey. Although interviews were carried out across England, more interviews were achieved in some areas compared to others. In particular, a large number of interviews were achieved in the North West and the Midlands, whilst relatively few interviews were achieved in East Anglia, the South East and Yorkshire and the Humber. As interviewing took place in a large number of sampling points (111), this regional profile largely reflects the geographical distribution of the participant group at the time of sampling.

[3] Although interviewers themselves recorded interviewing 1368 participants, 4 of these were only partial interviews and a further 16 were not received electronically by BMRB Head Office. Therefore, data from the main quantitative survey is based on 1348 participants.

Table B: Regional profile of participants taking part in the face-to-face quantitative survey

Base: All respondents (face-to-face survey; 1,348)	
	No. of Participants
North West	390
East Midlands	235
West Midlands	172
South West	155
North	119
London	109
South East	84
Yorkshire and the Humber	68
East Anglia	16

Weighting

The final interview set of 1,348 was found to be representative of the database of 7010 records in terms of sex and age. Therefore, it was decided that weighting was not required.

1.2.2 Follow-up quantitative telephone survey with participants

The follow-up telephone survey re-interviewed those who had taken part in the face-to-face quantitative survey. The purpose of the follow-up survey was to find out how participants' circumstances, activities and attitudes had changed since the face-to-face interview. The telephone survey itself took place over a two week period in May 2000, approximately 4 months after the quantitative face-to face interviews.

Sample

At the end of the face-to-face interview, respondents were asked if they would give the BMRB interviewer a telephone number which would be used to re-contact them for a follow-up survey. In addition to a home telephone number, interviewers attempted to collect other numbers that the participant could be contacted on. In total, 1275 respondents gave a telephone number to be re-contacted on. 16 of these were given in an unusable format (e.g. incorrect number of digits), so telephone numbers for 1259 participants were used during telephone fieldwork.

Fieldwork

Telephone fieldwork took place between the 8th and the 22nd of May 2002 and was carried out from BMRB's main telephone centre in Ealing. Interviews were administered using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). As with CAPI, this improves the data quality and reliability of the survey. Interviewing took place during the day, evenings and weekend to maximise the response rate. In total, 958 respondents were successfully re-interviewed over the telephone. Full interviews (average length 17 minutes) were conducted with the 791 participants who had completed the course, whilst the remaining 167 participants took part in a shorter interview. The response rate achieved was 80% (see Table C below).

Table C: Fieldwork figures from follow-up quantitative telephone survey

	No. of Participants	**%**
Total sample	**1259**	**100**
Total out of scope, of which:	**64**	**5**
– Dialler error/site out of service	26	2
– Number unobtainable/wrong number	38	3
Total in scope	**1195**	**100**
Final Outcome obtained, of which:	**1101**	**92**
– **Total interviews**	**958**	**80**
– Full interview	791	66
– Short interview	167	14
– **Unsuccessful**	**143**	**12**
– Abandoned/stopped interview	22	2
– Refusal	74	6
– Other (e.g. unavailable during fieldwork)	47	4
No Final outcome, of which:	**94**	**8**
– No answer/call backs	35	3
– Appointment/General call back not successful	58	5
– Other	1	<1

For the quantitative study as a whole, this means that respondents were interviewed, at stage 1 between four and nine months after starting the course, and at stage 2 a further four months later (8-13 months after starting).

1.3 Confidence intervals

The data from the quantitative surveys presented in this report is based on a *sample* of participants. Therefore, the findings are subject to sampling tolerances. The size of the sample or any sub-groups, together with the percentile results themselves, will affect the level of statistical confidence. The following table indicates the *degree of confidence* we can have with the data from either the face-to–face or follow-up telephone survey. The figures are calculated on the basis of 95% confidence; that is the findings can be assumed to be reliable within the limits specified below in 95% of instances. For example, if 50% of participants in the face-to-face survey give a particular answer, we can assume that in 95% of cases, this figure would not vary by more than 3 percentage points, if we repeated the survey 100 times.

Table D: Confidence intervals for quantitative data

SAMPLE SIZE	Percentile result:		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
1348 (Total interviews from face-to-face survey)	+/-2	+/-2	+/-3
958 (Total interviews from follow-up telephone survey)	+/-2	+/-2	+/-3
791 (Those who had completed the course at the follow-up telephone interview)	+/-2	+/-3	+/-4

The sample design can often carry a design effect, which reduces the effective sample size. The size of the design effect relates mainly to the extent to which the sample has been stratified and data weighted. In this case, no stratification or weighting was required. There was some clustering of sample addresses, and this can have a bearing on the design effect, although this will be negligible in this survey. Therefore, the actual sample sizes can be used when considering statistical confidence.

Throughout this report, where percentile results for *sub-groups* have been cited in the text, only statistically significant variations (of a 95% confidence level) have been presented.

1.4 Qualitative method

The qualitative research comprised three stages:

- Depth interviews with trainers and managers at centres where UK online computer training is provided;
- Depth interviews with course participants in six case study areas; and
- Follow-up telephone interviews with trainers and managers.

1.4.1 Depth interviews with trainers

A series of face to face depth interviews were undertaken with trainers and course centre managers from 40 training providers. These interviews (44) lasted approximately one hour and were primarily one-to-one. However, on a few occasions (2) mini-groups were run where several attendees wished to be present in one location. Trainers were drawn from a diverse sample of training providers, from a list provided by DfEE, and were purposively selected to include a range of providers across 18 locations. These locations included a range of rural and urban areas, unemployment levels and providers. This stage of research was carried out between October and November 2000.

1.4.2 Depth interviews with participants

A series of 140 in-depth interviews were undertaken with participants in the following six localities:

- Merseyside;
- Black Country;
- East London;
- Hertfordshire;
- Cumbria; and
- Hereford and Worcester.

These areas were purposively selected to include a range of rural and urban areas; unemployment levels and providers. Participant details were obtained from training

providers who had been interviewed at the first stage. The interviews with participants lasted approximately one hour and were mainly carried out in participants' homes. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes. This stage of research was carried out between January and April 2001.

1.4.3 Follow-up stage with Trainers

After the participants stage, a second phase of telephone interviews were carried out among training providers, to examine bedding down issues, and issues that arose throughout the course of the study. Where possible, the same respondents who had been interviewed in the first stage were re-contacted. In all, 44 telephone depths, each lasting about 40 minutes were carried out in April 2001.

1.4.4 Sample Profile: Participants taking part in the qualitative study

The profile of participants who took part in the qualitative study is shown in table E. A mix of participants took part in the qualitative study. Their profile was broadly representative of the participant group as a whole. However, those who took part in the qualitative study were slightly more likely to be women or those aged 35-45.

Table E: Profile of qualitative participants

Type	Number of participants
Sex	
Male	60
Female	80
Ethnicity	
White	120
Black	10
Asian	10
Course completion	
Completed the course	84
Doing course at time of interview	16
Did not complete course	40
Age	
18-35	37
35-45	35
45-55	30
55+ year	38
Region	
Black Country	27
Cumbria	24
Hereford and Worcester	14
London	20
Merseyside	31
Hertfordshire	24
Total number of interviews	**140**

Appendix 2 – Database forms A, B, C and D

UK Online Computer Skills Training

Data Protection Act 1998:
The DfEE/TEC/CCTE/Careers Service may put the information you give onto a computer to assist with record keeping, participant follow up and for statistical and research purposes

- Please read the guidance notes before filling in this form.
- Please complete in CAPITAL LETTERS.
- Where there are tick boxes, please tick the one that applies.

PART A. To be completed by participant

1. Surname
2. First name(s)
3. Home Address
4. Post Code
5. Telephone No.
6. NI Number
7. Date of Birth 1 9
8. Are you Male Female
9. Do you have a disability or health problem which affects your ability to carry out normal day to day activities

Yes No

12. Signature

10. To help us see how our equal opportunities policy is working, please say to which of these groups you be

White		Black African	
Black Caribbean		Black Other	
Indian		Pakistani	
Bangladeshi		Chinese	
		None of these	

11. Which benefit are you currently receiving? (tick one)

Jobseeker Allowance		Incapacity Benefit	
Lone Parent on IS		Widows Benefit	
Invalidity Care Allowance		Dependant or	
Other State Benefit		Benefit Recipient	

13. Date Signed

Part B. To be completed by the Provider

14. I certify that I have checked all the eligibility conditions and the young person named above is eligible is not eligible for support on UK Online Computer Skills Training

15. Intended start date: 2 0
16. Contact name
17. Signature
18. Tel Number
19. Date Signed

Part C. To be completed by Provider at start of training

20. Provider name
21. Address
22. Post Code
23. Telephone No.
24. Training Start Date
25. Expected End Date
26. Participant referred learndirect ES Other
27. Literacy need identified Yes No
28. ICT Qualification identified:
    - European Computer Driving Licence
    - Clait (levels 1 & 2)
    - City and Guilds 7261, Skills level (1 and 2)
    - Other agreed ICT qualifications

Part D. To be completed by Provider at end of training

29. Training Ended On 2 0
30. Did the participant complete planned training Yes No
31. If No, can you give a reason: _____
32. Did participant complete identified ICT qualification Yes No

Appendix 3 - The quantitative questionnaires

1. FACE TO FACE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1

---

qdate INTERVIEWER - TYPE IN WHEN THE RESPONDENT STARTED THEIR TRAINING AS IT APPEARS ON YOUR SAMPLE SHEET. PUT IT IN DD/MM/YY FORMAT.

(118 - 122)

Don't Know Y (118)

Q1 According to our records, you started your computer training in &Qdate& Is this correct?

Yes	1	(123)
No	2	
Don't Know	3	

IF Q1 = No
THEN ASK: Q2

Q2 So when did you start your UK On-line Computer Skills training?
PUT IT IN DD/MM/YY FORMAT.

(124 - 128)

Don't Know Y (124)

Q3 How did you find out about the training?

DO NOT PROMPT
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

TV	1	(129)
Radio	2	
National newspaper	3	
Local newspaper	4	
Saw information in Jobcentre/benefits office	5	
Jobcentre staff/advisor told me about it or advised me to go on training	6	
Benefits staff/advisor told me about it or advised me to go on training	7	
Recruitment agency told me about it or advised me to go on training	8	
Received leaflet from training provider/college	9	
Saw information at training centre/college	0	(130)
Training centre/college told me about it	1	
Friends/family told me about it	2	
Don't Know	Y	(129)
Other	0	

Other specify... (131 - 135)

Q4 SHOW CARD A

And did any of these influence you to go on this training?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Benefits office/Jobcentre staff	1	(136)
2. Private employment agency	2	
3. Family, relatives or friends	3	
4. Training provider/college staff	4	
5. No-one, decided on my own	5	
Don't Know	Y	
Other/Someone else (type in)	0	

Other specify... (137 - 141)

Q5 And how did you actually apply for the training initially?

