

THE
Action
GROUP



THE
CONNECTIONS
PROJECT

The Connections Project





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Making technology work for everyone

Our Goal

Our project's goal was simple yet important: to **combat isolation by fostering digital connections.**

It is crucial to note that one in four people with a disability experience loneliness daily. However, the internet is proving to be a lifeline, with half of registered disability users reporting that it helps alleviate their loneliness.

[LB Consumer Digital Index 2018 Report](#)



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Introduction

Over the past year, the Connections Project has been dedicated to helping **93 individuals build their digital skills**, with remarkable outcomes in enhancing their ability to connect with others. The project's core focus was to enable these individuals to develop and maintain relationships even when physical interaction was not an option.

This report reflects on the impact of the project, highlighting not only the expansion of digital skills but also unexpected benefits and emergent behaviours observed among the people we supported.





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Services Offered

- ✓ Regular drop-in sessions
- ✓ Digital skills courses
- ✓ Self-directed training



- ✓ Fun social events
- ✓ Device library
- ✓ Home visits

The primary objective of the Connections Project was to empower individuals by equipping them with essential digital skills.

Through a combination of regular drop-in sessions 11am - 4pm (*Monday at our Granton Hub & Tuesday Leith Hub*), home visits, digital skills courses, and self-directed training, we saw a significant transformation in how people connect and engage.



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Milestones



Digital Skills Course: As part of the Connections Project, we offered free digital skills training to the people we support and staff to help overcome the digital divide together.

Courses were structured in accordance with the **SCVO framework** on digital skills.

[GOV.UK - Digital skills Framework](https://www.gov.uk/digital-skills-framework)



Our Digital Village Day: was a tech-filled extravaganza! We provided hands-on experiences with an array of gadgets, from **VRS** to **Rainbow Tables**, **Nintendos**, **Echo Show 10**, **Dolphin Supernova Desktop PC**, and **Synapptic A8 Tablet**. Plus, an exciting session with a Talking Mats staff member who introduced us to their innovative **Digital Talking Mat Service**. It was a day of discovery, learning, and fun!





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Rainbow Tables

The Rainbow Tables, with their 40-point multitouch capability, have proven invaluable for training sessions and presentations. Beyond the project's end, we continue to utilise them to create engaging and interactive learning experiences. Their durability, inclusivity, and impact make them a vital asset in our ongoing efforts to empower individuals through technology.



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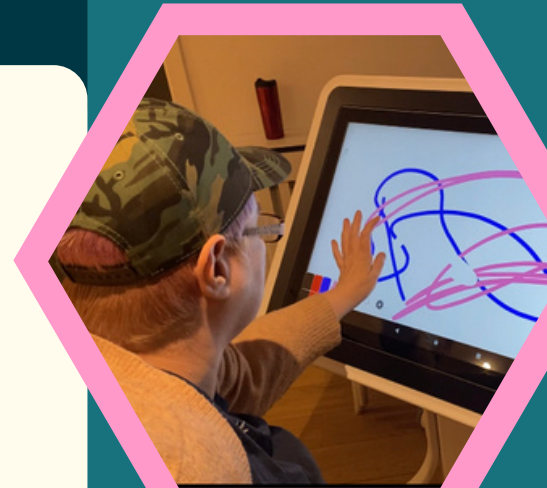
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Our Findings

It can be a challenging task to introduce technology to those who fear it or to encourage participation among people who are disinterested.

Many times we engaged a person we support who already had an established set of assistive tools, and they were unaware of improvements to the tech that have emerged since. We found that engaging these people in small ways and building up from there to more complex interactions, was a productive approach.

Gamification of activities has been another extremely useful method of encouraging the people we support to participate, by leveraging their competitive streak.





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Results

1

Impact on Relationships:

The people we support through the Project were able to create and sustain relationships despite physical barriers. They used digital platforms for communication, helping them feel less isolated and more connected to their communities. This has resulted in a more informed, connected, and engaged community.





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Results

2

Virtual Reality Inclusion:

The project also ventured into the realm of virtual reality (VR). Individuals with physical disabilities or limitations were given the opportunity to experience VR through devices like the Meta Quest. This technology allowed them to simulate experiences such as riding a roller coaster or exploring underwater environments, breaking down barriers and creating joyous moments for those who may not have had such opportunities otherwise. This aspect of the project stands as a testament to its commitment to inclusivity and the power of technology to provide unique and uplifting experiences.





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Results

3

Unforeseen Benefits:

Beyond improved digital skills, noticed numerous unexpected benefits. For instance, one participant's dedication to typing practice led to improved upper-body strength and hand-eye coordination, enabling them to take medication independently and operate a powered wheelchair.

Many participants discovered previously undiscovered skills and interests.





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Conclusion

The Connections Project successfully empowered 93 individuals to forge and maintain connections, even in challenging circumstances. Beyond improved digital literacy, the project has given rise to unforeseen personal developments and inclusive experiences through virtual reality. It has demonstrated the immense potential of **digital skills in fostering inclusivity, breaking down barriers**, and enriching the lives of those we support. As we reflect on the past year, we are inspired by the transformations we witnessed and look forward to furthering our mission of connecting people through





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The support provided by the Big Lottery Fund has played a crucial role in helping our project connect people and create a more accessible digital world, especially during the challenging post-pandemic period. Grants and funding like this can make a significant difference in bringing innovative ideas to life and addressing the needs of communities. It has been rewarding to see the positive impact our project has had on people, fostering connections and enhancing accessibility for all.



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