

Life-Bytes in Paris Street Notes on topics for meetings / training

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These are notes about possible topics for discussion during the second half of 2004. This could be at Life Bytes, a short term venue in Paris Street, Exeter. I also update a web site for Internet Express, the original name for the site that became Hyperactive Café. www.inxpress.co.uk will continue as an online base. Life Bytes could be demolished with a month's notice. Meanwhile Hyperactive may transfer to the Phoenix in some form.

A lot of knowledge was created at Hyperactive. Life Bytes is aiming to concentrate on games but there are resources to support all aspects of the web. My main interest is around Acrobat and PDF. Acrobat Services has a licence for enough copies to test out a network for forms and collaboration. This could be similar to the way collaboration would work online. Courses are also possible on creating PDF for print or design for online PDF documents.

There is an archive of magazines and some kit. The IBM PC and Apple II were last shown during 'From Script to Print to Hypertext' as part of the millennium reflection. There may be space at 24 Paris street to show them again and video some interviews. There are other issues around the material available in Exeter archives. A lot of hard copy has been scanned but the resolution varies when images are available online. See for example "Etched on Devon's Memory"

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/library/locstudy/etched.html>

Animated Exeter included a careers day and a games day. We have some sample CDs left over from Adobe and Macromedia. The basic skills are around Adobe Creative Suite and Macromedia Studio MX. (There is some Quark knowledge also, somewhere in the building.) Through advertising links with Amazon and Google I will try to get income through relevant promotions. There is also some video editing at Life Bytes, and Mac equipment and courses at the Phoenix.

Exeter has a reputation for wi-fi but there is not yet much use or widespread awareness. Psand have done solid work on this over the last three years. Maybe there could be a budget to invite them to talk. A good time would be during the Science Festival (6-10 Sept). This could be a deadline for a check on how much reality there is to 'wi-fi Exeter'. Because of the geographical constraints on 'Broadband for Devon' it sometimes seems there is more wi-fi knowledge in rural areas than there is in Exeter. Maybe that week would be a good chance to invite people to share current information.

<http://www.psand.net>

The week after is "Alt-C", looking at e-learning. I work with Exetreme on web design. One project is 'learnPDF', looking at ways to link PDF and e-learning. The server software for 'collaboration' is still far too expensive for educational use but there could be experiments. Co-operatives and 'social economy' organisations have an interest in this. Alternatives are open source software or email / text.

Wi-fi may not work as a paid service. There could be more discussion around Freespot, available at the Southgate Hotel. As broadband gets cheaper the model of free wi-fi as an attraction for venues is more likely

<http://www.wififreespot.com/hotels.html>

Some income can come from printing. Printme is an online service from EFI that simplifies this. So far the UK bandwidth has not encouraged much use of this and there are few available sites. But looking at cities in California shows this can work. Hyperactive was once the base for an 'Exeter Sneakernet', creating PDF on disc for print output. This might revive, taking Printme as a model. The idea is for a workflow where the print customer creates the page content.

http://www.efi.com/products/printme/pm_success.fhtml

Getting back to Acrobat, the forms software is about to be demonstrated by government projects to show off Reader Extensions. The cost of the server software includes a way to enable the free Reader to have more functions. The Netherlands tax forms are starting to use this. In the UK defra have done some work but it is hard to find examples. Over the next six months there should be more to discuss about this, including how people close to Exeter find defra forms at the moment. There are also discussions in the Acrobat User Forum. The forms issues will be part of Seybold San Francisco. Macromedia talk about 'user experience' but this actually includes filling in forms.

<http://www.acrobat-services.co.uk/auf>

<http://www.seybold365.com/sf2004/conference/>

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/flex/>

Alternatives to PDF forms include extensions to Flash from Macromedia, Microsoft and Xforms and open source. I realise this getting a way from games, the main purpose of Life Bytes. But there could be other themes in the background. Also connections with other places that may survive longer in real space, looking on the bright side.

Comment welcome

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PS One more thing on Acrobat. There are a number of newspapers with 'digital editions, in various formats that can usually be saved as PDF. So far there is not much publicity about this. The Guardian for example makes no mention in print of what is available on their website. In the South West there seems to be not much awareness that the Western Morning News is available from

<https://www.newsstand.com/>

The BA Festival of Science 4-11 Sept 2004
<http://www.the-ba.net/the-ba/Events/FestivalofScience/>

Alt-C "learning technologies for the next decade" 14-16 Sept 2004
<http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2004/>