

pass IT on

giving donated computers to people with disabilities



Annual Review 2008

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What is Pass IT On?

Pass IT On is a charity which collects donated computer equipment, adapts it and gives it to people with disabilities who live within the EH (Edinburgh) post code area.

Pass IT On will consider working with any client, regardless of their age or what they want to use their computer for. The only requirement is that they have a disability which makes it difficult for them to access public domain IT, for example in public libraries.

Pass IT On therefore not only works with people who have physical disabilities, but also those with learning difficulties (including severe dyslexia), acquired head injuries and some mental health problems.

Pass IT On's Aims

- ◉ To enable people with a wide range of disabilities in all age groups to access Information Technology in an appropriate way.
- ◉ To re-use the (currently much wasted) resource of used IT equipment.
- ◉ To provide work placement opportunities for people with disabilities.

Providing Computer Access for People with Disabilities

Research shows that people with disabilities are often excluded from the benefits of computer access. They cannot always afford to buy their own equipment and often find it difficult to access public facilities. Yet, computers can bring great benefits to people with disabilities, in terms of allowing them to access information and services from their own homes and reducing isolation.

Pass IT On provided 23 people with their own computers in 2008 and supported many more. Here's an example of the help we have given.

Case Study - "A"

"A" and her 9 year old son "U" both registered as clients with Pass IT On. A has a severe visual impairment and U has global development delay and is being assessed for autism.

The degree of A's visual impairment means that even when we set up our assessment laptop with extremely large text (eg font-size 250pt) and high contrast display settings she could only read what was on the screen when her eye was as little as 1 inch from the monitor. She was delighted even to be able to do that, however we wanted to find a better solution for her. A wanted to send e-mails, write letters and progress reports for her son, scan and read letters (eg from her son's school), and

ideally access the internet. We introduced her to *Guide*, a package from Software Express. In comparison to other software for visually impaired and blind computer users (which is undoubtedly more powerful), *Guide* is incredibly intuitive to use, and is relatively cheap. It's so easy to learn that by the time we got back to our workshop from A's house, having installed a 30-day evaluation copy of *Guide* for her to experiment with, there was an e-mail waiting for us from her! It also allows A to do all the things she originally wanted to with her computer, and many more *Guide* can be customised to suit the individual and includes all of the features required by most users in an accessible format.



A loves using *Guide* and regularly recommends it to other visually impaired people.

"It has opened my eyes so I can communicate with the outside world, using the internet. I can write letters to the school – basically it means I can communicate independently."

Case Study - "U"

U has complex needs, a short attention span and great enthusiasm. He enjoys using a computer at school but his learning disabilities mean that he can easily alter important settings on the computer without realising and finds it difficult to wait for programs to load. He wanted to play games, develop his reading skills and access the

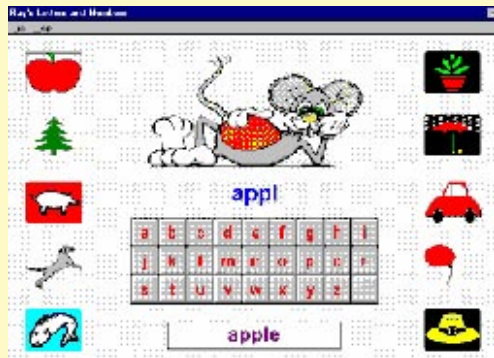
internet (especially CBeebies). We found a wide range of freeware educational games for U, including:

Tux-Type: a typing tutor.

Bingo Games: a series of educational games played on a bingo board. For every correct answer, a smiley face is inserted at a random point on the bingo board. The game is won by completing a line or a full house. The games include addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, shape recognition and more.

Ray's Letters and Numbers: which helps with learning the alphabet, numbers, counting, simple spelling, keyboard skills and much more.

We also installed *WinGuard Pro*, a freeware program which protects vital system files and settings with a password.



A said about U's computer:

"It's changed his life – he's learned how to play games and he listens to music on the computer (though he does keep banging the keyboard and the mouse!). It's very difficult for him to learn to read and write, but he's brilliant on the computer – he can use websites and find music he wants to listen to by himself because he's motivated. Before I had to assist with everything – now he's doing it by himself."

The Assessment Process

Registration

Anyone can register a potential client - including the client themselves. Registrations generally come from family members, social work or health professionals. Pass IT On will ask for a health professional to confirm the client's eligibility.

Further Information

Clients are assessed on a first-come, first-served basis, except in cases of terminal illness. When a client approaches the top of the waiting list Pass IT On will seek further information about computer experience and any possible access issues.

Assessment

An assessment visit, based on information received, usually lasts one to two hours and provides an opportunity to discuss the client's hopes and expectations, consider access issues and try alternatives to the standard keyboard and mouse.

Assessment Report

Clients should receive a written report summarising agreed goals within two weeks. This will list hardware and software that Pass IT On can provide free and any additional adaptive technology that may be recommended. Where cost is an issue, clients may be able to apply to Pass IT On's Adaptation Fund.

