

## Case Study

# The Cogwheel Trust

The Cogwheel Trust  
47-51 Norfolk Street,  
Cambridge  
CB1 2LD

Assistance delivered by the  
Faith Circuit Rider project

## **Background**

The Cogwheel Trust is a professional counselling charity underpinned by a Christian ethos, which is committed to social justice and actively opposed to discrimination in society. It offers professional counselling and psychotherapy services with equal opportunities regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, ability, class, financial situation, age, gender or orientation

## **Brief**

The Cogwheel Trust approached us with a number of outstanding issues and a request for assistance with their upcoming office move.

## **Initial Work**

Initially, we conducted a Health Check Audit to identify the current state of the IT systems in their organisation.

We determined that they had a wide variety of equipment in various states of functionality, speed, inter-compatibility and network connection. Some of their equipment was extremely old and thus difficult to keep running. Most of the equipment had been donated to them which explained this state. They had not networked the majority of their computers in any form.

We also took the time to discuss their plans for the future and they explained that they wanted to try to get any work that needed doing done whilst they were carrying out their upcoming office move.

A report was prepared which laid out their options and gave recommendations for both their current system and for the office move.

## **Network Infrastructure**

When the office move approached, Cogwheel got in contact with us to ensure that the office was suitable for their incoming equipment. Upon surveying the plans, we found that it was not adequate for the incoming equipment, as there was only a very minimal network infrastructure.

Jeremy Barnett, a trustee of The Cogwheel Trust who was overseeing the office move, decided that it was appropriate to have a proper network infrastructure installed, thus ensuring that the building was future-proofed.

Jeremy arranged for us to liaise with the contracted cable installers to define specifications for adequate network coverage and to work offer technical consultancy

We managed to minimise the cost of this due to the infrastructure that was already being put in place for the new phone system they were having installed.

Additionally, we advised, prepared information and sourced a variety of network equipment for Jeremy to purchase to complete the planned network infrastructure.

We also advised them on how best to transfer their broadband account with minimal loss of service/downtime, as well as the merits and flaws of transferring to a different ISP.

## **New computers**

Cogwheel also decided to follow the report's recommendation of acquiring two new computers to replace two of their computers which were obsolete, non-compatible, and could not be networked.

They approached a number of local suppliers for a complete solution, and used us to verify that their final selection was both good value and adequate for their needs.

## **CTX**

The Charity Technology Exchange (CTX) Programme offers donated technology products from Partners such as Microsoft and Cisco to eligible UK Registered Charities. Fees are to cover admin costs, and as such most software available is offered at 5-10% of the retail cost.

Instead of paying for software to be provided with their new PCs, I advised Cogwheel about the programme and which software they would need for their new computers. I also explained the limitations of CTX, and thus encouraging them to plan ahead for their future needs, and overall allowing them to save several hundred pounds off the cost of software for each new or donated PC.

## **Office Transfer**

Cogwheel worked with us to coordinate the computer move a day before the office transfer. In a single day, the networking equipment was installed and the transferred computers set up. All of the old computers which were to remain in use were successfully connected to the internet, providing internet access and network file sharing capabilities.

## **Network Photocopier**

Shortly after the office move, Cogwheel obtained a networkable photocopier intended primarily for photocopying. However, with the new network infrastructure in place, we decided to install it as a printer for all the PCs in the office, enabling low-cost printing without having to move to a specific computer.

The rest of the printers are in the process of being networked to allow colour printing and high-quality printing as needed.

## **Decommissioning old PCs**

The old computers which were being replaced by the two new ones were not capable of being networked or accessing the internet. They were also running Windows 98, which is not very compatible with newer operating systems, nor will it readily transfer data to other devices. However, they still contained some valuable and sensitive information. We have transferred the valuable data, and advised them on ways of safely disposing the old computers which ensure secure removal of the sensitive data.

## **Further Work**

We have discussed needs for the future with Cogwheel trust, and made a list of topics that need to be addressed to further increase their functionality and consistency.

## **Results**

Our work with The Cogwheel Trust has involved hundreds of emails, dozens of phone calls, and approximately 10 working days of time. When they approached us, their system was disparate, out-dated, and had serious functional limitations.

The Faith Circuit Rider project has enabled and helped them to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with their IT systems.

They now have a future-proofed networking infrastructure which has given them a high-speed data network, allowing them to share files amongst their computers, to print to any printer, and to access the internet from any computer. Any additional computers can be added with ease, and avoid the unreliability and health & safety issues of running loose, ad hoc cabling.

They have successfully replaced their archaic but system-critical computers with new computers which are powerful enough to meet future needs, communicate with other computers and the internet, and serve their diverse needs more successfully.

The project has enabled all this to happen whilst remaining within Cogwheel's limited budget by applying sensible but effective solutions and by carefully understanding the needs and goals of Cogwheel. Not only would hiring a consultant to achieve this have cost a lot, but would probably have led to over-specified solutions, higher cost, and a lower level of usability.