

Barnardo's: Delivering learning excellence

Barnardo's won the Charity Learning Award 2011 for the Best overall eLearning programme and went on to win a bronze in The Learning & Performance Institute's Learning Awards 2012. It is amongst the top performers in implementing learning technologies (as measured by the Towards Maturity Index).

This is the story of how this much-loved children's charity creatively harnessed technology to improve service delivery and workplace performance.



Contents

Delivering learning excellence in challenging times	1
Getting creative - how to meet business needs.....	2
Learning and technology – make the most of what you have	3
Thinking outside the box - The Barnardo's induction process	6
The practical stuff - embedding innovation into the business	6
The Impact on Staff	9
Next steps.....	9
Top top e-learning tips	10

Introduction

Barnardo's is the UK's largest children charity working with more than 190,000 children, young people and their families each year. Barnardo's transforms the lives of vulnerable children across the UK through their services, campaigning and research expertise. The charity aims to bring out the best in every child whether the issue is child poverty, sexual exploitation, disability or domestic violence.

The charity is committed to exploring new learning technologies to ensure that high standards and effectiveness are maintained in service delivery. With this priority in mind, the organisation has assessed and adapted its IT learning services to make sure training programmes are cost effective, current and relevant.

Barnardo's Assistant Director of Information Services (Learning and Communication), Lisa Johnson has worked with her team to develop a series of learning initiatives to support staff in delivering the charity's mission over the last 14 years.

Lisa and her team currently support a community of 8,000 IT users across 1,600 locations, including offices, staff in shops, and a growing numbers of home workers. A concern for Lisa and her team has been how to meet the diverse range of training needs most effectively with the resources they have available, even more so given the current economic climate.

Getting creative - assessing how to meet business needs

Understanding the ongoing and changing requirements within the charity is key. Lisa's team have implemented a training programme designed to support the diverse Barnardo's community, which is also aligned to the charity's business goals

A large part of the success of the programme is down to the learning & development team's ability to listen to the challenges staff face, to appreciate their issues and to develop solutions which meet their needs. The team has found face-to-face contact with staff vital in keeping up to date with their changing circumstances..

The team started by developing an L&D plan directly with their key stakeholders. They talked to project managers and learners in order to understand their challenges, finding that people did not always have a clear idea of what they needed, which meant that regular, good communication was crucial in allowing the team to fully understand learners' concerns.

Lisa's team have a wide knowledge of other departments in the charity and their specific needs, such as Children's Services and Corporate Fundraising. This understanding helped the team develop the right tailored support packages specifically focused on each departments' requirements. These training solutions are reviewed on a regular basis.

Lisa's team sits within the Information Services department in Barnardo's - so they work closely with the IT helpdesk and analyse incoming calls to understand both the impact of the solution given to a specific learning need and can identify what additional support is required. This means they are well positioned to track the common pitfalls experienced by

staff and can develop 'troubleshooting' guidelines for common problems as well as spotting new trends.

As Lisa Johnson says: *"Everything we do involves an element of getting feedback to constantly reassess how best we can meet the charity's needs. The core team are spread over the UK but we get together every six weeks to look at business requirements to consider what we can do creatively to improve the learning experience and performance of our IT users."*

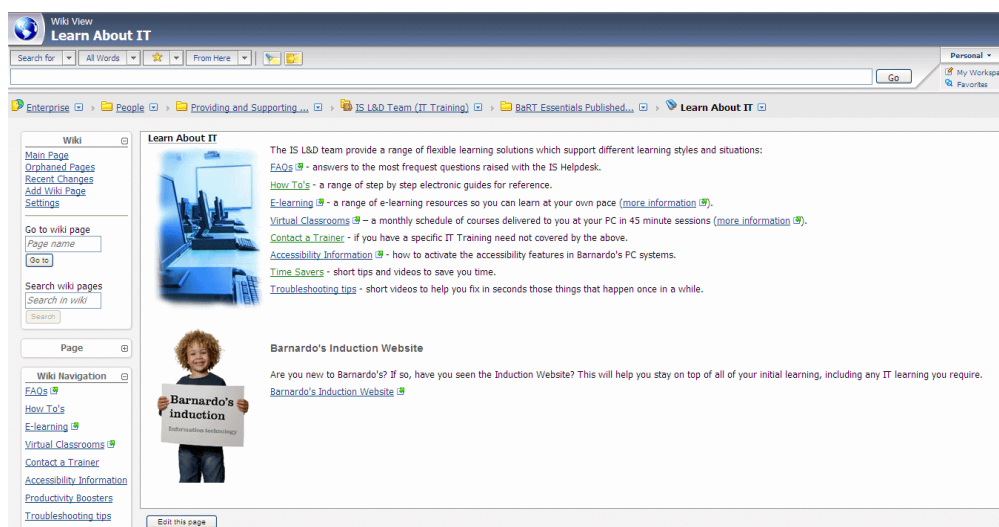
Learning and technology – make the most of what you have