Preparation and Delivery of Computer System

Once the client has agreed the report, computer equipment will be set up and customised software installed for the client. When this is ready it will be set up in the client's home and they will be shown how to use it and given additional information.

Follow up

Each client is offered a follow-up visit to iron out any teething problems. Further training and support can be provided through partnerships with U Can Do IT and IT Can Help.

Work Experience Placements

Through links with Jewel and Esk Valley College, Moving Into Work and the Job Club, Pass IT On provided sheltered work experience placements for four people during 2008.

Opportunities for Volunteers

Pass IT On also provides a wide range of opportunities for volunteers, who come to us through 'word of mouth', or through various volunteer recruitment activities in which Pass IT On takes part.

During 2008, 41 volunteers gave a total of 2,308 hours of their time to help Pass IT On. Volunteers took part in a wide range of activities during 2008, including preparation of machines for clients; office administration; fundraising; collection of donated equipment. Pass IT On organised occasional activities during the year to provide volunteers with an opportunity to meet as a group.

Four volunteers in the 16-25 age group gained Gold Awards in the Millennium Volunteer Awards scheme in association with the Volunteer Centre, Edinburgh. They were presented with their awards at the Scottish Parliament in April 2008.



Working in Partnership

Although Pass IT On provides a unique service it does not work in isolation of other organisations. Partnerships have been developed and enhanced with organisations in the re-cycling and assistive technology fields.

We are continuing to work with the Edinburgh Furniture Initiative, The City of Edinburgh Council and Reusing IT (formerly Computers for Africa) to improve the recycling of computer equipment in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

During previous years a model was developed in which Pass IT On provided a client with a customised computer system and initial support. Training to enhance the use of the computer was delivered by U Can Do IT and long-term technical support was obtained through IT Can Help. Joint publicity material was produced to explain the system to clients.

During the course of 2008 the partnership with U Can Do IT was enhanced to provide an improved service for clients. Pass IT On was commissioned to provide training and support for U Can Do IT clients, many of whom were ex-clients of Pass IT On. For clients, this provided the advantage of continuity of service and confidence in the trainers, who were familiar with their equipment: for Pass IT On there was the benefit of much-needed funding at a time of financial difficulty.

Fundraising Activities

Pass IT On receives no core funding for its work, relying on grants, fundraising by volunteers, payment for services and income from the sale of surplus refurbished equipment.

Grants

In 2008 Pass IT On received £5,000 from the Artemis Trust. Further money may be available from the same source provided that matched funding can be secured.

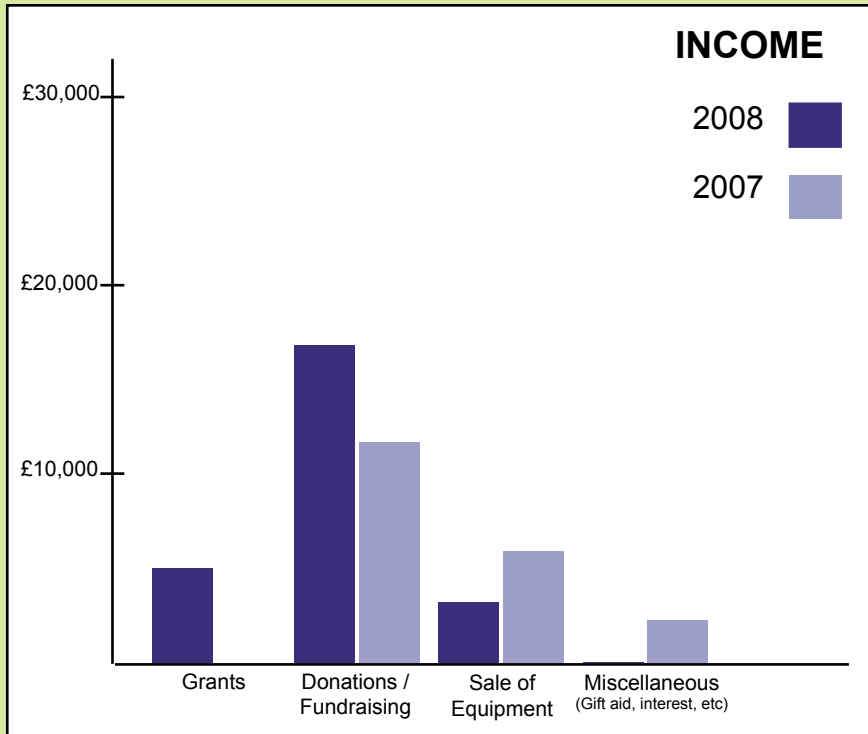
Donations, Fundraising and Payment for Services

- The steady income through the training and support provided for U Can Do IT has proved to be a lifeline for Pass IT On during the course of 2008.
- Twelve volunteers acted as Marshalls for the Scottish Community Foundation's Caledonian Challenge in June 2008, raising £1,800 for Pass IT On. Volunteers from Pass IT On have been helping at this event for a number of years and their work is appreciated by the organisers.
- Individuals made personal donations to Pass IT On at crucial times during 2008.