Was it by telephone, by filling in a form etc.

TYPE IN ANSWER

Over the telephone	1	(142)
In person	2	
In writing	3	
Through someone else	4	
Other	0	

Other specify... (143 - 147)

Q6 SHOWCARD B

For which, if any of these reasons did you go on this training?

1. To improve chances of getting a job	1	(148)
2. keep in contact with family/friends	2	
3. to use email/internet (e.g. to communicate, access information)	3	
4. wanted training on specific aspect, e.g. word processing, using databases	4	
5. I just wanted to find out how computers work	5	
6. It was a stepping stone to other computer courses	6	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these	X	
Other	0	

Other specify... (149 - 153)

Q7 SHOW CARD C

Before you went on the course, which of the following had you used or done?
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

1. Camcorder or video camera	1	(154)
2. Teletext or Ceefax	2	
3. Electronic organiser	3	
4. Answering machine	4	
5. Mobile phone or car phone	5	
6. Internet access	6	
7. Email	7	
8. Cash dispensing machine	8	
9. Automatic ticket machine, for example to buy a train ticket	9	
10. Telephone banking	0	(155)
11. Programming a video recorder	1	
12. Programming or storing numbers on a phone	2	
Don't Know	Y	(154)
None of these	X	

Q9 Before you went on this training, which of these applied to you?
READ OUT LIST

IF NECESSARY SAY - Please answer referring to all your computer experience, even if this was some time ago

Had never used a computer before	1	(158)
Had used a computer before but had very little knowledge/experience	2	
Had used a computer before and had some knowledge/experience	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q9 = Had used a computer before but had very little knowledge/experience OR Q9 = Had used a computer before and had some knowledge/experience
THEN ASK: Q10

Q10 Had you used a computer before....

READ OUT LIST
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

at home	1	(159)
at work	2	
at a friends/relatives house	3	
at a public facility (e.g. library)	4	
at college	5	
other	6	
Don't Know	Y	

Q11 SHOWCARD D

From this card, were there any particular reasons why you had not used a computer or had not used a computer more often than you did?

1. No convenient access to a computer / computers not available	1	(160)
2. Did not know where to go to use a computer	2	
3. Did not need to use a computer	3	
4. Did not like using a computer	4	
5. Did not know how to use a computer/do anything useful on a computer	5	
6. Not enough help available to use/learn to use a computer	6	
7. Do not own a computer as too expensive	7	
8. No particular reason	8	
Don't Know	Y	
Other	0	

Other specify...	(161 - 165)

IF Q9 = Had used a computer before but had very little knowledge/experience OR Q9 = Had used a computer before and had some knowledge/experience
THEN ASK: Q12

Q12 And before you went on this training, had you ever...

READ OUT

received any computer training as part of a job	1	(166)
been on any computer training (not as part of a job)	2	
neither	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q12 = neither OR Q9 = Had never used a computer before
THEN ASK: Q13

Q13 Had you considered or tried to go on any computer training previously?

Yes	1	(167)
No	2	
Don't Know/Can't remember	Y	

IF Q13 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q14

Q14 Why did you not go on any computer training?

DO NOT PROMPT
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

Did not know where to go/what was available	1	(168)
Too expensive	2	
No/not enough time	3	
Could not get/afford childcare	4	
No training available nearby/too far away/difficult to get to	5	
No training at convenient time	6	
Don't Know	Y	
Other	0	

Other specify... (169 - 173)

SECTION 2

Now, some questions about the On-line computer training itself.

Q15 SHOW CARD E

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the course, all things considered?

Completely satisfied	1	(174)
Very satisfied	2	
Fairly satisfied	3	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	
Fairly dissatisfied	5	
Very dissatisfied	6	
Completely dissatisfied	7	
Don't Know	Y	

Q16 What did you like about the course?

PROBE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE CONTENT, EXPECTATIONS OF COURSE, TEACHING METHODS ETC.

(175 - 179)

None of these	X	(175)

Q17 And what did you dislike about the course?

PROBE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE CONTENT, EXPECTATIONS OF COURSE, TEACHING METHODS ETC.

(208 - 212)

Don't Know	Y	(208)

Q18 How would you rate the staff who gave the training?
READ OUT LIST

Very good	1	(213)
Fairly good	2	
Neither good/poor	3	
Fairly poor	4	
Very poor	5	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q18 = Fairly poor OR Q18 = Very poor
THEN ASK: Q19

Q19 Why do you say that?

(214 - 218)

Don't Know	Y	(214)

Q19B Were you given a taster session before the course itself?
IF NECESSARY SAY: By taster session I mean going along to the training provider before the course and trying out the computers or finding more out about the course content to see if it was right for you.

Yes	1	(219)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q19c And were you given a needs assessment? That is, a conversation or meeting with the training provider where you discussed what you wanted to get out of the course.

Yes	1	(220)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q20 Which of the following were covered as part of the training?

READ OUT LIST

Computer basics (e.g. how a computer works, what the different parts do)	1	(221)
Internet/web	2	
Email	3	
Word processing/typing letters (e.g. word)	4	
Graphics/charts	5	
Using spreadsheets (e.g. excel)	6	
Computer maintenance	7	
Setting up and using databases (e.g. access)	8	
Desk top publishing	9	
Don't Know	Y	

Q21 To what extent did the training cover the different things you wanted or needed?
READ OUT LIST

Fully	1	(222)
Partly	2	
Not at all	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q21 = Partly OR Q21 = Not at all
THEN ASK: Q22

Q22 What would you have liked more training on?
DO NOT PROMPT

Computer basics (e.g. how a computer works, what the different parts do)	1	(223)
Internet/web	2	
Email	3	
Word processing/typing letters (e.g. word)	4	
Graphics/charts	5	
Using spreadsheets (e.g. excel)	6	
Computer maintenance	7	
Setting up and using databases (e.g. access)	8	
Desk top publishing	9	
Don't Know	Y	
Other	0	

Other specify... (224 - 228)

Q23 Did you complete the training?

Yes	1	(229)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q23 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q24

Q24 How long did the training last?

RECORD ANSWER AS NUMBER OF WEEKS. @ PROBE FOR ESTIMATE IF NECESSARY

(230 - 231)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (230)

Permitted Range
0 TO 50 (Numeric Range)

IF Q23 = No
THEN ASK: Q25

Q25 Why did you not complete the training?

(232 - 236)

Don't Know	Y	(232)

Q26 Did the course lead to a qualification or certificate?

Yes - qualification	1	(237)
Yes - certificate	2	
Yes - Not sure which	3	
No	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q26 = Yes - qualification OR Q26 = Yes - certificate OR Q26 = No
THEN ASK: Q27, Q28

Q27 Which one?
READ OUT IF NECESSARY

CLAIT	1	(238)
Key Skills 1&2	2	
City and Guilds	3	
European Computer Driving Licence	4	
Don't Know	Y	
Other	0	

Other specify... (239 - 243)

Q28 And did you obtain this qualification/certificate?

Yes	1	(244)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q29 Overall, how useful do you think the course has been to you?
READ OUT LIST

Very Useful	1	(245)
Fairly useful	2	
Not very useful	3	
Not at all useful	4	
Don't Know	Y	

Q30 To what extent has the training ...
READ OUT LIST

A great deal	1	(246)
A fair amount	2	
Just a little	3	
Not at all	4	
Don't Know	Y	

This question is repeated for the following loop values:
increased your confidence in using computers?

A total of 1 iterations occupying columns (246) to (246)

SECTION 3

Now I would like to ask you about your main activities over the last few months.

INTERVIEWER TO SHOW CALENDER AS APPROPRIATE

Q31/Q32 asked until respondent mentions an activity that started 6 months before they started the training

q31 SHOW GREEN CARD A

Could I ask you what you were doing &txt1& - please could you answer from this card?
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST
THIS QUESTION IS SINGLE CODED - PROBE FOR MAIN ACTIVITY
DISREGARD ACTIVITIES LASTING LESS THAN A WEEK
DO NOT COUNT CHANGES WITHIN A CATEGORY (EG CONSECUTIVE FULL-TIME JOBS) AS SEPERATE EVENTS
NOTE - COUNT AS A CHANGE OF ACTIVITY IF WORKING 16 HRS PER WK IN SAME JOB

1. In full time paid work (or off sick): 30 hours or more per wk	1	(247)
2. In part time paid work (or off sick): 16-29 hours per wk	2	
3. In part time paid work (or off sick): under 16 hours per wk	3	
4. In full time education/training (including on-line computer training)	4	
5. On a government scheme (e.g. New Deal/TEC/LEC)	5	
6. Unemployed and looking for work/waiting to take up a job	6	
7. Looking after children or the home	7	
8. Temporarily sick or disabled	8	
9. Permanently sick or disabled	9	
10. Retired	0	(248)
11. Not working for other reason	1	
Don't Know	Y	(247)

Q32 When did you start that?

EG, ENTER dd/mm/yy FORMAT
IF DOES NOT KNOW DATE/MONTH, TAKE BEST GUESS
BEFORE ENTERING DATE, CHECK THAT THIS WAS A CONTINUOUS PERIOD

(528 - 532)

Don't Know	Y	(528)

Q34 May I check, thinking of the time before &tday&/&tmonth&/&eyear&&oyear&, have you ever had a paid job lasting a month or more before then -apart from a holiday job?

Yes	1	(1235)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q34 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q35

Q35 When did your last job end?
IF NECESSARY SAY: The last job you started BEFORE you started the training course

RECORD ANSWER AS MONTH/YEAR (MM/YY FORMAT)
EG, 'FEBRUARY 2000' SHOULD BE RECORDED AS 02/00

(1236 - 1240)

Don't Know	Y	(1236)

Q36 Can I check, have you ever taken part in any government programmes (other than OnLine Computer training) to help with training, work experience or looking for work?

Yes	1	(1241)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q36 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q37

Q37 SHOW GREEN CARD B
Which ones?

1. New Deal	1	(1242)
2. Community Programme/Community Enterprise Programme	2	
3. Youth Training Scheme (YTS)	3	
4. Job Training Scheme (old or new)	4	
5. Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS)	5	
6. Employment Training	6	
7. Employment Action	7	
8. Enterprise Allowance Scheme	8	
9. Jobclub	9	
10. Job Match	0	(1243)
11. Work Trials	1	
12. Training for Work/Work based Learning for adults	2	
Don't Know	Y	(1242)
Other	0	

Other specify... (1244 - 1248)

SECTION 4

ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT CURRENT/MOST RECENT JOB THAT STARTED AFTER TRAINING START DATE

Qv4 INTERVIEWER -CODE WHETHER RESPONDENT IS CURRENTLY WORKING

Yes - working	1	(1249)
No - not working	2	

IF Qv4 = Yes - working

q38 Could I ask you a little more about your last job, or if currently working, the job you are now doing

What &v6& the firm/organisation you &v10& for mainly make or do (at the place where you &v10&))

DESCRIBE FULLY - PROBE MAUFACTURING or PROCESSING or DISTRIBUTING etc.
AND MAIN GOODS PRODUCED, MATERIALS USED, WHOLESALE or RETAIL etc.

