



# Background information

YouthNet, May 2013

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# Overview of Do-it

Do-it is the UK's national volunteering database and comprises a public-facing website and associated services to support it, including a desktop application and various web-based utilities.

Much like an online jobs board, our website, [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk), lists volunteering opportunities based on a simple postcode search, with a more advanced search that allows for further filtering. Once you've found a suitable opportunity, you can register and apply for the opportunity. Your application is forwarded onto the relevant partner to consider and follow up. Once you've registered your details are stored so that you do not need to re-enter your details when you apply for any subsequent opportunities.

The website also includes a Volunteer Centre finder service, information and blogs about volunteering as well as information for new and existing organisations seeking to recruit volunteers.

## Partners

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The organisations who partner with Do-it to make use of our services generally fall into two distinct groups. Of the 640 direct partners we have, approximately half of them are Volunteer Centres, independent organisations that support volunteering in the locality that they serve (usually a local authority area). Volunteer Centres make use of our bespoke V-Base CRM desktop software to run their brokering service, and in return for getting the software at 100% discount, upload their opportunities to Do-it. Through this network, Do-it and the Volunteer Centres are able to help thousands of small local charities and maintain the quality of opportunities added to Do-it.

Our other main group of partners use a web-based service called Recruiter to post opportunities directly through us. This group are mainly national and regional charities (such as the National Trust and Marie Curie), but also can include health trusts, local authorities and similar organisations that make use of volunteers. These partners pay an annual fee for use of this service.

We have recently built a new service called Uploader, which allows partners with existing databases to automatically transfer their opportunities into Do-it. Although we have several partners interested in this, it has yet to be used in a live environment.

We are also near completion on a new service called Volunteer Finder, which will allow Do-it partners to find and contact volunteers with suitable skills from within the Do-it database of registered volunteers.

## Syndication

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Since 2006 we have offered syndication of our data to various organisations through an XML API. Syndication allows organisations to show Do-it opportunity data on their own website within their own look and feel. This has been part of YouthNet's approach to enable individuals to find volunteering opportunities easily where they are and not limited to only via the Do-it website.

Those taking a syndication feed can also filter the data in numerous ways.

The main types of organisations who currently use the service:

- Volunteering organisations such as Timebank, vInspired and Your Square Mile who use opportunities from our database to promote volunteering on their websites. Other organisations, from local authorities through to media organisations also use our data and until recently, we provided this service to the JobCentre Plus website, to sit alongside paid roles.
- Charities use syndication on their own website to promote their own opportunities. Making use of our web-based interface means that charities can easily manage their portfolio of volunteering opportunities simultaneously on their own website, plus on Do-it. Several Volunteer Centres similarly use this service to promote opportunities that they have added to the database on their websites.
- Corporate and other large employers who want to promote volunteering to their workforce. As well as enabling a dedicated Do-it feed on their company intranet, which can be filtered to promote company priorities, we also provide a monthly report on the activity on the feed which can be used to measure against their CSR objectives.

## Technology

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Do-it handles around 2 million opportunity search queries a month, and therefore we have invested in enterprise-level technologies to ensure that we can meet the demands placed on our service. Our web-based services are built in a Java/Spring environment, and we use an Oracle 11g database, generously given as a gift-in-kind by Oracle. We operate a Solaris zone based system at application level, and we have multiple physical application servers to ensure we have adequate failover and a staging environment that mirrors the production. Our servers are currently hosted at Imperial College, again as a gift-in-kind.

We make use of third-party services such as Postcode Anywhere to convert postcodes and locations into geographical references.

## Scale and traffic

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- Over 1.1 million individuals have chosen to register on Do-it since we rolled out the registration process in 2004.
- Around 1,000 new people register on our service every day.
- An application is made every 46 seconds on average (January 2013).
- Our current average monthly unique users figure is 192,877; although this can rise to 225,000 (Jan 2013).
- More than 8,500 fans on Facebook, and over 4,500 followers on Twitter.

## Supporting and promoting volunteering

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YouthNet has always looked to use the scale of Do-it's reach to benefit volunteering initiatives, promoting relevant activity to the users of the site or to the partners. These initiatives vary from the 2005 Year of the Volunteer through to more recent campaigns such as the Jubilee Hour, Join In and Team London, the Mayor of London's volunteering campaign. We have also played a major role in supporting volunteering around the 2012 Olympics, including working with LOCOG to promote other opportunities to prospective Games Makers as part of the application and selection process.

Do-it has been part of several high profile media campaigns, including the Hairy Bikers' BBC TV series about Meals on Wheels, which included a call to action that was powered by Do-it. Most recently we began a partnership with ITV to support their Text Santa campaign, which they plan to build on in forthcoming years. Previously we have been used by Honda on a nationwide media campaign to help promote a new car.

## Approach to open access

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Open data means allowing certain data to be freely available, without restrictions from copyright. YouthNet has had discussions with funders in the past on making the Do-it data entirely open, allowing anyone to access the data in a format that can easily be manipulated and merged with other datasets and made fully available elsewhere.

YouthNet's approach to date has been to balance this with the investment and resources needed to collect this type of data. Our approach has been to invest in data to create a breadth and scale of opportunities available, as a key part of Do-it's distinct offering and to reach the scale of volunteers. This investment would be undermined by the data being fully available elsewhere. YouthNet's approach has therefore been to enable 'open access', which means that it is free for volunteers to access the data, but not that the data itself is free.

We welcome the idea of opening Do-it up, but we also recognise the reality that data collection has a cost and that this expenditure needs to be recouped. The new owner of Do-it would need to be able to ensure the opening up of data is consistent with financial sustainability, independent of central Government funding.

## Operating Costs

	July 2013 to June 2014 estimated	July 2012 to June 2013 estimated
<b>Staff costs</b>	£402,558 (£352,876 excl NI & Pension)	£402,558
<b>Direct costs excl gift in kind</b>	£59,310	£71,969
<b>Gifts in kind</b>	£228,898	£228,898
<b>TOTAL OPERATING COSTS</b>	<b>£690,766</b>	<b>£703,426</b>

In addition, YouthNet apportions its total overheads to its services according to headcount. Development Team resources are included in overheads, for example for account management for Big Lottery Fund, OCS and corporate syndication. On this basis, the additional overhead costs for YouthNet for 2013/14 would be £184,996 and for 2012/13 £218,350.