When you have fewer resources, you think about things differently. At Barnardo's, creative and innovative approaches to learning have involved effective use of technology. Rather than select a technology approach first, and then retro fit their programmes to work with the technology, the Barnardo's team put together a matrix of existing content and classroom courses, and asked themselves a number of key questions:

- Can we run this course in the classroom?
- Will this course work as an eLearning course?
- Can the content be delivered effectively in the form of a written guide?

As a result of this exercise, it was clear that Barnardo's would need to use a range of learning technologies. These include; self-paced eLearning courses, virtual classrooms, video, wikis, and an online learning community, for example:

A single point of access for all IT related learning resources.



The screenshot shows a Wiki page titled "Learn About IT" within a "Wiki View" interface. The page content includes:

- Learn About IT**: The IS L&D team provide a range of flexible learning solutions which support different learning styles and situations:
 - [FAQs](#) - answers to the most frequent questions raised with the IS Helpdesk.
 - [How To's](#) - a range of step by step electronic guides for reference.
 - [E-learning](#) - a range of e-learning resources so you can learn at your own pace ([more information](#)).
 - [Virtual Classrooms](#) - a monthly schedule of courses delivered to you at your PC in 45 minute sessions ([more information](#)).
 - [Contact a Trainer](#) - if you have a specific IT Training need not covered by the above.
 - [Accessibility Information](#) - how to activate the accessibility features in Barnardo's PC systems.
 - [Time Savers](#) - short tips and videos to save you time.
 - [Troubleshooting tips](#) - short videos to help you fix in seconds those things that happen once in a while.
- Barnardo's Induction Website**: Are you new to Barnardo's? If so, have you seen the Induction Website? This will help you stay on top of all of your initial learning, including any IT learning you require. [Barnardo's Induction Website](#)

The page also features a sidebar with navigation links: Main Page, Orphaned Pages, Recent Changes, Add Wiki Page, Settings, Go to wiki page, Search wiki pages, Wiki Navigation, FAQs, How To's, E-learning, Virtual Classrooms, Contact a Trainer, Accessibility Information, Productivity Boosters, and Troubleshooting tips.

This single point of access has been developed using a wiki and is accessible from within the organisation's central document management system. It provides a series of links that allow learners to choose how they prefer to learn: user guide, eLearning, live online session or contact a trainer!

eLearning content – Guides

The screenshot shows a Wiki View interface for 'How To's'. It features a search bar at the top with 'All Words' selected. Below the search bar is a breadcrumb trail: Enterprise > People > Providing and Supporting... > JS L&D Team (IT Training) > BaRT Essentials Published... > Learn About IT > How To's. On the left, there's a 'Wiki' sidebar with links like 'Main Page', 'Orphaned Pages', and 'Recent Changes'. The main content area is titled 'How To's' and contains a grid of links to various guides, such as 'Email and Calendars with Outlook', 'Word processing with Word', 'Excel Spreadsheets with Excel', 'Presentations with PowerPoint', 'Oracle (Finance, Direct Input etc.)', 'Reporting with Discoverer', 'CADB and CADBi (Supporter Database)', 'IT Security', 'Creating and editing a Wiki', 'Livelink Document Management', 'Livelink Service User Recording', 'Livelink Staff and Volunteer Files', 'Installing Software with RADIA', 'Connecting with 3G/GPRS Cards', 'Barnardo's IdP', 'National eCAF', 'IT for Service Users', and 'Video Conferencing'. A 'help' icon is visible on the left side of the main content area. At the bottom, there's a search bar with 'IT User Guides' selected and a 'Go' button. A note below the search bar says: 'Can't find the "How To" you are looking for? Search for any user guide by choosing **IT User Guides** from the **From Here** drop down list in the search area above, entering a few key words and clicking on the **Go** button, e.g. save email to livelink. Alternatively, you can browse through the full list of subjects [here](#).' There is also an 'Edit this page' button.