(1250 - 1254)

Don't Know	Y	(1250)

Q39 What &v8& your job?

ENTER JOB TITLE

(1255 - 1259)

Don't Know	Y	(1255)

q40 What &v6& you mainly do in your job?

(1260 - 1264)

Don't Know	Y	(1260)

Q41 Can I check, &v4& you working as an employee or &v4& you self-employed?

Employee	1	(1265)
Self-Employed	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q41 = Employee
THEN ASK: Q42, Q43

Q42 &v7& you have any managerial duties, or &v4& you supervising any other employees?

Manager	1	(1266)
Foreman/supervisor	2	
Not manager/supervisor	3	
Don't Know	Y	

Q43 How many employees &v4& there at the place where you &v10&?

1-24	1	(1267)
25 or more	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q41 = Self-Employed
THEN ASK: Q44

Q44 &v5& you working on your own or did you have employees?

Worked alone/with partners but had no employees	1	(1268)
With employees	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q44 = With employees
THEN ASK: Q45

Q45 How many employees &Qv4& there at the place where you worked?

1-24	1	(1269)
25 or more	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q46 &v9& this job....

READ OUT LIST

a permanent one	1	(1270)
a seasonal, temporary or casual one	2	
a job done under contract or for a limited period	3	
or was it some kind of other job that was not permanent	4	
Don't Know	Y	

q47 How many hours a week &v6& you usually work excluding mealbreaks but including any paid overtime?

IF VARIES, AVERAGE IF POSSIBLE

(1271 - 1273)

Numeric Range _____		
Don't Know	Y	(1271)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100 (Numeric Range)

IF Q41 = Employee
THEN ASK: Q48

Q48 What &v8& your usual take home pay, that is, after all deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, but including overtime and any bonuses?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

RESPONDENT CAN GIVE AMOUNT PER WEEK, PER MONTH OR PER YEAR

RECORD ANSWER IN POUNDS

IF RESPONDENT ONLY KNOW'S GROSS PAY, CODE DON'T KNOW

(1274 - 1279)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1274)

Permitted Range
0 TO 200000 (Numeric Range)

IF Q48 = Don't Know
THEN ASK: Q49

Q49 Do you know what your gross pay &v8& before any deductions?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

ENTER GROSS PAY PER WEEK, MONTH, OR YEAR
RECORD ANSWER IN POUNDS

(1308 - 1313)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1308)

Permitted Range
0 TO 200000 (Numeric Range)

IF Q41 = Self-Employed
THEN ASK: Q50

Q50 What do you estimate your total income &v8& from your self-employed work, after taking away all expenses and taxes?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

ENTER INCOME PER WEEK, MONTH OR YEAR

(1314 - 1320)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1314)

Permitted Range
0 TO 2000000 (Numeric Range)

IF NOT (Q49 = Don't Know OR Q50 = Don't Know)
THEN ASK: q51

---

q51 And what period &v11& that cover?

One week	1	(1321)
Two weeks	2	
One calender month	3	
One year	4	
Other	5	
Don't Know	Y	

IF q51 = Other
THEN ASK: Q52

Q52 How many weeks &v8& that?

(1322 - 1323)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1322)

Permitted Range
1 TO 52 (Numeric Range)

Q53 &v7& you use a computer as part of your work?

Yes	1	(1324)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q53 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q54, Q55

Q54 How often &v6& you use a computer at your work?

every day	1	(1325)
at least once a week	2	
once every 2-3 weeks	3	
once a month	4	
less often	5	
Don't Know	Y	

Q55 &v7& you use the computer for any of the following?

Email	1	(1326)
Internet access	2	
Graphics/charts	3	
Word processing/typing letters	4	
Spreadsheets	5	
Database	6	
Games	7	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these	X	

Q56 To what extent &v11& this job make use of the skills you gained as part of your on-line computer training? Would you say it made use of them.....

READ OUT

To a great extent	1	(1327)
To some extent	2	
Not very much	3	
Not at all	4	
Don't Know	Y	

Q57 How important was the on-line computer training to you in getting this job?

Very important	1	(1328)
Fairly important	2	
Not very important	3	
Not at all important	4	
Don't Know	Y	

QUANCEPT ITEM: IF NOT WORKING LAST WEEK

Q58 SHOW GREEN CARD C

What was the main reason that the job came to an end?
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

1. Temporary/seasonal/casual job came to an end	1	(1329)
2. Fixed term contract came to an end	2	
3. Dismissed	3	
4. Made redundant/laid off	4	
5. Took voluntary redundancy	5	
6. Resigned/decided to leave	6	
7. Left to have a baby	7	
8. Gave up work for family or personal reasons	8	
9. Gave up work for health or disability reasons	9	
10. Took early retirement	0	(1330)
11. The company went out of business	1	
12. Other reason	2	
Don't Know	Y	(1329)

IF STARTED A JOB BEFORE STARTING THE TRAINING:

Can I just ask you a little more about the last job you started before your on-line computer training?

THE NEXT SET OF QUESTIONS REFER TO THE MOST RECENT JOB THAT THE RESPONDENT STARTED BEFORE THE TRAINING START DATE

q59 INTERVIEWER - CODE WHETHER RESPONDENT IS CURRENTLY WORKING IN THIS JOB THEY STARTED BEFORE THE COMPUTER TRAINING

Yes - still working	1	(1331)
No - no longer working in that job	2	

IF q59 = Yes - still working

Q60 What &v14& the firm/organisation you &v18& for mainly make or do (at the place where you &v18&)

DESCRIBE FULLY - PROBE MAUFACTURING or PROCESSING or DISTRIBUTING etc.
AND MAIN GOODS PRODUCED, MATERIALS USED, WHOLESALE or RETAIL etc.

(1332 - 1336)

Don't Know Y (1332)

Q61 What &v16& your job?

ENTER JOB TITLE

(1337 - 1341)

Don't Know Y (1337)

Q62 What &v14& you mainly do in your job?

(1342 - 1346)

Don't Know Y (1342)

Q63 Can I check, &v12& you working as an employee or &v12& you self-employed?

Employee	1	(1347)
Self-Employed	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q63 = Employee
THEN ASK: Q64, Q65

Q64 &v15& you have any managerial duties, or were you supervising any other employees?

Manager	1	(1348)
Foreman/supervisor	2	
Not manager/supervisor	3	
Don't Know	Y	

Q65 How many employees &v12& there at the place where you &v18&?

1-24	1	(1349)
25 or more	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q63 = Self-Employed
THEN ASK: Q66

Q66 &v13& you working on your own or &v14& you have employees?

Worked alone/with partners but had no employees	1	(1350)
With employees	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q66 = With employees
THEN ASK: q67

q67 How many people &v14& you employ at the place where you &v18&?

1-24	1	(1351)
25 or more	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q68 &v17& this job....

READ OT LIST

a permanent one	1	(1352)
a seasonal, temporary or casual one	2	
a job done under contract or for a limited period	3	
or was it some kind of other job that was not permanent	4	
Don't Know	Y	

Q69 How many hours a week &v14& you usually work excluding mealbreaks but including any paid overtime?

IF VARIES, AVERAGE IF POSSIBLE

(1353 - 1355)

Numeric Range _____		
Don't Know	Y	(1353)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100 (Numeric Range)

IF Q63 = Employee
THEN ASK: Q70

Q70 What &v16& your usual take home pay, that is, after all deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, but including overtime and any bonuses?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

RESPONDENT CAN GIVE AMOUNT PER WEEK, PER MONTH OR PER YEAR

IF RESPONDENT ONLY KNOW'S GROSS PAY, CODE DON'T KNOW

(1356 - 1361)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1356)

Permitted Range
0 TO 200000 (Numeric Range)

IF Q70 = Don't Know
THEN ASK: Q71

Q71 Do you know what your gross pay &v16& before any deductions?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

ENTER GROSS PAY PER WEEK, MONTH, OR YEAR

(1362 - 1367)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1362)

Permitted Range
0 TO 200000 (Numeric Range)

IF Q63 = Self-Employed
THEN ASK: Q72

Q72 What do you estimate your total income &v16& from your self-employed work, after taking away all expenses and taxes?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

ENTER INCOME PER WEEK, MONTH OR YEAR

(1368 - 1373)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1368)

Permitted Range
0 TO 200000 (Numeric Range)

IF NOT (Q49 = Don't Know OR Q50 = Don't Know)
THEN ASK: Q73

Q73 And what period &v19& that cover?

One week	1	(1374)
Two weeks	2	
One calender month	3	
One year	4	
Other	5	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q73 = Other
THEN ASK: q74

---

q74 How many weeks &v16& that?

(1375 - 1376)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1375)

Permitted Range
1 TO 52 (Numeric Range)

Q75 &v15& you use a computer as part of your work?

Yes	1	(1377)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q75 = Yes
THEN ASK: D75b, Q76

Q76 &v15& you use the computer for any of the following?

Email	1	(1379)
Internet access	2	
Graphics/charts	3	
Word processing/typing letters	4	
Spreadsheets	5	
Database	6	
Games	7	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these	X	

IF q59 = No - no longer working in that job

IF q59 = No - no longer working in that job
THEN ASK: Q77

Q77 SHOW GREEN CARD C

What was the main reason that the job came to an end?

1. Temporary/seasonal/casual job came to an end	1	(1408)
2. Fixed term contract came to an end	2	
3. Dismissed	3	
4. Made redundant/laid off	4	
5. Took voluntary redundancy	5	
6. Resigned/decided to leave	6	
7. Left to have a baby	7	
8. Gave up work for family or personal reasons	8	
9. Gave up work for health or disability reasons	9	
10. Took early retirement	0	(1409)
11. The company went out of business	1	
12. Other reason	2	
Don't Know	Y	(1408)

Q78 SHOWCARD F

Thinking of the whole period since leaving school or college, how would you sum up your work experience? Could you choose an answer from this card.

1. I have spent most of my working life in steady jobs	1	(1410)
2. I have spent most of my working life self-employed	2	
3. I have mainly done casual or short term work	3	
4. I have spent a lot more time unemployed than in work	4	
5. I have spent a lot of my adult life looking after family or the home	5	
6. I have been in and out of work several times	6	
7. None of these apply to me	7	
Don't Know	Y	

SECTION 5

ASK Q30 ULESS WORKING, PERMANENTLY SICK OR DISABLED OR RETIRED

Q30b To what extent has the training improved your job prospects?

A great deal	1	(1411)
A fair amount	2	
Just a little	3	
Not at all	4	
Don't Know	Y	

ASK Q79 UNLESS WORKING

Q79 May I check, are you looking for work at present?