In terms of direct costs, excluding gifts in kind, estimates for 2013/14 are as follows:

Software	Incl Postcode Anywhere, Resin web server, Firewall security & SSL certificate annual licences	£13,800
Server support	Annual licences for Do-it servers	£17,000
Domain Management and Communications ISP	For 12 urls for Do-it and V Base and includes Janet network at Imperial College, back up charges, proportion of office telephone system & ISP for Do-it	£15,950
Marketing & Operations activity	Includes annual contract for newsletter, as well as travel and subsistence, and relating to membership & support	£12,560

Gifts in kind are valued as follows;

- Oracle 11g £180,098
- Imperial College £30,800
- Salesforce licence £18,000

## Income

Do-it is currently funded through the following;

- Office for Civil Society Transition funding, following end of strategic partnership – £239k funding to December 2013 – no funds to be transferred.
- Big Lottery Fund BASIS funding - Final funding of £154,000 from July to December 2013 – no funds to be transferred.
- Oracle gift-in-kind support valued at £180k p.a . Oracle currently provides a software licence and support gift-in-kind donation to YouthNet for the Oracle database software which forms part of the Do It technology platform. This gift-in-kind includes perpetual licenses for Oracle Database Enterprise Edition and associated Database Options, and the ongoing technical support for these licences (currently agreed until March 2014). The decision on whether or not this gift-in-kind donation would continue under any new ownership of Do It would be made on a case by case basis. Oracle would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter in more detail with shortlisted bidders or the selected owner.

- Imperial College gift-in-kind hosting valued at £30,800p.a. This would not be transferred to a new owner.
- Salesforce gift-in-kind licences valued at £18,000 p.a. There is an opportunity for this to be transferred to a new owner.
- Partnership Income from V Base Recruiter fees, training & support fees for V Base and syndication to charities. £86k in 2011/12, forecast to be £100k in 2012/13 (1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> June 2013). YouthNet will transfer proportional income relating to contracts which extend beyond December 2013 and are transferred to a new owner. An indication of potential income is complex to calculate given the timing of contracts and variables involved. Based on the current partnership contracts that we have open, if for example the handover took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013, the available income for the new owner of Do It would be around £36k. However, at this time this is only an indication of the amount that would be available in December, as we do not know at this stage what contracts we will have open at that time or will transfer.
- Corporate syndication fees to support employee volunteer and reporting on activity, including ITV. Annual income in the region of £40-£50k. Subject to agreement with each syndication partner, the proportional income relating to contracts which extend beyond December 2013 will be available to a new owner. As an indication, based on current syndication partners renewing where expected, the potential income would be £17,917.

# Audience

## Audience Information


We have seen Do-it's monthly average visitors grow considerably over the last three years.

- Between July 2010 and June 2011 we reached on average 137,215 unique users each month, with a highest reach in June 2011 of 190,434
- Between July 2011 and June 2012 we reached on average 181,139 unique users each month, with a highest reach in January 2012 of 215,699.
- For the current year (July 2012 to June 2013) we are currently reaching on average 192,877 unique users per month (based upon July to March data), with a highest reach in January of 225,156.

Between April 2012 to March 2013 we have seen a total of:

- 1,970,856 unique users
- 184,072 new registrations
- 618,169 applications or enquiries to volunteer

### Do-it: Reach & profile

Do-it	March 2013
Unique visitors	198,328
% change since same month last year( March 2012)	 10%
Page views	3,380,039
Average time spent on website per visit	8mins 13secs
% of visits that were more than a minute	60%
% of visits where more than one page was viewed	71%
New registrations this month	14,053
Registered users active this month	16,447
<b>Topline profile of users</b> (Source: All registered users ever-End of March 13 Do-it database -SQL tool)	
Male/ Female - % split of registered users	28/72
Age group- % registered users 25 or under	38%
Age group- % registered users under 30	53%
Ethnic minority registered users	26%
Registered users with disability	5%



## Do-it: Reach & profile

Geographical spread March 13	
Country website accessed from	% of all visits
England	91%
Scotland	2%
Wales	1%
N.Ireland	0%
Outside U.K	6%

Traffic sources breakdown March 13	
Traffic source	Proportion of ALL visits
Search engine traffic	46%
Direct traffic	31%
Referral traffic	23%

Top referral domains March 13	
Referral domain	Proportion of ALL visits
volunteering.org.uk	1.4%
thestudentroom.co.uk	0.6%
facebook.com	0.5%
valonline.org.uk	0.5%
volunteerbristol.org.uk	0.5%

Volunteer Registrations			
	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013
Accrued total	1,097,059	1,111,274	1,125,249
New per month	17,542	14,314	14,053

Number of Applications			
	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013
New Per month	58,023	46,310	45,343

## Do-it promotion snapshot

### Do-it social channels

On average we have maintained a maximum of two posts on our Facebook wall, per day. With between 3 – 4 proactive tweets (and outreach posts) via our twitter channel.

Engagement across these channels is generally very good - when leading questions are posted on these channels. The Facebook and Twitter channels continue to grow, with limited resources utilised across these channels.

Month	Do-it 2012 (April)	Do-it 2013 (April)
Twitter followers	2400	5114
Facebook followers	6000	8777
YouTube Followers	70	81 (not actively used at present)

Snapshot Last 90 days	(Feb – Apr)
Incoming messages (FB & twitter)	1.5K
Interactions (FB & twitter)	1.8K
Unique users (FB & twitter)	1.3K
Impressions (FB & twitter)	2.9M

