

Background

This 15 month project is funded by the British Library Research and Innovation Centre as part of its Digital Library Research programme. It is a two centre project based at the University of Strathclyde and South Bank University.

The project aims to identify the types of information that business people are using on the internet, and find out why they are using them.

As part of the project an Internet Business Club will be formed into which the business people participating in the project will be enrolled. This will consist of a web site, and an email helpline, offering advice on internet sources and searching.

Dissemination

As the project develops more information will be made available on the web site. The web site is primarily for the use of the participating companies, it will act as a guide to local and general business resources. The subject coverage of the site will reflect the interests of the companies.

It is also intended to use the web site to keep interested parties informed of developments. These will include summaries of results, listing of journal articles, press releases and links to related projects.

<http://business.dis.strath.ac.uk/>

Aims

- To identify the types of internet resources that are found useful by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).
 - To identify reasons why the sources were judged to be useful .
 - To put the use of internet resources in the context of use of all types of external information, and discover whether internet resources affect the balance of use, in terms of: medium, extent of substitution and frequency of use,
 - To gather information on resource implications and feasibility of creating a virtual SME Library through support and advice from a trained intermediary, remote from the user site.
 - These aims will be fulfilled by working with two groups of SMEs based in Glasgow & London. This will provide both a Scottish and an English perspective, enabling comparison of the two groups.
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Activities

The study will be carried out through a mixture of techniques.

A questionnaire will be administered to participants at the start and end of the project, inquiring about the types of information they need and the sources they use to answer those needs.

Focus groups will be used during the project. These will be used to address the questions of the benefits and disadvantages of the internet sources and the factors which affected decisions on information use.

The project will collaborate with local organisations such as Business Links, Business Shops, Chambers of Commerce, and Euroinfocentres.

A web site and a helpline service will be created to form a virtual information service tailored to local company requirements.

This virtual information service will be evaluated.

There will be analysis of business information enquiries received from participants during the course of the project.

Similar and related projects will be identified and, opportunities for co-operation will be sought.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

LOOK AT OUR WEB SITE

<http://business.dis.strath.ac.uk/>

Contact

For more information about the project contact:

Sue Allcock
Project Officer
University of Strathclyde
Department of Information Science
Livingstone Tower
26 Richmond Street
Glasgow G1 1XH
U.K.
Tel: +44 (0)141 548 4846
Fax: +44 (0)141 553 1393
Email: business@dis.strath.ac.uk

BUSINESS INFORMATION AND THE INTERNET

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Project Partners

University of Strathclyde
Department of Information Science

Project Head
Sheila Webber
Email: sheila@dis.strath.ac.uk

Project Officer
Sue Allcock
Email: business@dis.strath.ac.uk



South Bank University
Library Information Technology Centre

Project Manager
Robin Yeates
Email: robin.yeates@sbu.ac.uk

Project Officer
Annette Plenty
103 Borough Road
London SE1 OAA
Email: plentyas@sbu.ac.uk



**Getting better Value from
the Internet!**

A project run by the University of Strathclyde and South Bank University with funding from the British Library Research and Innovation Centre

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Full information on the aims of the project, participating organisations, and the Business Information Club, can all be found on the project web site.