

AOL UK and Citizens Online invite charities and community groups to apply for internet awards

Submitted by: AOL UK
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AOL Innovation (<http://www.aol.co.uk/innovation>) in the Community Awards 2006 to reward innovative online projects

Charities and community groups across the UK could turn their internet dreams into reality through the fourth annual AOL Innovation in the Community Awards, which launched today.

The awards scheme, run by AOL UK (<http://www.aol.co.uk/>) and the national charity Citizens Online (<http://www.citizensonline.org.uk>), offers 30 award packages of £2,000 plus one year's complimentary broadband in support of innovative internet projects in the voluntary sector. Full details can be found at www.aol.co.uk/innovation

Since the awards scheme began in 2003, AOL UK (<http://www.aol.co.uk/innovation>) and Citizens Online have supported 90 initiatives across the nation, from a broadband magic carpet for pre-school children in Liverpool to an online recycling programme in East London; a Web-based art exhibition by homeless young people in Glasgow to a mobile internet unit at a Scarborough hospice.

Karen Thomson, Chairman and Chief Executive of AOL UK, said: "Many charities and community groups are highly enthusiastic about the opportunities the internet offers to connect, support and inspire people but don't have the resources to make the most of it. These awards will help 30 of them to take an innovative idea and make it happen."

John Fisher, Chief Executive of Citizens Online (<http://www.citizensonline.org.uk>), added: "Many people can find the internet daunting but by developing inventive and original ways to use digital technologies, community organisations can encourage new users. This scheme provides funding to ensure these new projects are delivered to the people who stand to gain most from discovering the online world."

Representatives of organisations interested in applying for an AOL Innovation in the Community Award can find full details of the scheme and download an application form at www.aol.co.uk/innovation. Alternatively, they can request an application pack by emailing ukinnovation@aol.com or calling the awards hotline on 020 7348 8390.

The closing date for the applications is 10 May 2006 and a judging panel will select the 30 award recipients in June. AOL UK and Citizens Online will host an awards ceremony for the 30 winning organisations in London in Autumn 2006.

Jess Abrams of Drake Music Project Scotland, which received an award in 2005, commented: "Drake Scotland was delighted to receive an AOL Innovation in the Community Award. We have recently launched a new website and the award has enabled us to design an interactive element, which will enable people to take part in an experiential music making session using an online version of our adaptive music technology. It's very important that our website is accessible and the award has helped us to achieve

this." (www.drakemusicscotland.org)

Another 2005 award winner, Wendy Sanderson of 55+ Positive Lifestyle in Devon, said: "Many older people, particularly in rural areas, feel left behind by modern technology. This award offers us an exciting opportunity to help people overcome those feelings of frustration and loneliness, by showing them how to use the internet to shop and access information, and to keep in touch with family and friends." (www.positivelifestyle.eclipse.co.uk)

Commenting on Powys-based ecodyfi's 2005 award, Tom O'Kane added: "The award has made it possible for us to make a bridge between a garden training programme and a local school. School children with little or no knowledge of growing food are being given the opportunity to grow their own and then demonstrate to other schools in the valley how they did it via the garden training website." (www.ecodyfi.org.uk)

Notes to Editors

For further information, please contact: Vicky Prior in the AOL press office on 020 7348 8000 or at vickyprioruk@aol.com

About the AOL Innovation in the Community Awards

The AOL Innovation in the Community Awards were set up by AOL UK and the national charity Citizens Online in 2003 to encourage innovative use of the Internet among community groups and registered charities in the UK.

Full entry criteria and terms and conditions for the awards can be found at www.aol.co.uk/innovation and AOL Keyword: Innovation Awards. 30 awards to the value of £2,000 are available and will be payable by cheque. In addition, each winning organisation will receive a complimentary AOL Broadband Gold account (up to 2Mbps) for 12 months, subject to availability and terms and conditions.

The awards organisers require either a registered charity number from the Charity Commission in England, Scotland or Wales; a letter from the organisation's local authority recognising it as a non-profit making organisation; or an Inland Revenue tax reference number.

The awards judging panel will meet in June 2006. Shortlisted organisations will then be contacted and may receive a visit from a representative of the AOL Innovation in the Community Awards. The 30 award recipients will be announced by the end of June and will be invited to attend a daytime awards ceremony in London in Autumn 2006.

www.aol.co.uk/innovation

About AOL

AOL is the leading online interactive services provider to the UK, with more than 2.3 million members, including more than one million on AOL Broadband. AOL offers a range of services in the UK, including

dial-up, broadband and voice, as well as unrivalled content and community for all the family.

Members spend more than one hour a day online on average, enjoying access to more than 20 channels of online content, from Entertainment and News to Parenting, Shopping and Money, as well as email and the Internet.

The AOL branded online interactive services and AOL Talk are supplied to UK subscribers by AOL Europe Services SARL, a company in the AOL group based in Luxembourg. Both companies are part of AOL Europe, a business unit of America Online Inc., which is the world's leading interactive services company with more than 26 million members worldwide. America Online Inc. is a division of Time Warner Inc., a leading media and entertainment company, with businesses including interactive services, cable systems, filmed entertainment, television networks and publishing.

AOL's Community Investment Programme in the UK seeks to extend the benefits of the online medium to those who would most benefit from it, but who are often the least likely to obtain access through traditional means. Priority areas are young people, particularly those outside of mainstream education, and people with disabilities. AOL UK is a founding member of the Alliance for Digital Inclusion (<http://www.citizensonline.org.uk/adi>) .

www.aol.co.uk

About Citizens Online (<http://www.citizensonline.org.uk>)

Citizens Online is a national charity committed to closing the digital divide. It believes that members of the community should have access to ICT and the internet to ensure they are socially included in all areas of today's society. Its work includes research projects analysing the ever increasing digital environment and its impact on society as a whole. As part of its ongoing involvement, Citizens Online works closely with the IT and telecoms industry and local and central government in both an advisory and lobbying capacity and the development of ongoing projects across the UK.

www.citizensonline.org.uk