## Do-it Newsletter

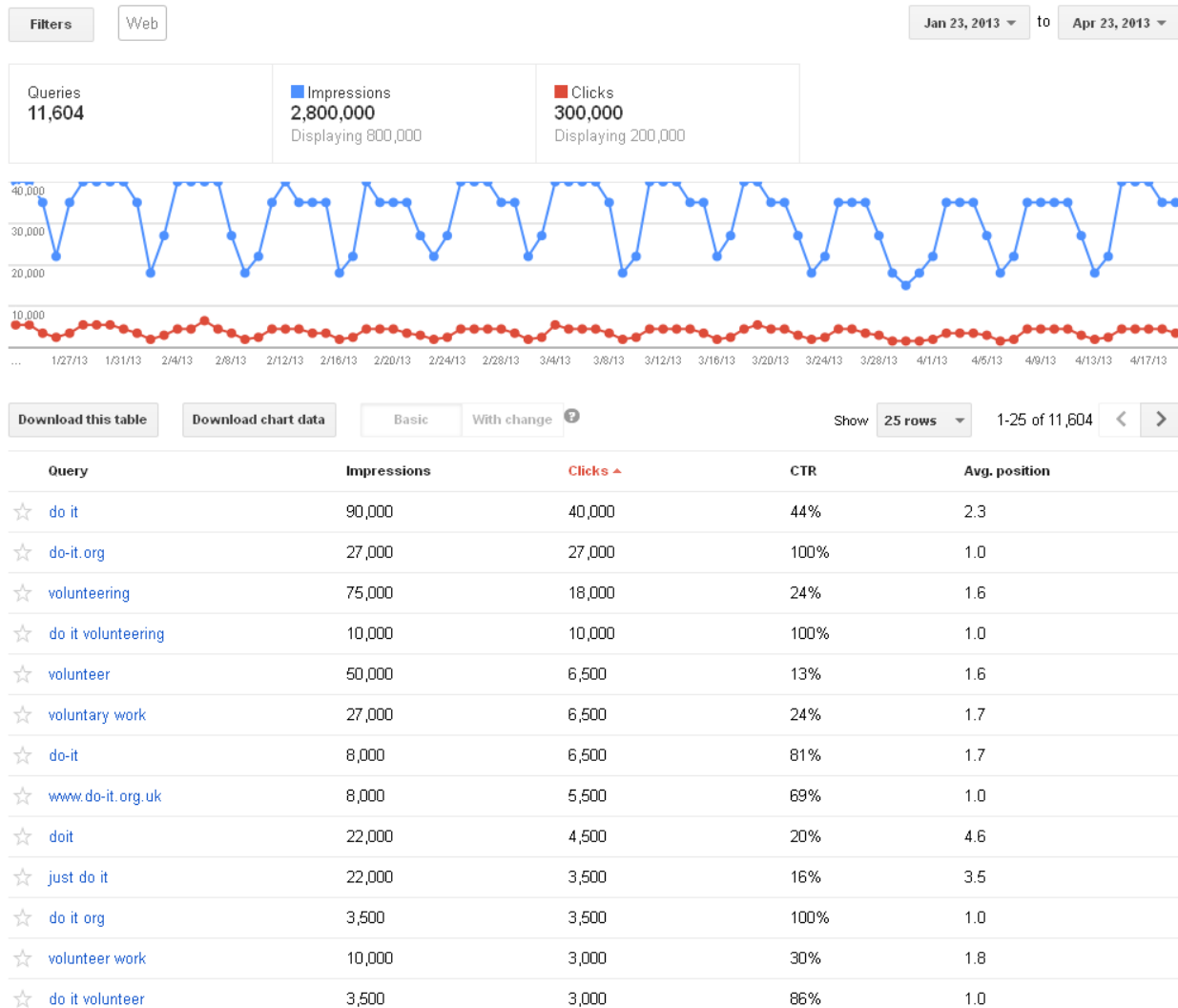
The Do-it newsletter is a key way of engaging with existing (and relatively new) users and volunteers. The Do-it newsletter is split in two, to target two demographics (16 – 25, and over 25). We have occasionally also undertaken regional targeting for specific opportunities. Seasonality plays a big part in the popularity of the newsletter.

Month 2013	Jan	Feb	Mar	April
Emails sent	73,823	81,510	86,497	90,522
Emails opened	55,632	59,972	51,510	41,499
In email click thr	10,583	8,805	6,314	4,591

## Do-it promotion snapshot

### Snapshot of search queries to Do-it (Jan Apr 2013)

The below highlights the top search query search terms that have served Do-it as a top destination site (for said query). You will see the synonymous nature of the Do-it brand with volunteers and volunteering keywords (and brand) terms. However, it also shows that there is potential to increase Do-it's performance on many of these keywords, where click through rates (CTR) are lower.



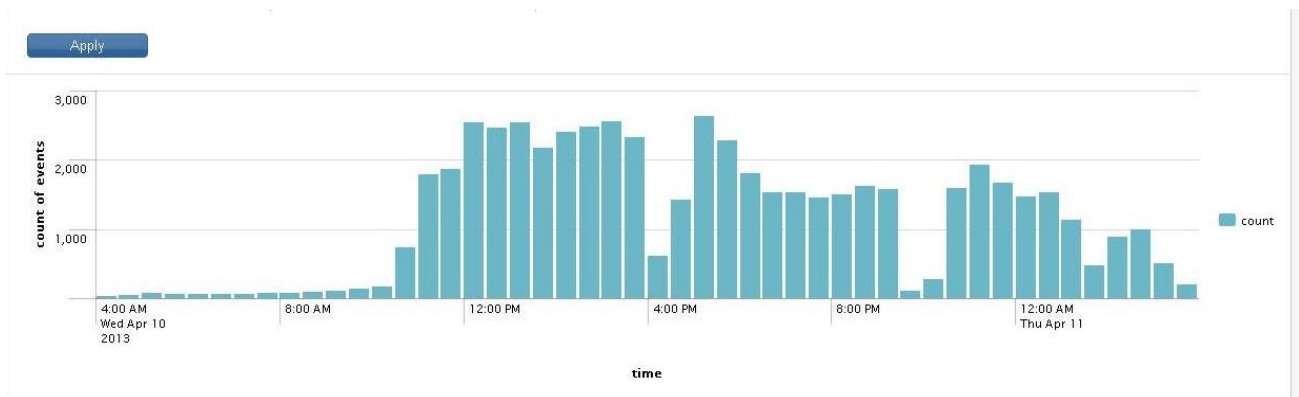
## Do-it marketing and media

### Do-it media coverage

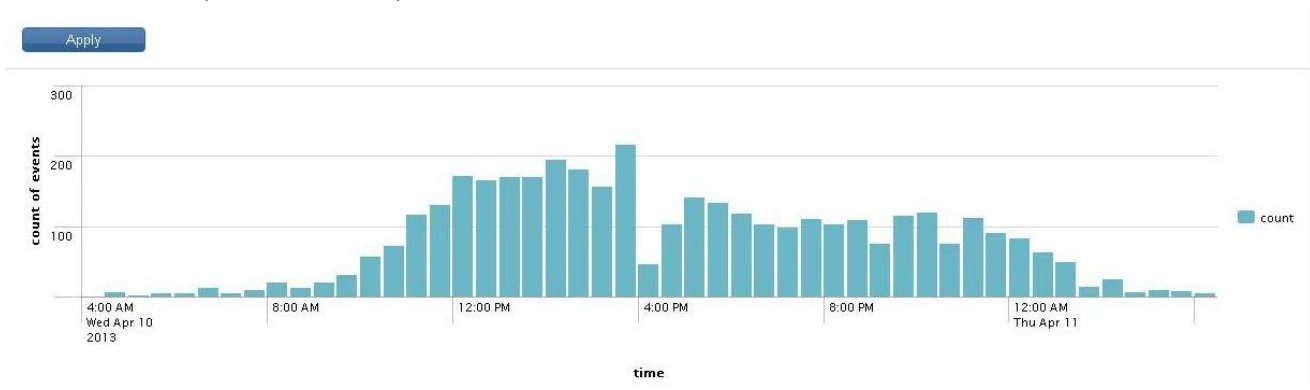
Do-it media coverage is consistently high for print, particularly regionally. This is achieved mainly through reactive and limited pro active work. However, the relationships YouthNet has nurtured and built for Do-it over the years, means that now the Do-it brand is regularly referred to.

