

Online basics pilot: evaluation summary

Online basics was developed in response to the Independent review of ICT user qualifications, conducted in 2009 by Baroness Estelle Morris. This review identified the need for a programme that would provide support for the 10 million adults¹ in the UK who remain offline, to develop their skills and confidence to take their first steps online.

The Online basics pilot scheme ran in 5 areas of England during the period January to March 2010 with over 3800 adults registering to use Online basics.

This report details the findings of the research evaluation of the pilot scheme led by Becta and conducted by IFF Research, which ran from January to March 2010.

The Programme:

Online Basics is an online learning programme designed to help adults who do not have basic digital skills to acquire the skills they need to take their first steps online. The programme was developed by UK online centres with support from BIS and Becta, to form part of the **myguide** service. It consists of five online learning modules covering the basics of getting online – using a mouse and keyboard, e-mailing, internet search and keeping safe online.

The Evaluation methodology:

The research evaluation involved the analysis of data and management information supplied by UK online, a survey of over 200 Online basics learners and qualitative telephone interviews with 21 project leaders.

Main findings:

Learners had generally seen considerable improvements in both their skills and confidence in using computers and the internet as a result of taking part in the programme - *92% of those interviewed in the exit survey saying their experience was positive, 97% reported that they were glad to have done the course.*

A high proportion of learners felt likely to undertake further learning or training in future, with a few having already done so – *over 50% had gone onto further myguide courses, 59% were trying to improve their skills without taking part in a formal, taught course whilst 37% had already gone on to a taught course at a college or private training provider. 86% of learners interviewed felt that they were very or fairly likely to undertake further learning in the next two years.*

Most learners had already been putting the skills acquired in Online basics to use – *89% had already used the skills they learnt, 29% had already passed on skills that they learnt through the Online basics course to others.*

Unemployed learners showed promising signs of using their new skills to help them find work - *25% had applied for jobs since taking the course, and almost one in five, 19% of respondents, had already applied for jobs online.*

Learners and centres were positive about the appearance and design on the course, remarking that it was 'professional' and 'well set out – 74% felt the appearance and design of the courses was good, 82% felt the language and tone used in the courses were appropriate.

Although centres reported some technical difficulties with the courses during the pilot this did not have a negative impact on learner satisfaction. Centres were positive about the support they received from UK online during the pilot.

To find out more about Online basics go to www.onlinebasics.co.uk

ⁱ Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2009) Statistical Bulletin 'Internet Access Households and Individuals' <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/iahi0809.pdf>