Yes	1	(1412)
No	2	
Waiting to take up a job	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q79 = No
THEN ASK: Q80

Q80 Even though you are not looking for work at the moment, would you like to have a paid job....

READ OUT

Now	1	(1413)
In the future	2	
or never	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q79 = Yes OR Q80 = Now OR Q80 = In the future
THEN ASK: Q81

Q81 How important do you think the on-line computer training will be to you in getting work, now or in the future?
READ OUT LIST

Very important	1	(1414)
Fairly important	2	
Not very important	3	
Not at all important	4	
Don't Know	Y	

ASK Q82 UNLESS, RETIRED, PERANENTLY SICK OR DISABLED OR EMPLOYED IN SAME JOB FOR 5+ YEARS

q82 SHOWCARD G

Have any of the problems listed on this card made it difficult for you to find or keep a job in the past year. Please just read out the numbers.

1.	1	(1415)
2.	2	
3.	3	
4.	4	
5.	5	
6.	6	
7.	7	
8.	8	
9.	9	
10.	0	(1416)
11.	1	
12.	2	
Don't Know	Y	(1415)
None of these	X	
Other	0	

Other specify... (1417 - 1421)

SECTION 6

Q83 Since you finished the on-line computer training, have you been on any additional training?

READ OUT

Yes	1	(1422)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q83b And have you received any computer training as part of a job?

Yes	1	(1423)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q86 Since the training, have you used a computer .....
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

at home	1	(1428)
at work	2	
at a public facility	3	
at college	4	
Other	5	
Not at all	6	

IF NOT (Q86 = Not at all)
THEN ASK: q87, Q88, Q89

q87 How often do you use a computer (outside of work)?

every day	1	(1429)
at least once a week	2	
once every 2-3 weeks	3	
once a month	4	
less often	5	
Don't Know	Y	

Q88 Have you used a computer for any of the following since the OnLine computer training? READ OUT

Email	1	(1430)
Internet access	2	
Graphics/charts	3	
Word processing/typing letters	4	
Spreadsheets	5	
Database	6	
Games	7	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these	X	

Q89 Do you currently have a personal computer in your home?

Yes	1	(1431)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

SECTION 7

I am now going to read you some of the things people have said about technology. I would like you to tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with them.

So firstly...

Q90 ...

SHOW CARD H

IF NECESSARY SAY

Do you agree or disagree with that? And is that strongly or tend to?

Agree Strongly	1	(1432)
Tend to agree	2	
Neither agree nor disagree	3	
Tend to disagree	4	
Disagree strongly	5	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these/ Not applicable	X	

This question is repeated for the following loop values:

I would rather use a cash machine than get service from a cashier, Computers are only for the young, I don't like leaving messages on answering machines, I like trying out new things, I find it difficult to program a video recorder, Things often go wrong with new technology, Having a computer at home is essential, Technology creates unemployment, I am willing to try new things if they make my life easier, Teletext or Ceefax is a convenient way of finding information, I find it hard to keep up with new technology at work, I have a good idea of what the Internet can be used for, I find Email useful as a way of communicating

A total of 13 iterations occupying columns (1432) to (1444)

SECTION 8

I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

Q93 How old were you when you finished continuous full-time education at school or college?

(1448 - 1449)

Numeric Range _____		
Don't Know	Y	(1448)
Refused	Z	

Permitted Range
5 TO 99 (Numeric Range)

IF Q93 > D92

Q94 Since you were 16, have you had any problems with reading or writing English at all?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Yes, reading English	1	(1450)
Yes, writing English	2	
Yes, because English not first language	3	
No	4	
Don't Know	Y	
Refused	Z	

q95 Can I just check, is English your first language?

Yes - English if first language	1	(1451)
No - English is not my first language	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF q95 = No - English is not my first language
THEN ASK: q96

q96 What is your first language?

(1452 - 1456)

Don't Know	Y	(1452)

Q97 Since you were 16, have you had any problems with numbers or simple arithmetic at all?

Yes	1	(1457)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q98 Do you have any qualifications .....
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

From school, college or university	1	(1458)
Connected with work	2	
From government schemes	3	
No qualifications	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF NOT (Q98 = No qualifications OR = Don't Know)
THEN ASK: q99

q99 SHOWCARD I

Do you have any of the qualifications on this card?

1. Degree or equivalent/qualification above degree level	1	(1459)
2. ENGLD-GCE 'A' level/Higher school cert	2	
3. ENGLD-GCE 'O' level grades A-C/GCSE grades A-C/CSE grd 1	3	
4. ENGLD-GCE 'O' level grades D-E/GCSE grades D-E/CSE grd 2-5	4	
5. ENGLD - School cert or matriculation	5	
6. SCOTLD - Cert of sixth year studies	6	
7. SCOTLD - SCE/SLC/SUPE Higher grade	7	
8. SCOTLD -SCE ordinary grade A-C/Standard grade 1-2	8	
9. SCOTLD - SCE ordinary grades D,E/Standard grade 3-6	9	
10. SCOTLD - SLC/SUPE lower or ordinary	0	(1460)
11. Other qualifications above 'A' level but below degree	1	
12. Other or foreign qualifications	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF q99 = Yes
THEN ASK: q100

q100 SHOWCARD I

Which of these school or college examinations is the highest you have passed?

CODE HIGHEST QUALIFICATION
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

1. Degree or equivalent/qualification above degree level	1	(1460)
2. ENGLD-GCE 'A' level/Higher school cert	2	
3. ENGLD-GCE 'O' level grades A-C/GCSE grades A-C/CSE grd 1	3	
4. ENGLD-GCE 'O' level grades D-E/GCSE grades D-E/CSE grd 2-5	4	
5. ENGLD - School cert or matriculation	5	
6. SCOTLD - Cert of sixth year studies	6	
7. SCOTLD - SCE/SLC/SUPE Higher grade	7	
8. SCOTLD -SCE ordinary grade A-C/Standard grade 1-2	8	
9. SCOTLD - SCE ordinary grades D,E/Standard grade 3-6	9	
10. SCOTLD - SLC/SUPE lower or ordinary	0	(1461)
11. Other qualifications above 'A' level but below degree	1	
12. Other or foreign qualifications	2	
Don't Know	Y	(1460)

Q101 SHOW CARD J

And do you have any of the qualifications on this card?

Yes	1	(1462)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q101 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q102

Q102 SHOWCARD J
Which qualifications do you have?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

1. Recognised trade apprenticeship completed	1	(1463)
2. City and Guilds - Craft/Intermediate/Ordinary (Part 1)	2	
3. City and Guilds - Advance/Final or full tech (Part 2 or 3)	3	
4. City and Guilds - can't say which	4	
5. BEC/TEC/BTEC/SCOTBEC/ SCOTEC/SCOTVEC/National/General	5	
6. BEC/TEC/BTEC/SCOTBEC/ SCOTVEC Higher	6	
7. Ordinary National Cert/Dip	7	
8. Higher national Cert/Dip (HNC/HND)	8	
9. RSA/Pitman's secretarial or clerical	9	
10. Other clerical/commercial qual (e.g. typing,shorthand,book-keeping)	0	(1464)
11. NVQ/SVQ	1	
12. GNVQ/GSVQ	2	
13. Nursing qual	3	
14. Teaching qual (incl TEFL)	4	
15. Other vocational/pre-vocational qual	5	
Don't Know	Y	(1463)
None of these	X	

q103 SHOWCARD K

Which of these applies to you?

Single	1	(1465)
Married or living with a partner	2	
Separated	3	
Divorced	4	
Widowed	5	
Don't Know	Y	

IF q103 = Married or living with a partner
THEN ASK: Q104

Q104 SHOW GREEN CARD A

From this card, which of these best describes the main activity of your wife/husband or partner last week?

1. In full time paid work (or off sick): 30 hours or more per wk	1	(1466)
2. In part time paid work (or off sick): 16-29 hours per wk	2	
3. In part time paid work (or off sick): under 16 hours per wk	3	
4. In full time education/training (including on-line computer training)	4	
5. On a government scheme (e.g. New Deal/TEC/LEC)	5	
6. Unemployed and looking for work/waiting to take up a job	6	
7. Looking after children or the home	7	
8. Temporarily sick or disabled	8	
9. Permanently sick or disabled	9	
10. Retired	0	(1467)
11. Not working for other reason	1	
Don't Know	Y	(1466)
None of these	X	

Q105 SHOWCARD L

Are you receiving any of these benefits at the moment?
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

1. Income Support	1	(1468)
2. Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)	2	
3. Child benefit	3	
4. Family Credit	4	
5. Working Families Tax Credit	5	
6. New Deal Allowance	6	
7. Retirement Pension	7	
8. Widows Benefit	8	
9. Statutory Maternity Pay	9	
10. Incapacity Benefit	0	(1469)
11. Another state benefit	1	
Don't Know	Y	(1468)
None of these	X	

IF q103 = Married or living with a partner
THEN ASK: q106

q106 SHOWCARD L

And is your partner receiving any of these benefits at the moment?
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

1. Income Support	1	(1470)
2. Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)	2	
3. Child benefit	3	
4. Family Credit	4	
5. Working Families Tax Credit	5	
6. New Deal Allowance	6	
7. Retirement Pension	7	
8. Widows Benefit	8	
9. Statutory Maternity Pay	9	
10. Incapacity Benefit	0	(1471)
11. Another state benefit	1	
Don't Know	Y	(1470)
None of these	X	

q107 SHOWCARD L

Were you receiving any of these benefits when you applied for the on-line computer training?
USE PgUp/PgDwn TO SEE FULL ANSWER LIST

1. Income Support	1	(1472)
2. Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)	2	
3. Child benefit	3	
4. Family Credit	4	
5. Working Families Tax Credit	5	
6. New Deal Allowance	6	
7. Retirement Pension	7	
8. Widows Benefit	8	
9. Statutory Maternity Pay	9	
10. Incapacity Benefit	0	(1473)
11. Another state benefit	1	
Don't Know	Y	(1472)
None of these	X	

q108 SHOWCARD M
To which of the groups listed on this card do you consider you belong?

1. White	1	(1474)
2. Black - Caribbean	2	
3. Black - African	3	
4. Black - Other	4	
5. Indian	5	
6. Pakistani	6	
7. Bangladeshi	7	
8. Chinese	8	
9. Other	9	
Don't Know	Y	

q109 Do you hold a current full driving licence to drive a car or motorcycle?

Yes	1	(1475)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF q109 = Yes
THEN ASK: q110

q110 Do you have access to a car, van or motorcycle for your private use?

Yes	1	(1476)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

I would now like to ask you a few questions about your health.

Q111 Do you have any health problems or disabilities that you expect will last for more than a year?

Yes	1	(1477)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q111 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q112, Q113

Q112 Does this health problem affect the KIND of paid work that you might do?