Month	Print	Online	Broadcast	No. of which were national;
Jul 2012	20	2	0	5
Aug 2012	32	7	1	1
Sep 2012	27	8	4	7
Oct 2012	36	9	0	9
Nov 2012	58	4	0	1
Dec 2012	33	7	0	14
Jan 2013	42	6	0	0
Feb 2013	20	7	0	2
Mar 2013	37	7	0	0

Indication of daily logs – snapshot from 10/04/13



Indication of daily searches – snapshot from 10/04/13



## Data protection

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Do-it holds personal and sensitive data about hundreds of thousands of individuals and as such takes its data protection responsibilities very seriously.

We only send our newsletter to those people who have expressly opted in to receive it, and we remove people from our mailing list where they have repeatedly not opened our emails. We delete the accounts of all unverified users after one calendar month, and as part of the transfer process we will delete the accounts of all users who have not logged into the service for more than three years.

Since Do-it started allowing volunteers to register in 2004, over 1.1million people have registered onto the database (April 2013). However, around 0.4m of those have since will have had their personal details removed from our database as they have not logged in within the last three years.

## Data protection and transferring ownership

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The Information Commissioner's Office has produced guidance on the requirements for data protection when transferring a business that holds that data.

The guidance states that although there is no specific requirement to get explicit consent prior to a business transferring ownership, the individual must be treated fairly and the level of consent sought should be consistent with that a reasonable person would expect.

We will work with the new owner, once identified, to agree a data transfer plan that is consistent with the Information Commissioner's guidance.

# Technical

## Do-it software

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Do-it is a platform that allows an individual to search for volunteering opportunities comparable to a job websites such as Jobserve, Jobsite etc.

## Getting the data in

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To provide this facility, opportunity data needs to be input into the system on a daily basis. To do this Do-it provides four software applications that allow data to be added into our database.

- **V-Base 2.5**, a VB6 access database CRM to manage volunteers and opportunities, there is a simple CSV (FTP) import of their opportunity data. Currently these imports occur when the user dictates and once sent to us via FTP take up to one hour to process.
- **V-Base 3**, a dot.net CRM application which is being rolled out, as above there is a simple CSV (SFTP) import facility to upload their opportunity data. The imports occur when the user dictates and once sent to us via SFTP; it can take anything up to one hour to process, however an aspiration is that we move to using the Uploader XML API to provide instant transfers.
- **Recruiter**, a web-based (GRAILS) application allowing organisations to manage their opportunities, any actions taken on this system will take place in real time.
- **Uploader**, an API that allows organisations to be able to import opportunities from their own database onto our platform. This is a Restful XML API and is provided to any organisation that wishes to use it, it does require technical work on the partner's side to transfer their data into the API format required.

These systems are automated and require no manual input from the technical team. If there is an issue we usually receive an error report from the Partnerships team and a decision can be taken on appropriate action.

## Getting the data out

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Once the data is in our database from the various methods listed above, we then are able to build multiple applications around it to allow volunteers and organisations to benefit from the platform.

### Website

At the core of the platform is the Do-it website, which allows volunteers to search and apply for opportunities in their locality. Based on Java technologies (Spring, Hibernate), the website handles the majority of the 100,000 searches a day we receive.

Everything is logged by our systems and this data is used to generate reports for Partnerships or fundraisers when required. By the nature of these reports it means that manual work is required by developers to generate the information.

The website also allows volunteers to register and apply for opportunities, as well as standard account management functions. There is also information on volunteering and using Do-it. These content sections are currently being moved to Wordpress. There is also an on-going process of refreshing the design of the main pages, moving them to responsive design that works across PCs, tablets and mobiles.

## Syndication platform

This is a XML Restful API to allow organisations to be able to take opportunity data from Do-it and present it on their services in their brand. Currently there are around 30 active syndication feeds.

Through this system we are then able to generate information reports detailing the profile of the volunteering searches and applications that have gone through their system.

This is an automated application that runs on the first of every month and organisations that are signed up to it will receive their report via email. No manual work by developers or partnerships is required. If an issue occurs regarding reports then this will be addressed in the same way as above.

We have also offered access to the syndication platform for others who want to create useful apps or other tools based on our data.

## Mobile phone apps

For Do-it, YouthNet has adopted an approach of enabling mobile access to the main site through responsive design. We have helped create volunteering apps in conjunction with partners rather than as standalone Do-it apps. There are two apps that currently use the data delivered by the Do-it platform.

- **+U** - This is an Android gamification app that was built by Sony and supported by YouthNet and is based on time specific opportunities. This takes data from Do-it via a generated CSV file on nightly basis and imports it into its own mysql database. It has had limited take-up, primarily due to the limited number of short, one-off volunteering opportunities appearing on Do-it which was a key focus of the app. It currently hosted on our server infrastructure, and we'd be happy to discuss with the new owner about potential for development in the future.
- **Looking Local** - Another more generic Android app has been developed by Looking Local. This takes a Do-it syndication data feed and allows for generic searches on mobile. This is hosted and maintained by a third-party.

No work is currently required from the developers in YouthNet to manage these systems.

## Quick search box

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We offer a free simple search box (sometimes referred to as a widget), an iFrame that can be added to any website using a short snippet of code, which is available on our [website](#). The aim was to create a simple and easy tool that allows any website to promote volunteering without the cost and resource implication of the syndication feed, and has been part of YouthNet's approach to enable individuals to find volunteer opportunities easily where they are and not limited to only via the Do-it website. This allows users on other websites to quickly access Do-it opportunities and is used by a variety of websites, such as local volunteer centres or blogs about volunteering. We don't charge for use of this widget, nor do we record who is making use of it.

## Admin systems

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To manage the Do-it platform there are several web based (GRAILS) administration systems. The Partnerships team require these systems to manage organisations, adding, editing, deleting and freezing them from being able to post data onto Do-it or take data from Do-it.

