

HINT Final Report form

Name of partner: North Pennines AONB

Period covered by report: 01/03/2013 to 30/06/2013

Key objectives during report period:

- Conclude the software development
- Install the unit and test it
- Make it operational.

Did you meet all your objectives?

(Highlight/explain any problems)

The iGlass unit was installed in time for the opening of the Bowlees Visitor Centre on 21 June 2013 and was extensively used by the visitors to our Bowlees open day on 23 June. It was only relatively recently that staff members got to see the content 'live' rather than as PDFs so there were a few glitches to sort out when content finally did go 'live'. It has now been decided to load the content onto the computer at the visitor centre rather than allow for content being taken directly from the web, which makes the unit much faster for visitors. However, all objectives were indeed met.

Summary of progress to project completion

In addition to the best practice manual for the whole of the project, we still have to do a get-together for businesses in the North Pennines Geopark area. This is now unlikely to happen before the official end of the project at the end of June 2013, but we will provide such a meeting later in the year.

With a project like it is obvious that there will be an ongoing requirement for updating information and to add new features.

What have you learned from this project?

(Highlight/explain how you are developing your knowledge/use of new technologies)

With hindsight, we were not sufficiently prepared for this project. It is only during the development that all sorts of barriers and constraints became apparent and we

had to resolve these as we went along.

A longer period to properly develop an action plan with the contractor would have been extremely useful, but the procurement rules (LEADER determined) don't allow for such development work to take place. As it is, communication with our contractors was very frustrating at times, especially as we didn't really understand what issues we needed to address or which questions to ask.

How have you tried to ensure best practice throughout the project?
(Highlight any support/advice you have received)

Our contractors are not aware of any other countryside site using the iGlass technology to provide out-of-hours information for visitors so there is no obvious best practice example available. However, we have used best practice for developing websites and our own branding guidelines to ensure information on the unit is easily accessible and visitor-centered.

Is there anything you would do differently in the future?
(Explain)

If we were to do something like this again, we would need to spend longer discussing our requirements with contractors to inform a tender brief. Invariably this would mean that a contractor would need to spend time with the client without the certainty of getting the contract. An alternative would have been to spend more time in the early part of the contract to develop an action plan with clear tasks, responsibilities and timetables.

Overall do you feel the project has been a success?

We consider the fact that the unit is now in place and working to be a success. However, the real success (or otherwise) will only become apparent after a little while and will depend on the reaction of our visitors.

List any publicity for your project (e.g. newspaper article, radio, magazine etc.)
(Please attach a scan or text where possible)

Teesdale Mercury: North Pennines pilot project - March 2012

Please give details of any community engagement (e.g. workshops, schools activities, volunteer opportunities, launch event etc.)

At the start of the development we discussed the content of the unit and what it was meant to do in the Teesdale Action Area- Tourism group and received feedback for members of that group which include tourism businesses in the area. The project has also been discussed in the AONB Partnership's Sustainable Tourism Working group on a number of occasions.

Give details of any feedback you have received on your use of technology

Early feedback suggested that the weblinks were too slow for visitors to make full use of the unit, due to the speed of our internet connection. We have resolved that by hosting all the content on the computer powering the unit, which has made it substantially faster. However, this does mean that updating the information is more complicated.

Any other comments?

We are very pleased to have been involved in this transnational project and have learned from our partners. It is very useful to know of other, friendly, partners who have dealt with the development of specific technologies, whom we can ask questions in due course.