Yes	1	(1478)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q113 ,...or the AMOUNT of paid work that you might do?

Yes	1	(1479)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q114 Have you ever had any health problems or disabilities (apart from those you have already told me about) that have lasted for longer than one year?

Yes	1	(1480)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Qhouse I would now like to ask you a few questions about your household. By your household, I mean people who live here and who use the same living room as you or share at least one meal a day with you.
Including yourself and any children, how many people are there in your household?

TYPE IN NUMBER

(1508 - 1509)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1508)

Permitted Range
1 TO 20 (Numeric Range)

IF Qhouse > 1
THEN ASK: q116

---

q116 Are there any children aged under 18 in this household who are financially dependent on you (or on your husband/partner/wife)?

Yes	1	(1510)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF q116 = Yes
THEN ASK: Qhouchi

Qhouchi How many children is that?

(1511 - 1512)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1511)

Permitted Range
1 TO 15 (Numeric Range)

AGE OF CHILDREN

qchi1 What is the age of your &TempVa1& child?
IF AGED UNDER 1, CODE 0

(1513 - 1514)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (1513)

Permitted Range
0 TO 18 (Numeric Range)

Q119 We would like to talk to you again in about 6 months time.

Please may I have a telephone number, so we can contact you? This telephone number will not be passed on to anyone outside of BMRB and will only be used to recontact you for this particular study.

Yes	1	(1533)
No	2	
Don't have a phone	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q119 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q119B, Q119c, Q120

Firstly, can I take your home phone number?

WHEN RECORDING PHONE NUMBERS, PLEASE ENTER THE AREA CODE AND LOCAL NUMBER TOGETHER AS ONE WHOLE NUMBER WITHOUT ANY DASHES, SPACES ETC. INBETWEEN.

IF RESPONDENT DOESN'T HAVE A PHONE NUMBER, IF POSSIBLE RECORD ANOTHER NUMBER WHICH THEY CAN BE CONTACTED ON E.G. A MOBILE NUMBER

PRESS ENTER TO CONTINUE TO NEXT SCREEN !

QUANCEPT ITEM: HOME TELEPHINE NUMBER

Q120 May I check, are you likely to be moving from this address in the near future?

Yes	1	(1573)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q120 = Yes
THEN ASK: q121

q121 Do you know what your new telephone number will be?

Yes	1	(1574)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF q121 = Yes
THEN ASK: Q122, q122B

QUANCEPT ITEM: NEW /ALTERNATIVE TELEPHONE NUMBER

Q119D Is there another number you can give me which you can be contacted on in the near future?
e.g. a mobile phone

Yes	1	(1641)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q119D = Yes
THEN ASK: Q119e, Q119f

QUANCEPT ITEM: IS THERE ANOTHER NUMBER YOU CAN GIVE ME WHICH YOU CAN BE CONTACTED ON IN THE NEAR FURURE

Q123 USE THIS BOX TO WRITE IN ANY OTHER COMMENTS WHICH RESPONDENT RAISED

EG - ANY SPECIFIC COMMENTS ABOUT THE TRAINING PROVIDER, FACILITES R HOW THE PROGRAMME IS RUN.

(1708 - 1712)

Don't Know	Y	(1708)
None of these	X	

2. TELEPHONE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE (QUANTITATIVE SURVEY)

SECTION 1

Q1t Can I just ask you if you completed the course? By completed I mean attended all or most of the training sessions.

Yes - attended most of the sessions	1	(522)
Yes - attended all of the sessions	2	
No - did not complete the course	3	
No - still on the course/sessions have been postponed	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q1t = No - did not complete the course OR
THEN ASK: Q2t, Q3t, Q4t, Q5t

Q2t Can I ask you about how much of the course you attended? Was it just one or two sessions, under half of the sessions, about half or more than half?

No sessions/didn't start the course	1	(523)
Just attended a taster session	2	
Went to one session	3	
Went to two sessions	4	
Went to more than two but less then half of the sessions	5	
Went to about half of the sessions	6	
Went to more than half of the sessions	7	
Don't Know	Y	

Q3t Why did you not complete the course?
CODE ALL THAT APPLY, PROBE FOR REASONS

I got a job/returned to work	1	(524)
I became ill	2	
Family circumstances/personal problems	3	
I wasn't getting anything out of it/it wasn't what I expected	4	
I couldn't find the time	5	
Childcare arrangements made it difficult	6	
I had difficulty getting to the training centre where the course was being held	7	
Inconvenient session times/course dates	8	
It was too easy for me	9	
It was too difficult for me	0	(525)
Don't Know	Y	(524)
None of these	X	

Q4t Were there any other reasons why you did not complete the course?

(526 - 529)

Don't Know	Y	(526)
None of these	X	

Q5t And thinking back now, how satisfied were you with the course, all things considered?
READ OUT LIST

Completely satisfied	1	(530)
Very satisfied	2	
Fairly satisfied	3	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	
Fairly dissatisfied	5	
Very dissatisfied	6	
Completely dissatisfied	7	
Don't Know	Y	

Z1t

IF Q1t = No - did not complete the course OR - Termination with data (Quit)

As you did not attend most of the training sessions, those are all the questions I need to ask you. Thank you very much for your time.

CLOSE INTERVIEW

SECTION 2

Q6t Thinking back, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the course, all things considered?
READ OUT LIST

Completely satisfied	1	(531)
Very satisfied	2	
Fairly satisfied	3	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	
Fairly dissatisfied	5	
Very dissatisfied	6	
Completely dissatisfied	7	
Don't Know	Y	

I'd now like to ask you about whether you received a qualification from the course.

Q7t Did the course lead to a qualification?

Yes - a qualification	1	(532)
Yes - a certificate	2	
Yes - not sure which	3	
No	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q7t = Yes - a qualification OR Q7t = Yes - a certificate OR Q7t = Yes - not sure which
THEN ASK: Q8t, Q11t

Q8t Which one?

IF NECESSARY, PROMPT FROM LIST

CLAIT	1	(533)
European Computer Driving Licence	2	
Key Skills 1&2	3	
RSA	4	
City and Guilds	5	
Pitmans	6	
NVQ	7	
Don't Know	Y	
Other	0	

Other specify... (534 - 537)

Q11t Did you obtain this qualification/certificate?

Yes	1	(538)
No	2	
Still waiting to hear	3	
Passed the exam but haven't received certificate/qualification yet	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q7t = No
THEN ASK: Q9t

Q9t Was there a written exam or test at the end of the course?

Yes	1	(539)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q9t = Yes
THEN ASK: Q10t

Q10t Did you pass this exam?

Yes	1	(540)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q12t Overall, how useful do you think the course has been to you?
READ OUT LIST

Very useful	1	(541)
Fairly useful	2	
Not very useful	3	
Not at all useful	4	
Don't Know	Y	

Q13t To what extent has the training increased your confidence in using computers?
READ OUT LIST

A great deal	1	(542)
A fair amount	2	
Just a little	3	
Not at all	4	
Don't Know	Y	

Q14t Since the training finished, have you used a computer at all?

Yes	1	(543)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q14t = Yes
THEN ASK: Q15t, Q17t

Q15t Since the training, have you used a computer...

READ OUT LIST, CODE ALL THAT APPLY

at home	1	(544)
at work	2	
at public facility (e.g. library)	3	
at college	4	
at a friends/relatives house	5	
anywhere else	6	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these	X	

In the last month or so, how often have you used a computer.....

Q16t ...

IF NECESSARY SAY: In the last month or so, how often have you used a computer there? Every day, at least once a week, once every 2-3 weeks, once a month or less often?

every day	1	(557)
at least once a week	2	
once every 2-3 weeks	3	
once a month	4	
less often	5	
Don't Know	Y	

This question is repeated for the following loop values:
at home, at work, at public facility (e.g. library), at college, at a friends/relatives house

A total of 5 iterations occupying columns (557) to (561)

Q17t Have you used a computer for any of the following since the computer training?
READ OUT LIST, CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Email	1	(562)
Internet access	2	
Graphics/charts	3	
Word processing/typing letters	4	
Spreadsheets	5	
Database	6	
Games	7	
Something else	8	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these	X	

Q18t Do you currently have a personal computer in your home?

Yes	1	(563)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q18t = Yes
THEN ASK: Q18bt

Q18bt And is that computer set-up to access the internet or to use E-mail?

Yes - Internet only	1	(564)
Yes - E-mail only	2	
Yes - both	3	
No	4	
Don't Know	Y	

Now I'd like to ask you about how you travelled to where the course took place. If the course was held at more than one location, please think about where the course was held most of the time.

Q19t On most occasions, how did you travel to where the course took place? Was it by....
READ OUT LIST. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

car	1	(565)
train	2	
bus	3	
taxi	4	
bicycle	5	
walked	6	
got there another way	7	
Don't Know	Y	

Q20 How convenient was the training location for you?

Very convenient	1	(566)
Fairly convenient	2	
Not very convenient	3	
Not at all convenient	4	
Don't Know	Y	

I'm now going to read out a few statements about the course. For each can you tell me how much you agree or disagree and whether that is strongly or slightly.

Q21t ...

Agree strongly	1	(567)
Agree slightly	2	
Neither agree nor disagree	3	
Disagree slightly	4	
Disagree strongly	5	
Don't Know	Y	

This question is repeated for the following loop values:
The course suited my needs, The course was too difficult for me, I spent too long doing things I wasn't interested in, I've made good use of the skills I learnt during the training

A total of 4 iterations occupying columns (567) to (570)

Q22t And thinking back on the course, please could you tell me in your own words how you think it could have been improved.

(571 - 574)

Don't Know	Y	(571)
None of these	X	

SECTION 3

I would now like to ask you about your current activities

Q23t Could I ask what you were doing last week? Please could you choose your main activity from this list I am going to read out.

READ OUT LIST. CODE ONE ONLY - PROBE FOR RESPODENTS MAIN ACTIVITY
DISREGARD ACTIVITIES LASTING LESS THAN A WEEK.

In full time paid work: 30 hours or more per week	1	(575)
In part time paid work: 16-29 hours or more per week	2	
In part time paid work: under 16 hours	3	
In full time education/training (including Online computer training)	4	
On a government scheme (e.g. New Deal/TEC/LEC)	5	
Unemployed and looking for work/waiting to take up a job	6	
Looking after children or the home	7	
Temporarily sick or injured - NO JOB TO RETURN TO	8	
Permanently sick or disabled	9	
Retired	0	(576)
Not working for other reason	1	

IF Q23t = Unemployed and looking for work/waiting to take up a job
THEN ASK: Q24t

Q24t Can I just ask for how long you have been unemployed/looking for work (on a continual basis)?
READ OUT
INTERVIEWER: CHECK THAT RESPONDENT IS CONTINUOUSLY UNEMPLOYED FOR PERIOD GIVEN

Less than 6 months	1	(577)
6 months to a year	2	
Over a year	3	
Don't Know	Y	

Q25t And thinking back to when you started the training course, which according to our records was &vcoum& 2000, can you tell me what your main activity was back then?