These systems have been developed in house and currently require no further action on the behalf of the technical team. Administering the data is the role of the Partnerships team. Any new features or bug requests go through the Do-it product owner who will take the decision whether to take action or not.

## Support website

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YouthNet provides partner support via our Customer Support helpline and via a micro-site, which provides an online knowledge base for our partners to be able to find issues or information that can assist them with any of our applications. This is managed by the Partnerships team and is built on Wordpress, and was visited by 489 unique visitors in March 2013.

## Desktop software (V-Base)

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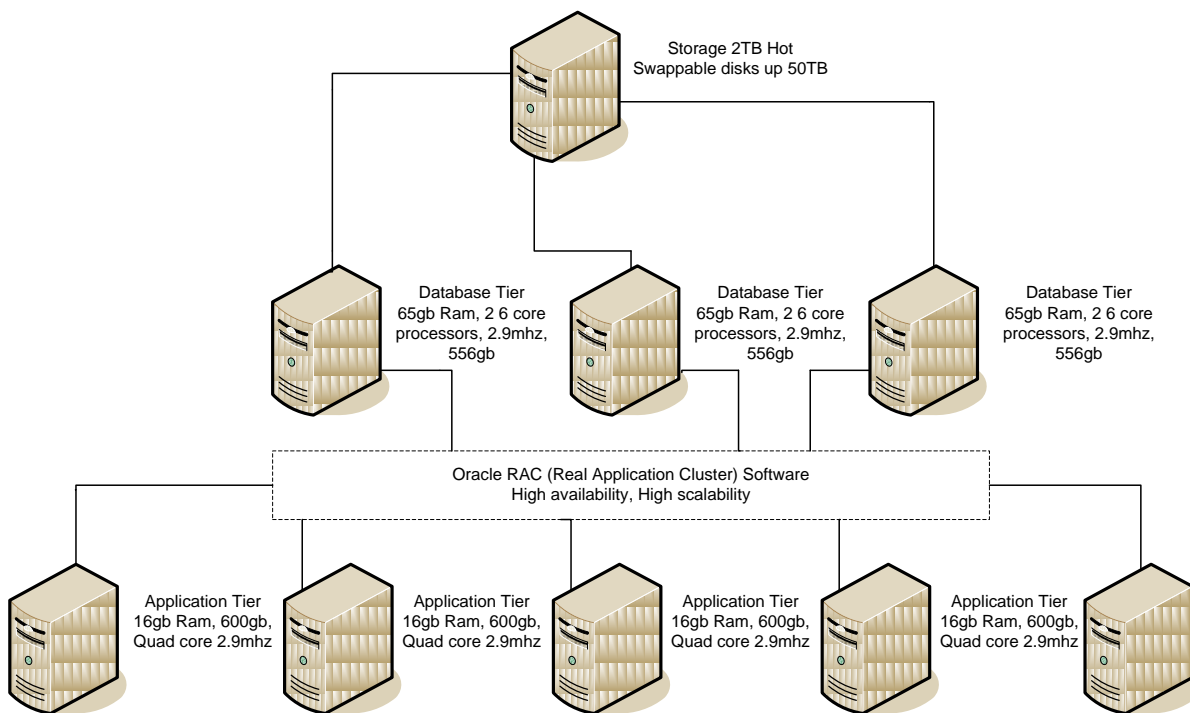
Although for most people Do-it is primarily seen as a website, for Volunteer Centres, Do-it is primarily the provider of their CRM solution, which supports their operations. YouthNet provides them with a copy of V-Base, allowing them to do their brokerage, manage their organisation and volunteer contacts, and produce reports for funders. That their opportunities go onto the Do-it website is a by-product of the service we provide, although different Volunteer Centres have different levels of appreciation for the number of volunteers Do-it generates (some report up to 50% of volunteers come through Do-it).

It's worth stressing the importance that Volunteer Centres place on V-Base; and the major concern that transferring Do-it to a new organisation will reduce the support for their core work. Volunteer Centres provide vital support to local organisations, especially smaller charities, to secure the volunteers they need. They also provide support and advice for individuals to match them to the right organisations and volunteering opportunity. As a result, the network of Volunteer Centres provides a large number of opportunities for Do-it as well as contributing to the diversity of opportunities. They also help maintain the quality of these opportunities, so they are a very valuable part of the volunteering ecosystem and Do-it.

The Volunteer Centre network is extremely varied, and many are under-resourced operations. Although some have several full-time staff, others can operate with one or two part-time employees and volunteers who do brokerage as part other responsibilities. Often the actual data entry and brokerage is carried out by volunteers themselves. The level of technical expertise and infrastructure can vary enormously across the Volunteer Centres and some are running on legacy systems.

A challenge for YouthNet in developing and rolling out V-Base 3 has been the sheer scale of different requirements for the CRM aspect of the service and the different technical infrastructure and systems support available amongst these partners. YouthNet recognises that many Volunteer Centres have expressed frustration with our timeliness to deliver software solutions that meet all of their requirements. This is one of the reasons why our intention would be to make V-Base 3 open source to allow requirements to be built or added on as required.

## Do-it hardware



The above diagram outlines the current infrastructure that runs Do-it and all its related applications. The infrastructure is very scalable, powerful and maintainable and will ensure we can respond to rapid increases in demand for the service and meet our SLAs.

We operate a Solaris zone based system at application level which allows us to ensure that each application has its own resources, it also ensures we can add new applications to new zones when necessary. It offers us huge flexibility to deploy or remove applications without affecting other critical services we provide. We have multiple physical application servers that ensure we have adequate failover and a staging environment that mirrors the production.

The back bone of the Do-it database is supported by Oracle 11g in a RAC (Real Application Cluster) set up. This clustered Oracle environment ensures we have seamless failover and the ability to add more resources if required.

We make use of specialist functions in Oracle to improve the speed of our geo-spatial search results and text searching functionality to be able to run keyword searches across our data.

We have totally rewritten the entire codebase with new open source technologies based on the Java stack.

## Lessons learned / future ideas

- Like most organisations our direction of travel is towards cloud-based solutions. In considering this approach, we have balanced the cost and reliability of this against ongoing gift-in-kind database and hosting solutions. As we have been working to reduce the overall operating cost of Do-it, there has been little financial benefit in making the switch. In addition, our review in 2012 also raised



three significant concerns about current market options: the usage-based pricing models makes budgeting difficult; there were concerns over consistency and reliability of certain services which could affect SLAs; and the DPA requirements about data remaining within the EU. However, there have been recent market developments YouthNet has identified as having the potential to ensure these concerns are overcome. Yet this has been put on hold since the decision to transfer Do-it to a new owner.