Simple How To guides to provide precise task based support at the point of need.

eLearning content – Courses

The screenshot shows a Moodle course page for Barnardo's e-learning site. At the top left, there's a logo for 'Believe in children Barnardo's'. On the top right, it says 'Home' and 'You are logged in as Lisa Johnson (Logout)'. Below the logo, there's a 'My learning' section with a 'Click here to view your learning record.' and a 'Launch My Learning' button. To the right of this is a 'Welcome to the Barnardo's e-learning site...' message with a magnifying glass icon and the text '- your single point of access to all online training resources.' Below the welcome message is a grid of course categories: IT Skills, Customer Service, Communication, Leadership and Management, Legislation, Literacy, Personal Development, Sales and Marketing, Training and Facilitation, and Budgeting and Finance. On the far left, there's a 'Barnardo's required e-learning' section with links to 'Safeguarding', 'Health & safety', 'Information sharing', 'Equality & diversity', and 'Data protection'. Below that is another 'Barnardo's e-learning' section with a link to 'IT Security'. On the right side, there's a 'WELCOME' message with a 3D character icon and text: 'Barnardo's e-learning site, brought to you in conjunction with the Charity Learning Consortium. The links to the far left provide access to a range of Barnardo's specific resources. The buttons in the centre provide access to a range of additional IT and business skills e-learning courses. Use this content as required to help you fulfil your learning and development needs.' At the bottom, there's a highlighted box containing a lightbulb icon with a plant growing inside it, and the text: 'This section has a range of courses on sales and marketing.'

eLearning content from The Charity Learning Consortium, third parties and customised content built in-house is delivered via a single personalised Moodle site.

Live online learning using WebEx

The screenshot shows the Barnardo's Training Center interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for Welcome, Meeting Center, Training Center (selected), Event Center, More Services, My WebEx, and a user profile for lisa.johnson with a Log Out button. Below the navigation bar is a search bar for sessions by presenter, topic, or words in the agenda. The main content area displays a list of sessions for Wednesday, 16 November 2011, starting at 16:35. The list includes columns for Date & Time, Topic, Presenter, and Duration, with a Register button for each session. A checkbox option is available to show only sessions that require registration. The total number of sessions is 21.

Date & Time	Topic	Presenter	Duration	Register
17 Nov 2011 10:00	IT Introduction to Outlook	Sue Fredson	45 mins	Register
17 Nov 2011 11:30	IT Introduction to IT in Barn...	Sue Fredson	45 mins	Register
17 Nov 2011 13:00	IT Introduction to Livelink S...	Sue Fredson	45 mins	Register
17 Nov 2011 14:30	IT Livelink Service User Reco...	Sue Fredson	45 mins	Register
21 Nov 2011 13:30	IT Introduction to IT in Barn...	Mike Woods	45 mins	Register
21 Nov 2011 15:00	IT Introduction to Livelink D...	Mike Woods	45 mins	Register
29 Nov 2011 10:15	IT Introduction to IT in Barn...	Jan Cowell	45 mins	Full

Live online learning has been introduced to improve performance, reduce time to competence, and reach more delegates - using less resources and saving money. Barnardo's chose a WebEx solution as this also offers the functionality to offer virtual meetings - a tool used by the training team and others when they need to connect remotely.

Barnardo's became a member of The Charity Learning Consortium in 2008 after working previously with partners in the private sector. The CLC offers a simple, affordable solution that meets the needs of the business. Feedback from learners is extremely positive and membership of the Consortium has opened up opportunities for the team to network with others in the charity sector, share knowledge and experience - and bring the entire organisations' eLearning under one roof

Lisa Johnson highlights how these learning innovations take shape within the organisation: *"When the team discovers a new technology, we immerse ourselves in understanding how to make best use of it, so that the benefits and challenges the technology presents are fully understood. This allows the team to build up a toolkit of resources that can be used in any combination to provide the right solutions."*

Box out 1 highlights how this approach is improving induction

Box out 1

Thinking outside the box - The Barnardo's induction process

How are these learning technologies supporting induction training?