In full time paid work: 30 hours or more per week	1	(578)
In part time paid work: 16-29 hours or more per week	2	
In part time paid work: under 16 hours	3	
In full time education/training (including Online computer training)	4	
On a government scheme (e.g. New Deal/TEC/LEC)	5	
Unemployed and looking for work/waiting to take up a job	6	
Looking after children or the home	7	
Temporarily sick or injured - NO JOB TO RETURN TO	8	
Permanently sick or disabled	9	
Retired	0	(579)
Not working for other reason	1	
Don't Know	Y	(578)

IF (Q25t = Unemployed and looking for work/waiting to take up a job AND (NOT (Q23t = Unemployed and looking for work/waiting to take up a job)))
THEN ASK: Q27t

Q27t Can I just ask how long you were unemployed for at that time (on a continuous basis)?
READ OUT
INTERVIEWER: CHECK THAT RESPONDENT IS CONTINUOUSLY UNEMPLOYED FOR PERIOD GIVEN

Less than 6 months	1	(580)
6 months to a year	2	
Over a year	3	
Don't Know	Y	

Q26t Were you receiving any of these benefits when you started the training?
READ OUT LIST. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Income Support	1	(608)
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)	2	
Child benefit	3	
Family credit	4	
Working Families Tax Credit	5	
New Deal Allowance	6	
Retirement Pension	7	
Widows Benefit	8	
Statutory Maternity Pay	9	
Incapacity Benefit	0	(609)
Another State benefit	1	
Don't Know	Y	(608)
None of these	X	

SECTION 4

IF Q23t = In full time paid work: 30 hours or more per week OR Q23t = In part time paid work: 16-29 hours or more per week OR Q23t = In part time paid work: under 16 hours
THEN ASK: Q28t, Q29t

Now I'd like to ask you about the job you are currently working in.

Q28t Thinking back to when someone came round to your house in &vintm& to ask you about the course, did your current job start before or after that interview?

Current job started before the last interview	1	(610)
Current job started after last interview	2	
Current job started at about the same time as the last interview	3	
Don't Know	Y	

Q29t How long have you been in your current job?

Under 3 months	1	(611)
3-6 months	2	
6 months to a year	3	
A year to 2 years	4	
2-5 years	5	
Over 5 years	6	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q28t = Current job started after last interview
THEN ASK: Q30t, Q31t, Q32t, Q33t

Q30t What do the firm/organisation you work for mainly make or do (at the place where you work)?

DESCRIBE FULLY - PROBE MAUFACTURING or PROCESSING or DISTRIBUTING etc.
AND MAIN GOODS PRODUCED, MATERIALS USED, WHOLESALE or RETAIL etc.

(612 - 616)

Don't Know	Y	(612)

Q31t What is your job?

ENTER JOB TITLE

(617 - 621)

Don't Know	Y	(617)

Q32t What do you mainly do in your job?

(622 - 626)

Don't Know	Y	(622)

Q33t Can I check, are you working as an employee or are you self-employed?

Employee	1	(627)
Self-employed	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q33t = Employee
THEN ASK: Q34t, Q35t, Q38

Q34t Do you have any managerial duties, or do you supervise any other employees?

Manager	1	(628)
Foreman/supervisor	2	
Not manager/supervisor	3	
Don't Know	Y	

Q35t How many employees are there at the place where you work?

1-24	1	(629)
25 or more	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q38 Is this job.....
READ OUT LIST

a permanent one	1	(630)
a seasonal, temporary or casual one	2	
a job done under contract for a limited period	3	
or was it some other type of job that was not permanent	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q33t = Self-Employed
THEN ASK: q36t

q36t Are you working on your own or do you have employees?

Work alone/with partner(s) but have no employees	1	(631)
With employees	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF q36t = With employees
THEN ASK: Q37

Q37 How many employees are there at the place where you work?

1-24	1	(632)
25 or more	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q39t How many hours a week do you usually work excluding mealbreaks but including any paid overtime?

IF VARIES, AVERAGE IF POSSIBLE

(633 - 635)

Numeric Range _____		
Don't Know	Y	(633)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100 (Numeric Range)

IF Q33t = Employee
THEN ASK: Q40t

Q40t What is your usual take home pay, that is after all deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, but including overtime and any bonuses?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

RESPONDENT CAN GIVE AMOUNT PER WEEK, PER MONTH OR PER YEAR. IF PAY VARIES, GIVE AMOUNT FOR MOST RECENT PAY.

RECORD ANSWER IN POUNDS

IF RESPONDENT ONLY KNOW'S GROSS PAY, CODE DON'T KNOW

(636 - 641)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (636)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100000 (Numeric Range)

IF Q40t = Don't Know
THEN ASK: Q41t

Q41t Do you know what your gross pay before any deductions?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

ENTER GROSS PAY PER WEEK, MONTH, OR YEAR
RECORD ANSWER IN POUNDS

(642 - 647)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (642)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100000 (Numeric Range)

IF Q33t = Self-Employed
THEN ASK: Q42t

Q42t What do you estimate as your total income from your self-employed work, after taking away all expenses and taxes?

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

ENTER INCOME PER WEEK, MONTH OR YEAR. IF PAY VARIES, GIVE AMOUNT FOR MOST RECENT PAY.

(648 - 653)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (648)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100000 (Numeric Range)

IF NOT (Q41t = Don't Know OR Q42t = Don't Know)
THEN ASK: Q43t

Q43t And what period did that cover?

One week	1	(654)
Two weeks	2	
One calender month	3	
One year	4	
Other	5	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q43t = Other
THEN ASK: Q44t

Q44t How many weeks is that?

(655 - 656)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (655)

Permitted Range
1 TO 52 (Numeric Range)

Q45t Do you use a computer as part of your work?

Yes	1	(657)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q45t = Yes
THEN ASK: Q46t, Q47t

Q46t How often do you use a computer at your work?

every day	1	(658)
at least once a week	2	
once every 2-3 weeks	3	
once a month	4	
less often	5	
Don't Know	Y	

Q47t Do you use the computer for any of the following?
READ OUT LIST. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Email	1	(659)
Internet access	2	
Graphics/charts	3	
Word processing/typing letters	4	
Spreadsheets	5	
Database	6	
Games	7	
Something else	8	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these	X	

Q48t To what extent does this job make use of the skills you gained as part of your on-line computer training? Would you say it made use of them.....

READ OUT

to a great extent	1	(660)
to some extent	2	
not very much	3	
or not at all	4	
Don't Know	Y	

Q49t How important was the OnLine computer training to you in getting this job?

Very important	1	(661)
Fairly important	2	
Not very important	3	
Not at all important	4	
Don't Know	Y	

SECTION 5

IF NOT (Q23t = In full time paid work: 30 hours or more per week OR Q23t = In part time paid work: 16-29 hours or more per week OR Q23t = In part time paid work: under 16 hours OR Q25t = In full time paid work: 30 hours or more per week OR Q25t = In part time paid work: 16-29 hours or more per week OR Q25t = In part time paid work: under 16 hours)
THEN ASK: Q50t

Q50t Can I just ask if you have been working at all, either full or part time since the training started?

Yes	1	(662)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF ((Q50t = Yes OR Q25t = In full time paid work: 30 hours or more per week OR Q25t = In part time paid work: 16-29 hours or more per week OR Q25t = In part time paid work: under 16 hours) AND (NOT (Q23t = In full time paid work: 30 hours or more per week OR Q23t = In part time paid work: 16-29 hours or more per week OR Q23t = In part time paid work: under 16 hours)))
THEN ASK: Q51t

Q51t Now I'd like to ask you about the last job you were working in.
Thinking back to when someone came round to your home in &vintm& to ask you about the course, did your last job start before or after that interview?

Last job started before last interview	1	(663)
Last job started after last interview	2	
Last job started at about the same time as the last interview	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q51t = Last job started after last interview
THEN ASK: Q52t, Q53t, Q54t, Q55t

Q52t What did the firm/organisation you worked for mainly make or do (at the place where you worked)?
DESCRIBE FULLY - PROBE MANUFACTURING/PROCESSING/DISTRIBUTING ETC.
PROBE FOR MIAN GOODS PRODUCED, MATERIALS USED, WHOLESALE OR RETAIL ETC.

(664 - 667)

Don't Know	Y	(664)

Q53t What was your job?
ENTER JOBTITLE

(668 - 671)

Don't Know	Y	(668)

Q54t What did you mainly do in your job?

(672 - 675)

Don't Know	Y	(672)

Q55t Can I check, were you working as an employee or were you self-employed?

Employee	1	(676)
Self-employed	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q55t = Employee
THEN ASK: Q56t, Q57, Q60t, Q62t

Q56t Did you have any managerial duties, or were you supervising any other employees?

Manager	1	(677)
Foreman/supervisor	2	
Not manager/supervisor	3	
Don't Know	Y	

Q57 How many employees were there at the place where you worked?

1-24	1	(678)
25 or more	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q60t Was this job.....

a permanent one	1	(679)
a seasonal, temporary or casual one	2	
a job done under contract for a limited period	3	
or was it some other type of job that was not permanent	4	
Don't Know	Y	

Q62t What was your usual take home pay, that is, after all deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, but including overtime and any bonuses?
PROBE FOR ESTIMATE. ENTER AMOUNT IN POUNDS

(708 - 713)

Numeric Range _____		
Don't Know	Y	(708)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100000 (Numeric Range)

IF Q62t = Don't Know
THEN ASK: Q63t

Q63t Can you tell me what your gross pay was (before any deductions)?
PROBE FOR ESTIMATE. ENTER AMOUNT IN POUNDS.

(714 - 719)

Numeric Range _____		
Don't Know	Y	(714)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100000 (Numeric Range)

IF Q55t = Self-employed
THEN ASK: Q58t, Q64t

Q58t Were you working on your own or did you have employees?

on own/with partner(s) but had no employees	1	(720)
with employees	2	
Don't Know	Y	

Q64t What do you estimate your total income was from your self-employed work, after taking away all expenses and taxes?
PROBE FOR ESTIMATE. ENTER AMOUNT IN POUNDS.

(721 - 726)

Numeric Range _____		
Don't Know	Y	(721)

Permitted Range
1 TO 100000 (Numeric Range)

IF NOT (Q63t = Don't Know OR Q64t = Don't Know)
THEN ASK: Q65t

Q65t And what period did that cover?

One week	1	(727)
Two weeks	2	
One calendar month	3	
One year	4	
Other	5	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q65t = Other
THEN ASK: Q66t

Q66t How many weeks was that?