Sales of Refurbished Computer Equipment

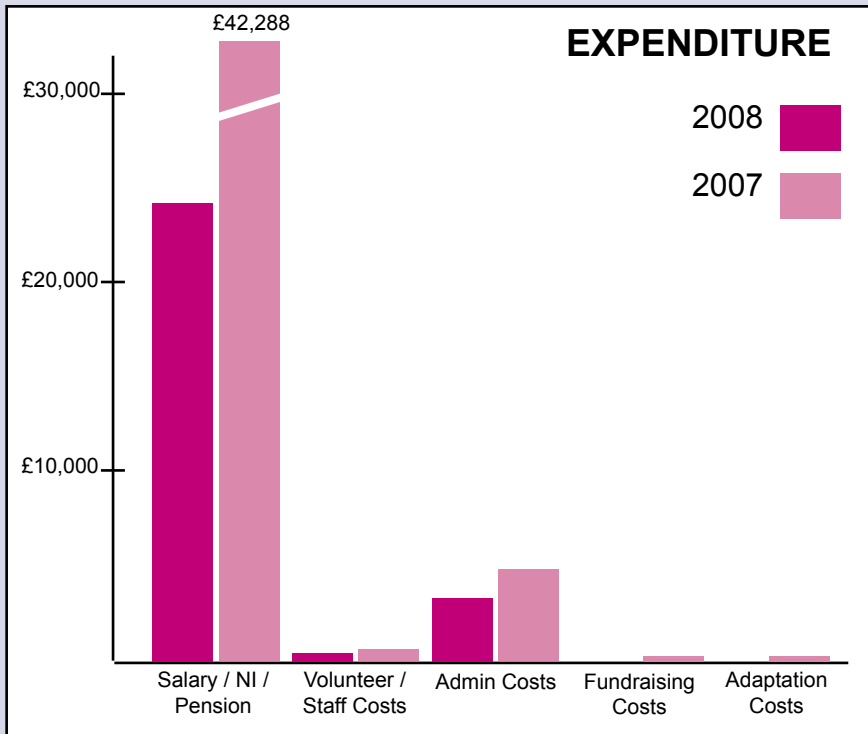
2008 was not a particularly good year for the sale of refurbished equipment, with the continuing drop in the price of new computers making it difficult to sell refurbished equipment. The Pass IT On office is not well located for sales. We have investigated the possibility of having shop premises, but it is not a practical option.

Financial Review of 2008



Income

Net income in 2008 amounted to £25,037, of which £5,000 came from the Artemis Trust, £16,773 from donations, fundraising and the sale of services and £3,221 from the sale of surplus equipment. Grant income and income from donations, fundraising and services have increased significantly, but income from equipment sales has dropped.



Expenditure

Total expenditure amounted to £28,171, the largest part (£24,245) being made up of salary costs. This was significantly less than in 2007 due to a reduction in staff from 2 to 1 in 2007.

We reduced expenditure in all areas compared with 2007.

Reserves Policy

Our formal policy is that a minimum of three months average unrestricted expenditure should be held in the general reserve fund. At the end of the year there was a deficit of £535. This was an unsatisfactory situation, but we were able to continue operating as we were confident that additional funds would be forthcoming at the beginning of 2008, which proved to be the case.

Chairman's Report

2008 was another difficult year for Pass IT On, but it may be that we have 'turned the corner' and can look ahead to better times in 2009.

We were successful with a grant application to the Artemis Trust and there is every prospect of further money coming from this source in 2009, provided that we can secure matched funding. Our partnership with U Can Do IT has secured a steady monthly income and has benefited Pass IT On clients as they can now receive basic computing tuition on a one to one basis from a person who is familiar with their equipment and support needs. We hope to develop further partnerships with local organisations in 2009.

Work with U Can Do IT has inevitably reduced the time that can be spent working with Pass IT On clients. Nevertheless, we are pleased that xx disabled clients have had their lives enhanced through access to a computer in their own home over the past year. We are grateful for the patience and understanding shown by clients who have had to wait longer than we would like to get an adapted, accessible computer.

I would like to thank Pass IT On's founders, Sandy Kerr and Martha Lester-Cribb, for their hard work over the year. Sandy has coped well with the stresses arising from financial uncertainty and working by himself. Martha, though now employed elsewhere has regularly given at least two days a week volunteering for Pass IT On.

I must also thank the many volunteers who regularly give up their time to help Pass IT On, and my fellow-Trustees and colleagues on the Management Committee who have also made an important contribution to the organisation.

Allan Wilson
Chair, Trustees

Trustees and Management

Trustees

Pass IT On's Trustees have overall legal responsibility for the charity and govern the strategic management of the organisation. We are sorry that Steve Catterson had to resign due to other commitments. We wish him well and hope to find an additional trustee in the near future.

- Allan Wilson (Chairman)
- John Brereton
- Steve Catterson (until May 2008)
- Simon McLaren

Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation and includes client, volunteer, trustee and staff representatives.

- Sandy Kerr
- Martha Lester-Cribb
- Allan Wilson
- Kirsten Corrie
- Robbie Grigor





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