New staff are provided with a link to an induction website when they join Barnardo's, so they have access to essential information and are ready to start with skills needed for their job. Technology support this further in a number of ways:

- Videos, made with the CEO, explain the vision for Barnardo's, welcome new starters and explain why induction is important;
- New staff members can also look at videos of other executives;
- All new recruits are provided with a 45 minute virtual classroom session introducing Barnardo's IT systems. During this session, new staff are shown how to access the charity's learning resources and support. (This virtual classroom is also available to existing staff);
- Individuals coming into children services can find out about their own area, but they can also learn as much as they want about other areas before coming into the organisation;
- Everyone that needs to must attend a 45 minute Introduction to Barnardo's IT Virtual Classroom, which focuses on the technology that Barnardo's uses; highlights where to access the help desk and portal; and the resources they will find there.
- Staff have a clear structure to follow but are encouraged to take responsibility for their progress by completing a check list;
- An online check list is also provided for line managers, who can use this as part of their reviews;
- The induction process is mandatory, and staff are only confirmed in their jobs after this online process has been completed;

The whole process helps gets people on board quickly, gets them competent, and just as importantly, it gets them used to how learning is structured at Barnardo's.

With 11,000 volunteers, not everyone will have access to online content so it is important to develop offline versions as well.

The practical stuff - embedding innovation into the business

The Barnardo's team didn't implement the full range of learning technologies overnight. They took a measured approach, gradually introducing learners to new technologies, taking time to consider feedback and engaging groups in testing new content

For example, in the early stages of rolling out self-paced learning content, feedback was gathered from learners who "missed being in a classroom", "missed having a trainer at hand to ask questions" and "felt isolated learning alone". To overcome these issues, they looked for other ways to engage learners and trialled the use of virtual classrooms (VCs).

Virtual classrooms provided learners with something which had elements of both classroom and eLearning: staff are able to learn at their PC but are also able to communicate with other delegates and ask a trainer for help.

Over the past five years live online learning has doubled at Barnardo's and now 60% of annual learning delivery is completed using the virtual classroom (compared with 30%, five years ago). Today only 20% of annual delivery takes place in the classroom (compared with 50% five years ago).

The organisation has also been inspired by external influences such as YouTube – the way people access information now has changed dramatically and video is becoming common place for learning. Barnardo's has picked up on this and combines audio with content created with Captivate to create video demos to act as 'time savers' in key areas.

For example, analysis of helpdesk calls identified a need to help people quickly find information they regularly accessed within a growing document management system. A two minute video demo was quickly developed to show how to add favourites to a list, and then how to access them. Another short video demo showed staff a simple trick to keep their email inbox under control.

Nineteen video demos have been created since their launch at the end of August 2011 – a really fantastic example of how the team quickly responds to the needs of the organisation. These demos are creating quite a stir within the business and new requests are coming in thick and fast. As a result, they will be launching an information security awareness campaign in February 2012. Not all subjects are appropriate for a video demo, but some of it is, and the team intends to use a mix of media to get key messages out to the business.

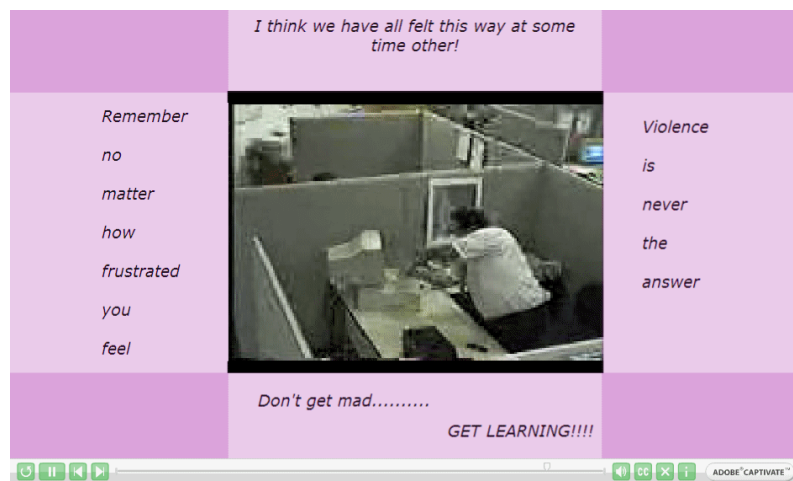
These demos are hosted on an internal website and published via the Learn About IT wiki (the online learning portal). The training team use Google analytics to track the hit rate and a 'rate it' link is also included to provide feedback.