(728 - 729)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (728)

Permitted Range
1 TO 52 (Numeric Range)

Q61t How many hours a week did you usually work excluding mealbreaks but including any paid overtime?

(730 - 731)

Numeric Range _____
Don't Know Y (730)

Permitted Range
1 TO 50 (Numeric Range)

Q67t Did you use a computer as part of your job?

Yes	1	(732)
No	2	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q67t = Yes
THEN ASK: Q68t, Q69t

Q68t How often did you use a computer in your work?

every day	1	(733)
at least once a week	2	
once every 2-3 weeks	3	
once a month	4	
less often	5	
Don't Know	Y	

Q69t Did you use the computer for any of the following at work?
READ OUT LIST, CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Email	1	(734)
Internet access	2	
Graphics/charts	3	
Word processing/typing letters	4	
Spreadsheets	5	
Database	6	
Games	7	
Something else	8	
Don't Know	Y	
None of these	X	

IF (Q51t = Last job started before last interview OR Q51t = Last job started at about the same time as the last interview OR Q51t = Last job started after last interview OR Q51t = Don't Know)
THEN ASK: Q70t

Q70t How long were you in the job for?

under 3 months	1	(735)
3-6 months	2	
6 months to a year	3	
a year to 2 years	4	
2-5 years	5	
over 5 years	6	
still in job	7	
Don't Know	Y	

IF NOT (Q70t = still in job)
THEN ASK: Q71t

Q71t What was the main reason that job came to an end?

Temporary/seasonal/casual job came to an end	1	(736)
Fixed term contract came to an end	2	
Dismissed	3	
Made redundant/laid off	4	
Took voluntary redundancy	5	
Resigned/decided to leave	6	
Left to have a baby	7	
Gave up work for family or personal reasons	8	
Gave up work for health or disability reasons	9	
Took early retirement	0	(737)
The company went out of business	1	
Still in job	2	
Other reason	3	
Don't Know	Y	(736)

SECTION 6

IF NOT (Q23t = In full time paid work: 30 hours or more per week OR Q23t = In part time paid work: 16-29 hours or more per week OR Q23t = In part time paid work: under 16 hours OR Q23t = Permanently sick or disabled OR Q23t = Retired)
THEN ASK: Q72t

Q72t May I check, are you looking for work at present?

Yes	1	(738)
No	2	
Waiting to take up a job	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q72t = No
THEN ASK: Q73t

Q73t Even though you are not looking for work at the moment, would you like to have a paid job....

now	1	(739)
in the future	2	
or never	3	
Don't Know	Y	

IF NOT (Q73t = or never)
THEN ASK: Q74t

Q74t How important do you think the Online computer training will be to you in getting work, now or in the future?

Very important	1	(740)
Fairly important	2	
Not very important	3	
Not at all important	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF NOT (Q23t = Permanently sick or disabled OR Q23t = Retired)
THEN ASK: Q75t

Q75t To what extent do you think the training will improve your future job prospects?

A great deal	1	(741)
A fair amount	2	
Just a little	3	
Not at all	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF NOT (Q75t = Don't Know)
THEN ASK: Q76t

Q76t Why do you say that?

(742 - 745)

Don't Know	Y	(742)

Q77t Since you finished the OnLine computer training, have you been on any additional computer training? READ OUT, CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Yes - as part of a job/provided by an employer	1	(746)
Yes - organised by the Jobcentre/Employment service	2	
Yes - any other computer training	3	
No - None at all	4	
Don't Know	Y	

IF Q77t = Yes - as part of a job/provided by an employer OR Q77t = Yes - organised by the jobcentre/Employment service OR Q77t = Yes - any other computer training
THEN ASK: Q78

Q78 What did the training cover? Did it cover any of the following or was it on something else? READ OUT LIST. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Email	1	(747)
Internet access	2	
Graphics/charts	3	
Word processing/typing letters	4	
Spreadsheets	5	
Games	6	
Something specific to a job that I am in	7	
Don't Know	Y	
Other	0	

Other specify... (748 - 751)

Appendix 4 – Qualitative topic guides

1. FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to explore in depth the issues surrounding participation in the course and not to replicate the quantitative survey

AIMS

- To explore individual and community level factors that influence participants' attitudes to ICT per se and to learning about ICT
- To identify the barriers individuals face in relation to accessing new technologies
- To explore why people start, stay-on (or drop out) and finish the course
- To explore factors affecting post course destinations

1. INTRODUCTION

- About BMRB and ECOTEC
- About the research study and in depth interview
- Confidentiality and tape recording

2. BACKGROUND

Confirm basic background information

- Age
- Ethnicity

- Current activity (e.g. look after house and children, caring, stay at home for health reasons, looking for work, education or training,)
- Employment history

  ⇒ *Probe on what respondent was doing prior to course, types of work, sector, full time/part time, casual, short-term etc.*
- Description of the local area – where they live, what's it like are there lots of people out of work
- Where did you take the computer course

  ⇒ *Confirm course title (ECDL, Clait etc)*
- How long ago were you on the course
- How long did it last for

Perceptions of job availability in the area

- Is there any work available for you in your area

⇒ *What sort of work is it? Probe for full/part time, temp/casual, shift work*

- Would you like to do that? If not, why not?
- What sort of work would you like to do?
- What do you think is the future for work in this area? Do you know of any up and coming opportunities for employment?
- How do you rate your chances of finding work

3. BEFORE THE COURSE

Attitudes to learning

- What was the school like that you went to
- Was there a favourite subject
- Have you done any training since leaving school
- How were these courses funded
- What has been your experience of training since leaving school
- What types of training courses have you considered taking
- What do you like and dislike about the courses that you've been on
- Are the skills/qualifications you have relevant to the occupation you are looking for

Attitudes to technology

- What experience had you with computers before taking the course

⇒ *Probe on what use they made of computers in each setting*

⇒ *E.g. word processing, games, Internet, email etc*

  - ❖ At school
  - ❖ On training courses
  - ❖ At home
  - ❖ At work
  - ❖ Others e.g. libraries, friends houses

- Were there any particular reasons why you hadn't used computers before

⇒ *Probe on what it was that put them off*

⇒ *E.g. cost, could not see the use for them, confidence factors, access*

- What sort of advantages do you think there are to being able to use computers
- Why do you think it is important to know about computers?

Signing up for the course

- How did you first hear about the course?

⇒ *Probe on Jobcentre, national advertising campaign, local advertising campaign, word of mouth*

⇒ *Views on national campaign*

⇒ *Probe on TV, Radio, Newspaper, Jobcentre, Other media*

⇒ *Have they seen any local advertising*

⇒ *Probe on most effective way of targeting similar sorts of people who would be interested in this type of training course*

- What were your reasons for going on the course

⇒ *Probe on getting a job, passing the time, gaining confidence with computers*

⇒ *Had you already thought about going on a course and UK online reawakened the idea or were you inspired by it?*

- Did you discuss going on the course with anyone
- Did you have any reservations about going on the course

⇒ *Were there any difficulties in getting involved*

⇒ *Waiting time etc*

⇒ *Did you find it hard to take the first step*

- making a telephone call, calling in at the job centre
- wondering whether you were eligible or not

- Why did you choose this training provider

⇒ *Were you given a choice of where you could do your training*

- What did you think of the courses that were on offer
- What did you think was the purpose of the course
- Is this training / support available anywhere else (to the best of your knowledge)
- Why do they think this kind of course is being offered

⇒ *Who is it aimed at*

- How soon after enquiring about the course did you start the training

4. DURING THE COURSE

Taster courses

Explain what a taster course is

- Did you take a taster course
- Reactions to it
- Perceptions of usefulness of taster course

Assessment

- Did the course provider make any kind of assessment to see if you were suitable e.g. interview, test?
    - Probe on taster course
    - main course
- How did you find this?

First impressions

- How did you feel about joining the course

  ⇒ *first day impressions*

  ⇒ *what kind of concerns did they have*

- Tell me a bit about the course that you were on

  ⇒ *Talk me through the course you did*

- What qualification(s) did they have on offer

  ⇒ *What did you take*

- Was this the sort of computer course that you expected

  ⇒ *Probe length, pace, level of difficulty, timing of the course, tutor interaction*

- What type of people attended the course

  ⇒ *Did this meet with your expectations*

  ⇒ *How did this mix of people work*

- Did you know it was a 'UK online' course

Facilities

- What did you think of the place where the course was held

- What did you think of the computer facilities that were available

  ⇒ *Probe on quality, appropriateness for the training*

Course delivery

- Was the way the course was run similar to other courses you have been on
- Explore whether balance of amount of time spent working on computers and listening to the tutor met expectations –Views about
- What kind of materials did you have
- Did you receive any guidance notes specific for that course
- How did you find working with the computer
- Did you find it easy enough to grasp some of the technology
- Has it involved any teaching methods, techniques, materials that you have not experienced before / heard about before
    - Views about
- How did you find the tutor; views about quality of delivery, consistency, relevance
- How did the group work
    - did they work together?
    - Is group interaction helpful or did the lack of it make the course difficult
- Was there any support on offer to help people with other problems, e.g. childcare, coping with problems at home

⇒ *Usefulness - Did it meet your needs*

- Did you have any other difficulties with the training course
- Did you have a choice about what areas you would cover during the training
- If any difficulties did the trainer adapt the course to your needs
- What sort of feedback did you get on your work
- Did you think this was a good way of getting feedback (probe confidence levels)
- Did you feel encouraged to keep on the course

- Did you have access to facilities/computers outside sessions

  ⇒ *Probe on quality, appropriateness for the training*

  ⇒ *Probe whether useful, what they did with it, confidence on working alone with the computer*

  ⇒ *How flexible did you find the attendance hours*

Attendance

- Did you have any problems getting to the course

  ⇒ *Probe on Money, transport, illness*

- Did you miss any sessions -Reasons

  ⇒ *Were you able to catch up/given extra time*

  ⇒ *Did this cause any problems*

- How frequent were your sessions

Did you finish the course

For those who didn't finish the course

- Perceived reasons

  ⇒ *Probe on whether too hard, not relevant, not enough time, problems with childcare*

- What should have been different for them to have finished the course

- Would they go back and do another computer course

5. AFTER THE COURSE

Meeting Expectations

Overall describe how you think it went

⇒ *Probe what expectations were (New skills, confidence, using new technology)*

⇒ *Probe on were expectations met.*

- Do you think it has improved your job prospects
- Views about the level of course
  - Was the course 'pitched' at the right level
- Any back up/on going support from the course organisers
- What do you think you can do now that you couldn't do before

  ⇒ Probe on accessing the Internet, sending emails, using software packages
- Do you need any further training on computers
  - What sorts of things
- Why do you think it is important to know about computers now
- What would you have done if you had not been offered the UK online course (have tried to find another IT course?)
- Would you recommend this course; reasons

6. THE FUTURE

Job opportunities

- What are you doing at the moment
- Have you had a job since finishing the course

