



ACL Initiative Project Report

Name of project lead	Chrystella Bieler
Name of organisation	Herefordshire Council (Adult & Community Learning)

Brief description of what you proposed to do

We had planned to use the equipment in the following areas: Wider Family Learning, Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) and non-ICT, Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) courses. Connectivity has been limited in some areas. We had planned to deliver courses at venues where there was wireless connection to the Internet, in order to further develop e-learning opportunities. We were hoping that learners, who have previously avoided computer courses, would have used the opportunity to have hands on experience in a safe environment to explore some of the benefits that computers offer.

Summary of your project *(How did your organisation integrate the mini laptops and camera into e-learning in your Adult Education Service?)*

We decided to loan the two Eee PCs to a Family Centre based at one of our market towns – Bromyard. The reason for this being that the centre planned to run a range of ESOL, Family Learning and Community Learning courses. The Linux PC was loaned to the Family Learning/ESOL tutor for sole use. The tutor used the PC as follows:

1. I used the Eee PC as a teaching tool carrying it with me to various places where I work.
2. I used it as a main computer connected to the projector.
3. I used it with learners directly as a help to improve speaking and listening skills.

The Windows PC was shared between the remaining Tutors and was most widely used in IT classes.

Evaluation of project

1. Teaching tool:

Since the mini laptop is very small it was very convenient to carry. It wasn't heavy, so it could just be put into a bag and was always there whenever it was needed.

Tutors used memory sticks, which meant that tutor resources were easily accessible. The PC's were used to connect to the Internet giving even better access to various teaching and learning activities. Unfortunately being connected to the Internet wasn't always possible.

There are two negative things to mention: The size of the keyboard makes typing very difficult, therefore tutors typed most resources using a standard laptop/PC beforehand. The other issue was the lack of a CD-drive, as tutors couldn't use any of their educational CD-Roms.

2. Using it with the projector:

The mini laptop is perfect for using it as a main computer being connected to the projector in places where you have to attach your own laptop to the projector.

3. Using it as a tool to develop listening and speaking skills – comments from ESOL tutor:

"The mini laptop was wonderful to play pre-recorded listening exercises – although a simple MP3 player could do the same job just as well. It didn't prove to be so good about improving speaking skills. I made a few attempts to record learners' speaking activities using the web-cam facility on the Eee PC, but it didn't come out as well as I had expected it. Of course, it wasn't the mini laptop's fault, it had a simple psychological reason.

Whenever I set it up and asked advanced learners to speak into the camera, they all got too shy or embarrassed and couldn't say a word while the camera was on".

Project outputs

As a summary we think the Eee PC is a very useful tool with some limits. Where there is access to the internet, it opens up plenty of additional learning opportunities. The laptops were well received by learners who were using them for a limited time. However, those with more advanced IT or typing skills did not see them as suitable.

Any plans for the future?

We shall continue to use the PC's at the learning centre but have no immediate plans to invest in any more.