

# CASE STUDY

## Redevelopment of the Social Enterprise Training and Support website: the journey so far.

### History of the SETAS website

The Social Enterprise Training and Support (SETAS) website was launched in 2004 by the Social Enterprise Training Consortium (SETC) and by 2008 had become a key destination for social enterprises seeking high quality training and support. The site acts as an interface for support providers and social enterprises; hosting details of business advisors and consultants; training opportunities; as well as links to other relevant social enterprise resources. It is currently managed by Coin Street Community Builders, a



social enterprise development trust which has transformed a derelict area of London's South Bank into a thriving neighbourhood, who were former members of the Social Enterprise Training Consortium.

Redevelopment of the SETAS site was chosen as a project of the Big Lottery funded I-SEE Programme to address the issue of improving access to high quality social enterprise business advice. The potential of the site to deliver in this area was clear due to its previous success and because of the relevance it had to changes in the business support and technological landscapes. The project was an opportunity to bring together the increasing number of business support services, under a modern Web 2.0 platform.

### Redeveloping the website

#### Formation of a Steering Advisory Group

One of the earliest activities of the project was the formation of a Steering Advisory Group. Group members were chosen for their expertise and experience and represented a cross section of the business support landscape. The group was formed to guide the redevelopment of the site; discussing key issues to ensure that it was correctly managed and not only appropriate for current aims and needs, but also sustainable beyond the life of the project.

#### KEY CHALLENGES

*Ensuring the SETAS site was not isolated in the business support landscape by clearly identifying key stakeholders and how to engage with them.*

*Ensuring the SETAS site was suitable for all types of organisations within the social enterprise sector by actively involving them in the research and testing phases.*

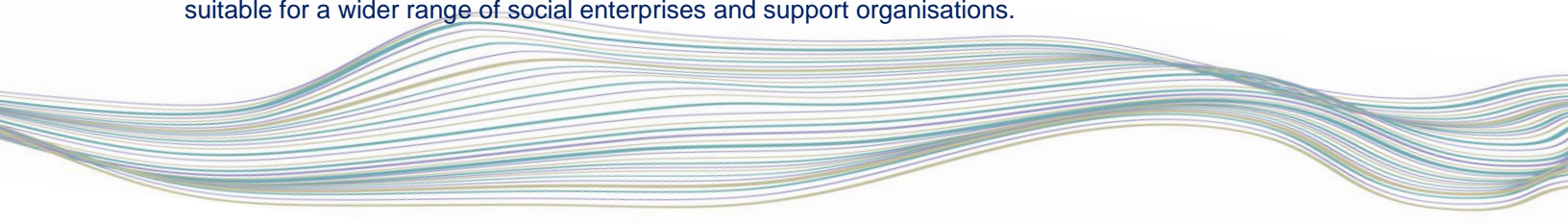


It was also at this early stage that UnLtdWorld, the creator of a leading networking site for social entrepreneurs, was chosen from an open tender to deliver the technological build of the new site, as their technical expertise and relevant experience were ideally placed.

#### Research

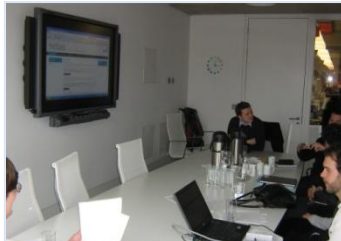
With the general aim of the project decided and the experts in place to guide it, research needed to be undertaken to establish what was required of SETAS in the current landscape and, in turn, what form the new site should take. The target research sample included those with key invested interest in the site: existing users, social enterprises, support providers, established support organisations and those involved in similar support projects.

The research took the form of emailed and posted surveys and face-to-face interaction. In addition to this, focus groups were created where key individuals met to discuss the requirements of the site in more detail. As a result of this focused research, specific objectives were identified: the search and rating functions needed to be significantly improved; there needed to be a facility for users to converse and network; and the site needed to be suitable for a wider range of social enterprises and support organisations.



### ***Creating and testing the beta site***

Having established the essential requirements of the new site, Coin Street Community Builders, the Steering Advisory Group and UnLtdWorld began to discuss the overall design and style. By late January 2010, key decisions had been made, the existing SETAS site was replaced with a holding page and the rebuild commenced.



Due to the clear vision that existed for the site, the rebuild was swift and by March 2010 UnLtdWorld had produced a fresh, modern beta site. Although detailed research and discussions had influenced the design, stringent testing was still required to ensure that the functionality and style met the required standards.

The Steering Advisory Group and focus groups have reconvened to test and discuss the beta site and access will also be granted to key bodies who fed into the research stage. Using the same research and test audience ensures that the input remains focused and relevant, and that the testing process proves successful in 'fine-tuning' the anticipated final product.

**The beta site is now in the late stages of testing and the official SETAS re-launch is scheduled for late-April 2010!**

### ***The future of the project and the SETAS site***

The launch of the new SETAS site is by no means the end of the project. The Steering Advisory group will continue to guide the evolution of the site; developing it into 'the UK's one-stop marketplace for social enterprise training and support'.

Some exciting and timely links have also been made between SETAS and other services in the business support landscape. Of key interest is the relevance the site has to recent recommendations made by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS). The OTS commented that improved web-based systems will greatly improve a social enterprise business support landscape that is currently complex and difficult to navigate. As a result of this they are fully supportive of SETAS and keen to form strategic links between it and Business Link, the government funded channel for business support in England. This is an exciting development and could not only improve, but truly transform the social enterprise business support landscape.

There are also potential strategic links between other services and business support projects and these too will be explored over the coming months.

#### **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

*Formation of a Steering Advisory Group*

*Successful partnerships formed*

*Successful market research completed*

*Beta site built*

*Beta site tested*

***Launch of new site scheduled for April 2010***

*Exciting and timely links made to other organisations and services*

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