When the new video approach was launched, 30 people looked at the first programme. The team used this valuable feedback to highlight the benefits to others in the business, and in the second week the programme had 300 hits. Since then, use of these video demos is growing and increasing.

Lisa Johnson is a firm believer in the importance of communication: *“There is no point in developing new programmes if people don’t know about them. I now have a communications role in our IS department to change perception of IT but it is just as important to me that we market L&D in the same way as we communicate other areas of importance.”*

As a result, Barnardo’s now has a promotional video introducing IT with humour (see box out 2). It shows learners how to use IT effectively and teaches useful hints and tips. The video helps staff learn about wiki pages offering IT help, where staff can see FAQs (driven by the top five helpdesk calls). It also introduces the ‘How-To’s’, the video ‘time savers’ and self-paced eLearning, including training for Barnardo’s own IT systems as well as generic courses.

Box out 2 Don’t get mad – get learning



keep calm and carry on!



The Impact on Staff

So what impact is this approach having on service delivery and performance in the charity? Despite the fact that the number of dedicated training staff has been reduced, the team delivered learning to 54% more learners in 2010/2011 than in 2006/07. Last year there were more than 3,000 attendees at learning events (and that doesn't include those who are self-paced learners).

The organisation is also better equipped to pull management information together, which is important for both induction training and proving compliance. The Charity Learning Consortium's learning platform is integrated with Barnardo's Oracle HR system which sets up eLearning accounts automatically so that individuals can start accessing learning immediately. Every 24 hours progress is fed back to the HR system.

A knock on effect of the team's success in building new skills is a reduction in help desk calls. As a direct result of analysing those calls the team is able to put things in place to reduce them e.g. tips and tricks, video demos. As a direct result of this approach, the 'How to' calls to the helpdesk were reduced by 50%. The team continues to review this data and update the learning resources as enquiries change.

Staff are really pleased with the new approach with individuals providing great feedback:

- *"I've always found it flexible, dipping into the tips and tricks are really useful as they are concise and to the point"*
- *"The virtual classroom was enjoyable and so simple"*
- *"Can I have more of these please? I've found it to be of real practical assistance!"*

Nadine Good, Assistant Director of Children's services said that *"It responds flexibly to individual and service needs and learning approaches, and we get feedback from all our staff on the variety. The small video clips are fantastic and I am keen to pass those onto other staff members"*

Next steps

The team behind this innovative approach has real passion and are driven to continually develop new learning approaches.

At a strategic level, Barnardo's continually assesses organisational and external challenges that will have an impact on the learning community. For example, the team expects to see an increasing need for flexibility and mobile technology with a growing number of staff working from home and on the move. Barnardo's is exploring developing the right content, applications and hardware to support a more mobile and diverse workforce to keep one step ahead of the needs of staff.

Members of the L&D team are also looking to take advantage of social learning and have started to immerse themselves in environments like Twitter and LinkedIn to support personal learning. They have also spent time influencing the IT director to introduce Chatter to encourage sharing of learning insights within the IT department. As with other media, the expectation is that this will grow as confidence increases.

We hope this case study has inspired you, and shown that it is possible to achieve excellence in learning even on a limited budget.

Top tips for embedding learning innovation by Lisa Johnson:

1. Keep in contact with your learners
2. Be creative with existing learning technologies
3. Engage new recruits early and get them hooked
4. Learn to walk before you run – success comes in small chunks
5. Keep reviewing your progress – plan for the future
6. Shout loud and clear about your successes - communicate good news to engage new learners
7. Don't use a sledgehammer to crack a nut – you don't have to create a course for everything
8. Use technology to track your business impact
9. Integrate with existing systems

This case study has been independently investigated and developed by Towards Maturity and has been brought to you thanks to the support of [The Charity Learning Consortium](#)