Collaboration for Website Maintenance – learn East

Summary

One of the funded activities of this project was for the seven Third Sector partners (six county Third Sector Consortia / lead bodies in the East of England, plus COVER) to keep their websites updated with the following information for their members:

- Sector News and Events
- Funding and sub-contracting opportunities for Third Sector training providers.

About learn EAST

learn EAST is a network of six county-based learning consortia covering the East of England, formed as a Managed Network (led by COVER, the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum for the Eastern Region) in April 2007 as an East Region LSC / ESF funded project.

The learn EAST network exists to provide both stakeholders and prime contract holders, from all strategic funding streams, with a single point of contact with which to engage the Third Sector, and also provides its extended membership of third sector providers with:

- Relevant, up-to-date information about developments in the learning and skills arena
- Potential sub-contracting opportunities and;
- Support for partnership working both internally and cross sectors.

The challenge

It soon became apparent that the majority of this information was at Regional or National level and that having the seven partners update their websites with this 'common' information was an ineffective use of time.

The activity

Each of the seven partners have their own strengths and specialist areas within the sector. The Suffolk Learning Consortium was identified as the lead on website maintenance and was therefore commissioned to deliver a solution.

Similarly, lead partners were identified for Funding / Contracting news, and all partners agreed to forward all news received to Suffolk for regional updating.

A new website was developed for the [learn EAST](#) project with the content for the News, Events and Funding pages produced in such a way that it could be automatically embedded into other websites.

The 'webmasters' of the other websites were then provided with details of how to automatically import the data into their websites, so if you view the News page on the [Suffolk Learning Consortium website](#) you will see the imported Regional / National News at the top of the page and County / Local News beneath.

The Regional / National updates typically take two hours / week to update, and using the above system saves 12 hours / week across the partners.

The outcomes
- Eight websites, 2 Regional and 6 county, updated simultaneously
- Dedicated Regional webmaster keeps websites updated daily, if required, which is important for news / funding / contract opportunities with short response times
- Time saved by partners by reducing duplication of work.

The impact
- Dedicated Regional webmaster keeps websites updated daily, if required, which is important for news / funding / contract opportunities with short response times
- Time saved by partners by reducing duplication of work.

The lessons learned
- Collaborative working benefits all collaborators
- The Third Sector are notorious at not celebrating success
- Make the most of a partners strengths
- Simple technological solutions can save duplication of work.

Useful links
- [learn EAST website](#)
- [Third Sector National Learning Alliance (TSNLA)](#)