- Do-it has supported Volunteer Centres populating our database by providing opportunities through using V-Base, the bespoke desktop CRM system that we provide them. However, Volunteer Centres have a wide variety of different setups and a single software solution trying to meet all their requirements is never going to be the perfect solution. It is for this reason that YouthNet has recently developed a comprehensive XML uploader facility, to allow other services to interact with our database and enable Volunteer Centres and other partners to use an alternative to V-Base.
- V-Base itself still has a market, and plenty of Volunteer Centres are currently using it. The completion of V-Base 3 has taken longer than planned due to reduced technical resources since the end of our strategic partnership and working to meet the diversity of needs. It has been developed for a desktop environment that is relevant for many VCs, however going forward we would probably look towards more cloud based solutions. However, this turns us into software-as-a-service provider for Volunteer Centres, which requires a different support structure.
- Do-it's website is built using enterprise level Java and Oracle database, and the core code and database structure was overhauled in 2011. For YouthNet, a key benefit of Oracle is its spatial search features that other databases do not necessarily offer. This ensures good location search functionality for users and has meant the service has coped easily with the significant increase in traffic over the last few years, and continues to provide a robust platform.  
Java and Oracle both require technical specialists who are much in demand, and YouthNet has been affected by the buoyant recruitment market, and has struggled to match the market-rate for salaries.
- Do-it's search is based around proximity searching based on the postcode/location a volunteer provides, which is simple to explain and fair to all partners. However, many opportunities do not take place in a specific location, and we have struggled to develop a model that lists these alongside those opportunities with a location. Similarly, where the opportunity location is away from a population centre, such as at a stately home, these opportunities may not get seen by that many people. For quite genuine reasons, opportunity providers attempt to "game" the system by using postcodes of popular locations (eg city centres), or post the same opportunity in multiple locations, simply to ensure that their opportunity is seen by as many people as possible. Whilst their intention is well-meaning, the result is that the proximity element confuses end-users and distorts how many opportunities are available in the database.
- Overall, Do-it has a large number of dependencies, so any change to our data requirements can be a long process. A lot of the decisions about how our data is structured have been taken because of the original set up of Do-it and partner infrastructure. Making fundamental changes would require a huge change management process for us and our partners, which YouthNet recognises may be required yet to deliver this would significantly affect our focus and resources on our other service TheSite. This is a key reason why we believe Do-it has potential with an organisation focusing upon volunteering.

# Partnerships

## Introduction to partners

### Current partners

Do-it has direct contracts with organisations that make use of our products and upload to Do-it. As of the end of April 2013, this is configured as below, although as we are currently migrating organisations from V-Base 2.5 to V-Base 3.0:

- Do-it Recruiter – 199
- V-Base 2.5 – 418
- V-Base 3.0 – 21

In addition, we also have seven partner organisations that use V-Base 2.5 but don't upload to Do-it.

Many of our partner organisations are federated or umbrella groups that allow multiple smaller organisations to upload through a single product.

The numbers below reflect the approximate number of individual charities within federated organisations which have access to Do-it due to membership by their umbrella organisation. This aligns with the Charity Commission's approach to calculating the number of charities in England and Wales.

Organisation size	Number of organisations	
	31 March 2013	31 March 2012
VCQA Volunteer Centre (under 30K)	2	2
VCQA Volunteer Centre (over 30K)	331	323
Less than £10,000	3,150	2,658
£10,000-£100,000	1,833	1,557
£100,000- £500,000	741	636
£500,000- £1 million	69	63
£1 million- £10 million	182	173
£10 million +	89	85
Total Number of Direct Posting Partners	6,397	5,497
Total Number of Charities with Opportunities Posted on Do-it; Directly and on their behalf via a broker	26,108	

Do-it partners cover a wide range of causes. The ten most common areas of interest of Do-it volunteer opportunity are: (April 2013)

1. Children
2. Youth
3. Disability
4. Health and Social Care
5. Families
6. Older People
7. Mental Health
8. Education and Literacy
9. Sport and Recreation
10. Employment support

## Partner overview

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When YouthNet created Do-it needed a way to populate the database with good quality opportunities to volunteer. To achieve this ambition we worked hard to develop a strong relationship with the Volunteer Centres in England and created V-Base as a mechanism for these organisations to upload opportunities to Do-it.

YouthNet works with NCVO accredited Volunteer Centres and organisations that offer the six core functions of a Volunteer Centre in areas where an accredited Centre doesn't exist. Currently 345 of these organisations use Do-it, including organisations operating under a shared licence. Volunteer Centres have also experienced cuts to funding over the last few years which has had an impact on Do-it with organisations merging and sharing a common database. Where a Volunteer Centre has ceased to operate generally another organisation has filled the gap.

Our other Do-it partners are mostly national or regional charities who want to promote their opportunities on Do-it. They either need a mechanism to manage their opportunities or have their own database. At the moment these organisations would use our Do-it Recruiter web-based platform to enter details of their opportunities.

In the last two years, in light of the climate and pressures on all charities but especially small to medium, YouthNet has focused our recruitment on charities with turnover of £100k and less, to ensure they are able to cost effectively benefit from Do-it to meet their volunteering needs. In line with this YouthNet has also offered smaller organisations with income under £10k 100% discount to enable more the benefit from Do-it.

## Managing and supporting our partners

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We currently operate a membership scheme and fees are based on an organisation's gross annual income. For V-Base and Recruiter organisations sign up through Do-it and agree to the terms and conditions (see appendices). Membership is mostly renewed annually and we notify partners at least a month in advance of their membership expiring. Renewals happen throughout the year according to when members sign up, as opposed to all at the same time. Membership is currently at 100% discount to accredited Volunteer Centres (in exchange for the opportunity data) and organisations using Do-it Recruiter with an annual income of under £10k. Syndication is also provided at 100% discount for Volunteer Centres.

The benefits of membership include: our regular e-newsletter containing updates about Do-it products and services; opportunities to promote their volunteer roles in our newsletter to registered volunteers; access to the Do-it quick search widget (enabling organisations to include the Do-it branded search box in their own website with search results appearing on Do-it), 20% off NCVO membership and a 10% discount through our recommend-a-friend scheme. We support partners by answering their queries relating to their Do-it membership and use of the service.

Annual income from partners is in the region of £85-£100k, and the team are currently on target to reach our £100k income target for this financial year.

