User Empowerment Workshop

Yorkshire Dales: ShareRoute

15 October 2014

Introduction

The Yorkshire Dales ITRACT User Empowerment Workshop was held on Wednesday 15 October at Hudson House, Reeth, as a basic computer training session looking especially at journey planners and introducing the new journey planner, ShareRoute, which has been developed in the Yorkshire Dales as part of the ITRACT project. The event was advertised in the Reeth Gazette and on the Hudson House noticeboard. The event was run by Julie of Quick Start IT, and Ed Beale of West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Between us we brought a variety of laptop and tablet devices for people to use. The event was held in the computer room in Hudson House, so there were also four Windows 7 desktop computers for participants to use. As a drop-in session, the event was tailored to the needs of each person who attended. At the end, the participants were shown the pilot version our new journey planner ShareRoute and we sought their feedback about whether they would find it useful.

Publicity

We placed an advert in the October issue of the Reeth Gazette to advertise the User Empowerment Workshop. We also put posters up in Hudson House, the Reeth community centre, library and tourist information centre.

Are you interested in learning the basics of using a computer? Would you like to use the internet to plan journeys and make ticket bookings? Then come along to a free session at Hudson House in Reeth on Wednesday 15 October! Drop in any time from 10:30 to 12:30. Free refreshments provided.

Journey Planners Guide

We prepared a basic guide to using journey planners and ticket booking websites, to be given out to people who attended the User Empowerment Workshop, so that they could follow up on what they had learned at home. The guide was aimed at showing people the most important information and controls on popular journey planning websites, to make them easier to use.

Photographs

Findings

We set out to show people how to use online journey planners and ticket booking systems, but that is not what the people who came along were interested in. The people who attended the User Empowerment Workshop either did not use computers or occasionally used the public computer in the library. Their computer skills level was low or zero. Therefore they were mainly interested in the absolute basics of using a computer and/or the internet. Most were interested in taking their learning further and were interested in other computer courses happening locally. We were able to point them to a voluntary organisation in Richmond who run occasional computer courses. People were interested to know what kind of device they could buy to go online, and showed most interest in the tablets such as the iPad rather than a desktop or laptop computer which they felt was too complicated. However, most people actually didn't use public transport at all, and therefore they weren't interested in journey planners. In reality, and increasingly with local government cuts, people felt that public transport isn't really an option for most journeys in remote parts of the Yorkshire Dales.