

NEWS RELEASE

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Learning lessons about technological deprivation

Technology. It's what I do and what I love.

My partner would say that breathing, eating, and sleeping technology doesn't begin to cover my obsessive enthusiasm. I love playing with it. I also love reading, talking and writing about it. It still blows my mind what it can do now and what it could possibly do in the future.

Technology is second nature to me. I use it without even thinking about it.

Recently I had a stark reminder of just how much I take technology for granted. A meeting I had, threw up a question in my own mind. Could I imagine my life without access to technology? No. End of.

But that is a daily reality for some of the groups that BAYC (Birmingham Association of Youth Clubs) works with.

Our company has just become a partner of the Pershore Road-based charity, which works with some of the groups across the West Midlands and beyond. They provide support to as many as 200 youth groups and organisations in the region. The support comes in different guises but with the common goal of empowering young people.

Technological empowerment is a component part of that. But the reality is that there are pockets of young people who are marginalised because they haven't even got some of what we would consider the most basic provisions, such as access to the Internet.

There is a myth that all young people wear hoodies and go round happy slapping each other, filming it on their mobile phones and posting the footage on video file sharing websites. It's easy to forget that not everyone can afford, or has access to, the multiple technologies that are widely available.

This is where we can help our charity partner. Because as well as helping to raise much needed funds, we can offer our help, advice and expertise on the issues and help these groups engage with technology.

As an organisation, working with a charity in this way will give us all a warm healthy benevolent glow.

But the thought struck me there is more I can gain from this. Being technologically deprived is beyond my comprehension. It's completely alien to me because I spend most of my waking hours with, using it or spending time with people with a similar grasp or appreciation of it.

However, I know I can learn from the experiences of those who don't see technology in the same way I do. I'm not sure what I'll find when I do it but by putting myself in other people's shoes, I hope it will help me look at what our company does differently.

This is especially pertinent for us as we are so heavily involved in installing IT learning systems into schools, colleges and universities.

In a lot of cases, educational establishments have a pretty clear idea of what they want from their IT because they are clued up to what's possible. And it's easy to get carried away with what can be achieved

without appreciating that not everyone who will be able to benefit or use it fully.

Where our work alongside technologically deprived people comes in to its own is that we can get a whole new perspective on the barriers to usage of the hardware and software that we install and manage for our clients.

This level of learning will help us add value to our overall proposition because we can make more rounded recommendations based on real experience of those people who have come to technology for the first time.

And there's a lesson to be learned on a personal note too. Whilst I'll never probably be in the position where I'm technologically deprived, there are some people that say I should learn to switch off from time to time.

Andy Dent is managing director of Innovit.

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Notes to Editors

Innovit is a Midlands based provider of IT solutions for SMEs, professional services and education. The Innovit team work in partnership with client companies to maximise the potential of technology with the businesses, helping them to work smarter not harder.

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