As V-Base is much more than a tool to manage opportunities and promote these on Do-it YouthNet provides training for our partners, which allow new staff and volunteers to learn how to make the most of

the software. We organise these training sessions regularly at our offices or partners can organise on-site training depending on capacity. Training is an additional paid for service. Standard training covers data entry, customising the database, querying, reporting among other features. Training sessions are usually held once a month, although this depends on demand. We are in the process of developing some e-learning modules and video tutorials. As Do-it Recruiter is simple and intuitive we no longer offer training on this service.

A significant part of our work is providing technical support to our partner organisations. Our helpdesk is open from 10am-3pm every day, and is pretty much in constant use during these times. This need for support (as well as training outlined above) reflects the often transient nature of the volunteers and staff at many partner organisations. In many cases these calls are requiring basic levels of support as initial training and expertise isn't passed on. Often, new staff or volunteers are seeking account details. There are also calls with technical issues or where bugs have been identified. YouthNet has aimed to move as much support online, with a wealth of materials (how to guides, solutions archive, user guides etc) online, however most partners still use the helpline and appreciate speaking to someone.

## Recruiting partners

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Over the last few years we have worked on recruitment strategies to target gaps in provision, comparing what volunteers want with opportunities in the database. For example, we have run specific projects targeting sports, arts, environment and health and social care organisations in order to increase the number using Do-it and the diversity of opportunities. As of the end of March 2013 we have an 87% retention rate and a 103% attainment rate.

## Consultations and Networks

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In previous years we have run face-to-face advisory and membership user groups. We have also run an annual partner survey most years to gauge satisfaction and development needs, details of which are in the appendices. We have often visited regional meetings of Volunteer Centres to answer queries and disseminate information. More recently we ran an online group which steered the development of V-Base and have given demonstrations of new services. We meet regularly with NCVO and vInspired as many organisations that access their services are also Do-it members.

YouthNet attends meetings of the England Volunteer Development Council (EVDC), which is an umbrella group representing voluntary organisations from nine regions across England. EVDC has recently started holding joint meetings with NNVA, which is a similar group for national volunteer involving organisations.

YouthNet had been involved in the European Year of Volunteering, and we have previously sat on the Volunteering in London working group. We also were involved in producing the Department of Health's Volunteering strategy in 2010.

YouthNet was also a member of the Volunteer Advisory Group for the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympic Games.

## Managing volunteer queries

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Whilst there is much information and guidance for volunteers on Do-it, the Partnerships team also offers customer support to prospective volunteers using the Do-it site. We answer queries from telephone and email contacts relating to finding appropriate volunteering opportunities, not having heard from opportunity providers regarding their application/enquiry, DBS checks, volunteering overseas, and issues affecting the Do-it site etc.

A frequent query is following up on an application and where an individual has not heard back within what they consider an appropriate time. YouthNet encourages partners to respond quickly to potential volunteers and while many organisations do so, this is an area where we see frustration in our volunteer satisfaction survey (see appendices) and reflects the resourcing challenges for many charities in volunteer management.

# Corporate Partnerships and Fundraising

## Corporate syndication

Do-it supports 30 syndication feeds, the majority of which are to partner charities as outlined above. In addition, Do-it has been offered to corporates as a simple way of supporting employee volunteering. It offers employees a quick and easy online search facility and application process, and reporting features to help measure interest and take up in volunteering. Do-it can be integrated into the organisation's volunteer system in its own look and feel. Examples include:

- **BBC** - used for specific campaigns like Hairy Bikers, where they can filter specific opportunities
- **Centrica** - had been a long standing partner and very supportive. However their strategy changed to move closer towards having a few partnerships related to their overall CR strategy.
- **Honda** - used a number of feeds on external facing websites to support the launch of a new environmentally friendly car in 2008. They filtered opportunities and used the feed as a key CR message attached to the campaign. This generated some good press coverage as well.
- **ITV** - in our second year of collaboration on their Text Santa initiative.

The Southern Co-operative

Latest Promotions Click here!

Home Corporate Info Membership Responsible & Ethical Retailing Community Support News Stores & Services

Search and apply for a volunteering opportunity

Search volunteering opportunities

Want to volunteer? Search through thousands of volunteering opportunities and apply online.

Please enter a location OR a postcode to search for

Location\*

Distance\* Up to 5km

Choose your interest & activity type

Interests  All interests

Activities  All activities

Keywords  (e.g. a charity or a specific area of interest)

The co-operative food

find your nearest Southern Co-operative store, opening times & local offers

enter address, town or postcode

Powered by Do-it

BBC TWO

Hairy Bikers' Meals on Wheels

Join the Hairy Bikers as they embark on a mission to save Meals on Wheels.

Do-it is volunteering made easy. You can quickly find a volunteering opportunity close to you, and then apply to get involved.

Postcode or town\*

[Advanced search](#)

Volunteer your help

Why not support the Hairy Bikers by volunteering to help older people in your area?

Whether it's a few hours or a couple of days a week, you could make a significant and positive difference to the

## Charges

YouthNet has charged a fee, based on the number of UK employees, all of which goes back into the running of the database:

Number of UK Employees	Annual Fee (excluding VAT)
Up to 1,000	£2,500
1,001-10,000	£5,000
10,001-25,000	£7,500
25,000-50,000	£10,000
50,000+	£15,000

Every month syndication partners are provided with reports on the database search activity from their company. These include the following information:

- Total number of searches
- Number of search and opportunities viewed by specific area of interest and type of activity
- Number of registered volunteers
- Number of volunteer applications
- Number of volunteers by age range, ethnicity, gender etc

## Current Partners

Corporate syndication provides a small level of income for YouthNet, currently around £40 - £50k p.a. It is expected that the new owner will honour existing contracts for the remainder of the duration, if these extend beyond December. In these situations, YouthNet will transfer the proportion of the income for the remainder of the contract. See below.

