

## Enterprising Solutions Application Form 2002

### 1. Organisation/Project Contact Details

Name of organisation    Hyperactive The Net Ltd  
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Date organisation established    1996

### 2. Your objectives

Please explain the objectives of your organisation

Who benefits from this?

What was the original motivation for providing your product/service/support?

What is your motivation now? Have things changed? How?

To provide public web access in central Exeter. To provide training and support in using the web. To provide a network for games. The coffee and snacks contribute to a relaxed atmosphere in which the technology is not frightening. The staff are not in it for the money but there is a chance to develop skills and awareness. All support for the project has come from people who want an opportunity to develop awareness of the web through a chance to use it. Some visitors just use the minimum time to check their email while on holiday.

Local supporters like the ADSL link which is faster than most home modems. There is now public access at the local library and college but the cafe may have helped to show a demand and may yet influence better speeds and a wider range of software.



Jon Parker in '96 worked in IT support for a training department but found little support for web technology. He wanted to demonstrate what was possible. Wider social aims were included but even then games were a factor. There was another company involved later mainly interested in website design. The current co-operative was formed to protect jobs and continue the project. The original name for the café was Internet Express.

There is still an awareness that the web has further to go. Few people realise what is possible with broadband. There is more access to email in general but still a need for public access. We would like to reach more of the established organisations in Exeter and the region. For example we have Acrobat set up on a network to show online collaboration possibilities.

Jon Parker now works for Microsoft in California. Some website designers have moved to London. The web is normal but it remains difficult to persuade some people to actually use it.

### **3. About your organisation**

Please explain in 500 words or less:

-  the products/services/support your organisation provides
-  how you fund this

The cafe has eight personal computers with Windows and Internet Explorer. ADSL through Pipex. Software includes full copies of Acrobat. Most plugins are available such as Flash, Quicktime etc. Coffee, soft drinks, chocolate and snacks are available. The menu is a bit limited but there are other cafes close by and also the Thistle Hotel.

Support is available for basic browsing, use of search engines and how to set up an online email account. Scanning and inkjet printing is available, A4 size in black and white or colour.

Courses have been offered on an introduction to the net and further skills. Often groups need to hire the entire resource for an evening to get a brief introduction and then experiment. This is an effective form of 'training' as it gives enough confidence for people to continue trying things out.

Web site design is available through Exetreme and Barb Design and maybe some other unofficial people who talk to each other. Often there is an informal discussion about websites as a result of which people learn a fairly simple way to do it themselves.

Hyperactive Cafe is a referral partner for Pipex. This just means we suggest people contact them and can state how reliable we find the service. So far better than the previous experience.

Hyperactive is a test site for Nettime software, designed to administer any situation where web access is rented. It was developed at Hyperactive and is widely used. Sometimes people ask for further information.

#### **Funding**

The main income is through a charge of £5 an hour for web access. There is some income from coffee and snacks. Training is offered at low prices so the contribution to the café is about the same as for other uses of the space. There has been advertising income for links on the screens but this has ceased. There was some sponsorship of cups etc. from an ISP but this has ceased. Currently the promotion is for Pipex ADSL and a link to Amazon through Inxpress.

There has been no funding from government.

The business planning is to keep costs low and improve the hardware as spare cash is available. The problem is to predict cash flow over a full year as income is greater during the tourist season.

#### 4. Your enterprising solution

Please outline in 1,200 words or less how you have provided an enterprising solution, including:

- the long-term change or lasting impact you are seeking to achieve
- the skills you have in the organisation that enable you to tackle the problem in this way
- how you will judge success
- how far you have already met these objectives and the problems you have overcome
- the difference you have made to people's lives
- why you think your enterprising solution should win this award

The long-term change happening on the web is a transition to a new level based on broadband. Games is only one aspect of this but the first to provide the cafe with income. There will also be a social impact on health and education. The café is capable of demonstrating this possibility and offering training and support within reasonable travel distance of Exeter. The scope of media will expand from print to cover animation.

Other aspects of the web are not yet known.

We have Windows support and networking skills. (Linux server in the background and Macs at the Phoenix Arts Centre within ten minutes walk) Scanning and printing are linked to graphic design skills. Several web design operations have started from this base or continue. There is more interest in Flash animation than demand from website clients so this area could easily be expanded. The games events encourage new skills so there are usually new ideas. Acrobat software has been on public offer for several years so there is awareness of PDF workflows. In general the experience supporting people in trying out the web is a good background for designing new sites.

Subjectively the change would be evidenced by responses to the idea of spending time on the web.

Objectively there could be statistics on use of ADSL and cable modems in the 01392 area or wider. Cable modems are not yet available contrary to the DTI map so actual targets are hard to estimate. One test would be the level of support for web browsing within the Exeter Animation Festival. In 2002 it was part of the official program, not a fringe event as previously. Eventually it could be a major feature.

Just surviving in the same spot over five years is unusual for a cybercafe. We offer the lowest level of broadband but it makes a point as to what is possible. The problem of free access at local libraries

turned out not to be too difficult as people still appreciate the café environment and range of software. The problem of the rent to Railtrack is getting worse as it is too high in proportion to the cost of bandwidth.

The internet has changed people's lives over the time Hyperactive has existed. For some people there is a connection.

Winning an award would help to promote the cafe to a more official audience. There still seems to be a barrier on the range of people who will visit. Although there is apparent support for the web there is still benefit in people actually experiencing it.

## 5. The future

What do you hope to achieve over the next three years?

What would you do with the prize if you won?

During the next three years it is probable that broadband will be available in homes and workplaces. The existing form of an internet cafe will cease to be viable. However there will be a continuing need for training and support and for a social base for discussion and shared learning. The aim over three years will be to find ways of changing with this.

Whatever form the structure takes, the potential is for cheap fast communication through all forms of media, including print.

Much software will be available as a web hosted service. Games, animation, DVD etc will be a large part of leisure activity.

Health and education will be using information systems online.

People connected with Hyperactive may not be able to supply all relevant services connected with this but they will know where to look and may be able to do some of it.

With £5000, there would be a purchase of four portable computers, a modem and some cables. If the budget allowed there would also be a short trip to Brittany. The aim would be to expand the space that could be reached by the cafe and to benchmark on other situations in Europe.

With £10.000 there would also be the rent or purchase of a satellite dish and transportation. There is a possibility of technical support in Barcelona so the plan would be to get a ferry from Plymouth to Santandar. There are programmers working with a global client base from Spain and Portugal. Knowing more about this would be a contribution to further travels in areas of South West UK and possibly other places depending on a budget.

We might try to leverage the budget through other forms of sponsorship. Someone might lend a satellite dish anyway.