  ⇒ *Probe on type of job, quality of job, full or part time*

For those not working

- Do you now feel more or less positive about finding work after the course

  ⇒ Probe on reasons

- Do you think that the course will help you get employment

  ⇒ Probe on reasons

- Would you like to have a job that uses computer skills
- Has the course equipped you for this

For those in new employment

- Do you think what you learnt on the course directly helped you get your new job;

  ⇒ Probe on reasons

- Does your new job involve computers
- What are you doing with computers
- Would you like to have a job that uses computer skills; reasons

Training opportunities

- Would you like to keep up your computer skills

  ⇒ Probe on reasons

- What do you think would be the best way of keeping up the skills
- What are the barriers to keeping them up
- Are you aware of places around where you can use a computer
- Would you go on and do another course; reasons

- What type of training do you think you would now consider
- Has the way in which this course was delivered altered the type of training provider you would look for in the future
- Would you be happy to use computers to learn about other subjects
- Do you know where you would go to get more training
- What barriers, if any do you have to taking up another course

THANK AND CLOSE

2. FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS WITH TRAINING MANAGERS/TRAINERS

Aims:

- To explore the effectiveness of providing basic ICT training to benefit claimants who are information poor
- To explore the extent to which providing training helps claimants to come off benefit
- To explore the issue that the client group might pose for the training process and trainer
- To explore methods of training, types of courses, and good practice

1. INTRODUCTION

- About BMRB and ECOTEC
- About the research study: to explore their views and experiences of UK online Computer Training
- Confidentiality and tape recording

2. BACKGROUND

- Description of local area
  - Job access issues
  - What was the existing ICT provision in the area
    - Type of providers

- Type of people taking courses

Managers only:

- Description of trainers (briefly)
  - Previous work experience
  - Length of time teaching
  - Subject taught

Trainers only:

- Trainer's role
  - Subjects taught
  - Length of time teaching
  - Types of students
  - Previous work

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3. **COURSE SET-UP**

<u>Ask managers and trainers</u> – trainers may be less able to volunteer information, depending on their involvement in setting up the courses. Probe accordingly:

- How did they first hear about UK online training
- When did they first hear about UK online training
- The decision to join the initiative
  - Who made the decision, reasons
  - When was this made
  - The bid process

  - Funding issues
  - Other intermediaries e.g. TEC, Government Offices
- Expectations at the time
  - What type of participants did they feel would go on the course
  - How did this fit in with existing training provision in the area
  - How did this fit in with what the provider was already doing
- Setting it up: Probe on
  - Offering qualifications
  - Timetable: Length of time to set up
  - Full versus part time
  - Length of course
  - Making the decision on content
  - Methods of delivery
  - Liaison with
    * Government Offices
    * TEC
    * Other parties
- Meeting the specifications
  - Purchase of technology, facilities
  - Did they go beyond the specification
  - Setting up course materials
    * Probe on particular problems, difficulties

- Awareness of whether there is an Equal Opportunities Policy in place

Trainers only:

- How did trainers initially feel about dealing with this particular client group
  - Any previous experience
  - Initial thoughts and expectations

Managers only:

- Reactions from trainers about dealing with this particular client group
  - Initial concerns and queries raised by the trainers

All:

- Views about taster courses
  - Did they set one up
  - Are they useful

4. ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

- Views about national campaign
  - Timing and format
  - Probe on
    * Television
    * radio
    * newspaper (national and regional)
    * Jobcentre
    * Other media

- views about what was most effective for targeting participants, and why

- Do participants know they are on a UK online Training course

- Undertaking local campaigns
  - Whether advertised to the whole community or targeted at specific groups

5. UNDERTAKING THE TRAINING

<u>Ask trainers and manager</u> – this section is most relevant to trainers:

- How did they get participants on the course
  - how did participants find out about course
- Effectiveness of sources of referral
    * Probe on different types
    * Views about referral process
- Types of people taking the course
  - Number of participants
    * Age, sex, ethnicity
    * Any with special educational needs
    * Any with specific practical needs regarding access, travels
  - Quality of participants
    * Probe on participant background
  - Did they meet their expectations of the type of people taking the courses
  - Participants' previous knowledge of IT
  - Perceived motivations for taking the course

- Methods of assessment
  - How were needs assessed
    - By whom & timing
  - What factors were taken into account
  - Action plans
    - undertaken by whom
    - How Action plans were used
- Problems encountered
  - Technology problems
  - Participants
    - Facilities
    - Relevance of the course content
    - Between clients
  - Attendance
- Any participants drop out of courses;
  - perceived reasons
- Dealing with client group
  - Are there differences dealing with client group and other students/trainees
  - Explore positive and negative aspects
  - Are there differences between the various types of people taking the UK online course
    - e.g. older, younger

        - male, female
        - levels of commitment, drop out rates, problems with funding
    - has the client group changed over time
- Type of teaching
    - numbers in class
    - tutor to pupil ratio
    - technological and administrative support
    - types of support used
    - methods of delivery
- Whether clients' travel expenses for attending the course are paid
- Have there been changes to the training as the course has been carried out
- Did participants have 'an image of learning'

Managers only:

- Clerical Issues
    - Views about providing information and monitoring to DfEE
    - Ease of providing information
    - Issuing training plans
    - Recording attendance
    - Any other administrative issues

6. COMPLETION OF THE COURSE

- Perceived role of course

- Role of qualification
- Expectation of outcomes
  - will they be monitoring the outcomes
- Effectiveness of course
  - is there a need for further training
- Differences between types of participants
- Perceived barriers to completion
  - probe on course content
  - monetary factors
  - at what points in the process do these occur
    * Beginning of course, end of course

7. THE FUTURE

- How do they see the course changing
  - Type of people
  - Course content
- Views about the initiative in future
- Any suggestions or changes for way in which the initiative is run
- What advice would offer to anyone else setting up course
  - What are the lessons learned
  - What is best practice

THANK AND CLOSE

3. FOLLOW-UP TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH TRAINING MANAGERS/TRAINERS

Aims:

- To explore the effectiveness of providing basic ICT training to benefit claimants who are information poor
- To explore the extent to which providing training helps claimants to come off benefit
- To explore the issue that the client group might pose for the training process and trainer
- To explore methods of training, types of courses, and good practice

1. INTRODUCTION

- About BMRB and ECOTEC
- About the research study: to explore their views and experiences of UK online Computer Training
- What this stage of research is about – to see if anything has changed since set-up and to reflect some of the findings from the participants
- Confidentiality and tape recording

2. CHANGES (UNPROMPTED)

- Unprompted changes since last time interviewed in terms of:
  - Courses taught by trainers (i.e. for participants)
  - existing ICT provision in the area

        - Type of providers
        - Type of people taking courses
    - Numbers of students taking UK online
    - Types of students taking UK online in terms of age, sex, status (unemployed, retired, etc)
    - Qualifications offered
    - Course content/structure offered
    - Method of delivery
    - Hours of course
    - Views of participants
    - Any unexpected changes

3. **ADVERTISING AND MARKETING**

- Views about national campaign since last time interviewed
    - Timing and format
    - Probe on
        - Television
        - radio
        - newspaper (national and regional)
        - Jobcentre
        - Other media
- Views about what was most effective for targeting participants, and why
    - how did participants find out about course

- Effectiveness of sources of referral
    - * Probe on different types
    - * Views about referral process
- Undertaking local campaigns
    - Have they undertaken any further campaigns
    - Did these campaigns change at all
    - Did they target different types of people
    - Whether advertised to the whole community or targeted at specific groups
    - importance of local newspapers
    - messages stated by training
    - importance of other media, such as local radio, posters, advertising in libraries, community centres.

4. **UNDERTAKING THE TRAINING**

- Views about taster courses
    - What did participants get out of them
    - did it encourage take up of the course
    - did they change the taster course at all
    - Any drop out after tasters; reasons
- Any further liaison with
    - Government Offices
    - TEC; Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
        - * funding arrangements

  - Reasons for further liaison with Government Offices/ TECs
  - Other liaison (e.g. Local Authority, LEA??, DTI??)

- Types of people taking the course
  - Number of participants
    * Age, sex, ethnicity
    * Did participants come on their own or with someone they knew
    * Any with special educational needs
    * Any with specific practical needs regarding access, travels
    * How did this change over time
    * Did participants have different levels of IT skills
    * How was this coped with
    * Were courses adapted to meet different types of participants
  - Quality of participants
    * Probe on participant background
  - Participants' previous knowledge of IT
  - Changes in motivations for taking the course

- Methods of assessment
  - How were needs assessed
    * By whom & timing
    * What did this take into account; previous IT experience; basic skills
  - Some participants felt that their needs were not assessed – comments
  - What was the outcome of the assessments

        - Did it result in a training plan/a course being chosen/something else

    - Were Action Plans used

- **Any Problems encountered**

    - Technology problems faced by participants; how were these resolved

    - Technology problems faced by providers; how were these resolved

    - Disability-related problems (e.g. people with poor eyesight having difficulty reading computer screens)

    - Facilities

    - Relevance of the course content to participants

    - Relevance of the course content to employers /to potential jobs

    - Between participants

- **Attendance**
    - Any participants drop out of courses;

    - perceived reasons

- **Perceived barriers to completion**

    - probe on course content

        - difficulties keeping up with course/course too basic

    - monetary factors

    - lack of time/ course being run at inconvenient times

    - underlying factors (e.g. family commitments)

    - at what points in the process do these occur

    - how did this change over time

- **Dealing with client group**
  - has the client group changed over time
  - how did the groups interact with each other
- **Type of teaching**
  - numbers in class change
  - tutor to pupil ratio change
  - technological and administrative support
  - types of support used
  - methods of delivery change
  - did the course content change
    * reasons,
    * how did they decide what to change it too
    * has this been successful
  - were handouts provided

Managers only:

- Clerical Issues
  - Views about providing information and monitoring to DfEE
  - Any other administrative issues
  - Did this change over time; how did this change

5. COMPLETION OF THE COURSE

- Perceived role of course – unprompted
  - Prompt on in terms of improving participants' ICT skills
  - Prompt on their employability/ chances of getting a job
  - has this changed over time
- Perceived role of qualification for participant
- Did they allow participants to carry on using the computers after completion of the course
- Expectation of outcomes
  - Have they monitored the outcomes
    - How have they done this
    - Did they talk to participants about any further training
    - is there a need for further training
    - did participants move onto other ICT courses
  - What have they found
    - Did this lead them to change anything about the course
  - Effectiveness of course

6. THE FUTURE

- How do they see the course changing
  - Type of people
  - Course content

- Views about the initiative in future
- Any further suggestions or changes for way in which the initiative is run
- What advice would offer to anyone else running the courses
  - What have been the key lessons they have learned running the UK online courses
  - What is best practice in terms of running the courses

THANK AND CLOSE