Partner and how they use the feed	Contract started	Contract expires	Total annual fee	Revenue to be transferred <sup>1</sup>
<b>Grant Thornton</b> On intranet to support employee volunteering.	First started in August 2009. Renewed May 2013	End April 2014	£5,000 +VAT	£1,667
<b>Santander</b> Running a 6 month pilot. On intranet to support employee volunteering. We worked with The Village as their third party supplier.	January 2013	End June 2013	£5,000 +VAT	None
<b>[Major financial institution]</b> Being integrating into a new internal platform to support their employee volunteering. Platform being developed a third party.	Expected July 2013	End June 2014	£15,000 +VAT	£8,750 (based on commencement in July)
<b>ITV</b> ITV public website to support Text	April 2013	End March 2014	£15,000 +VAT	£3,750

<sup>1</sup> based on transfer in December 2013, so income from January 2014)



Santa campaign.				
<b>Vivo Miles</b> Public facing website providing incentives for school and college students	Expect May 2013	End April 2014	£7,500 +VAT	£3,750 (based on commencement in June)

## Lessons learned

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There is a clear opportunity for corporate syndication, however in YouthNet's experience the return on the resources invested to achieve this has not been significant. This is primarily as from acquisition to implementation can take a long time (6-12 months). In most instances there is significant buy-in at the start from CSR teams, yet implementation is dependent upon securing subsequent IT buy in, to integrate into their internal system, and to secure the resources to deliver this. For example, a major UK bank were very keen on incorporating Do-it and we were selected after a proposal process, yet because they were developing a new volunteering platform which in itself was a large and complex job, they couldn't include Do-it in the scope for phase one.

Often a company will take a Do-it syndication feed at a time when they are redeveloping their platforms to improve employee volunteering. Therefore, the timing will depend on their development process including tender process, time to introduce to third party supplier etc. So although they may make a fairly quick decision, the time to implement (and invoice) can be lengthy.

There also seems a general trend for companies to build their employee volunteering platforms themselves. There have been a number of third party solution providers, yet none have as yet managed to establish themselves with a sustainable business model. Increasingly these platforms are being building in-house in order to meet the specific company's requirements for bespoke reporting/logging/management.

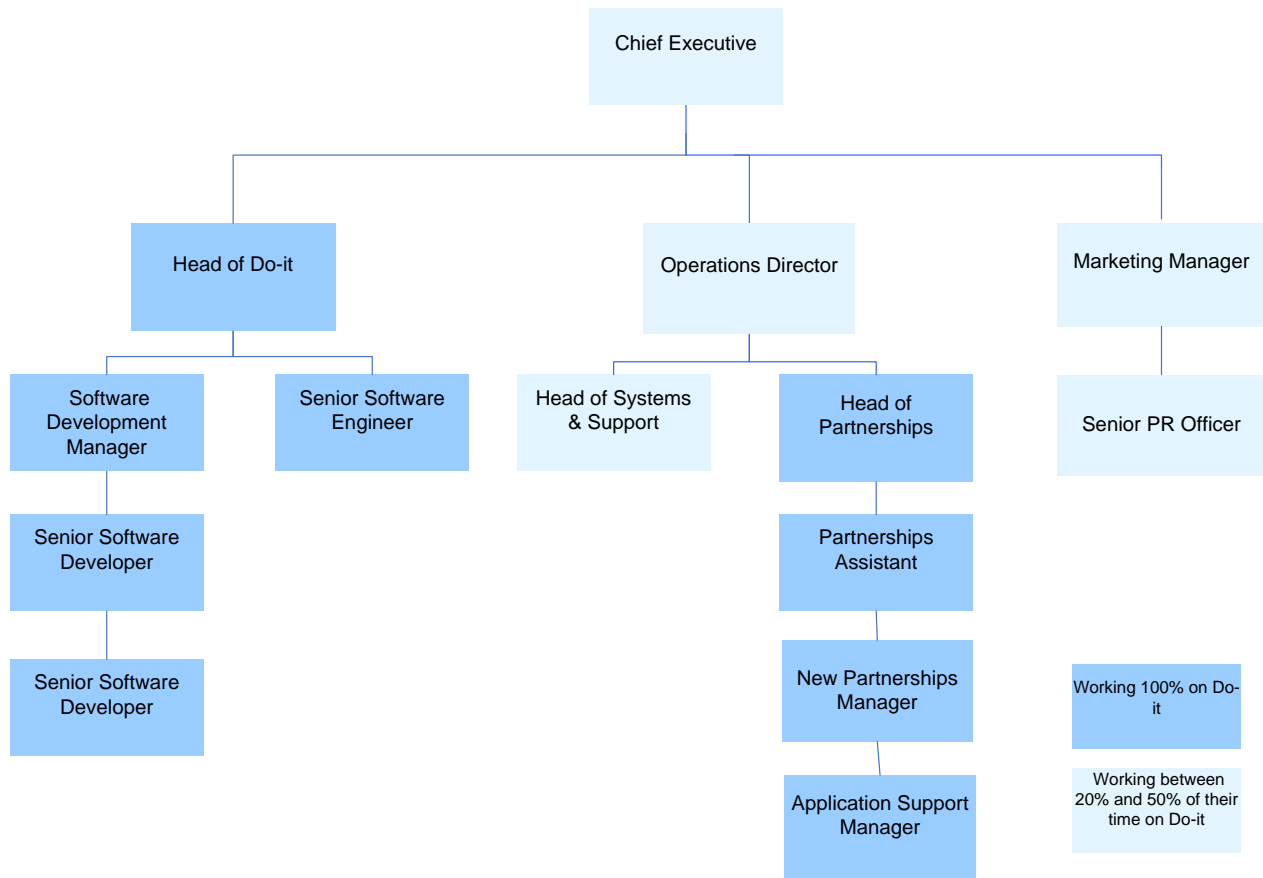
The main limitation and challenge for Do-it in the corporate market is the reporting. We can only show searches, opportunities, applications made, demographic data of those applying. We can't close the loop and follow up on individual volunteers. Do-it facilitates the volunteer application to the charity partner or Volunteer Centre. So YouthNet is not in a position to know whether the employee did the volunteering opportunity or to ask for feedback. This is primarily as after application the relationship is between the individual and the opportunity provider and secondly, because YouthNet wasn't in a position to enable resources to conduct bespoke evaluation.

The other challenge for renewals is that the success and take up of the feed relies on the corporate promoting and embedding it. So level of internal communications and promotion of volunteering within the organisations will affect the drive to their site and use of the Do-it feed.



# Operational

YouthNet's model for running Do-it is with dedicated resources in our Operations and Technical teams, and addition resources from support teams with time split across our services. Of our dedicated resources there are nine staff who work on Do-it full time, with four in our Partnerships Team and five in our Technical Team.



## Partnerships Team

The primary function of the Partnerships team is to engage, recruit and support partners to benefit from Do-it to manage and recruit volunteers. This includes working with both Volunteer Centres and directly with volunteer involving organisations. Their key focus is:

- Recruiting new partners in order to provide diverse opportunity content for Do-it.
- Providing excellent relationship management and support, in order to provide high quality opportunity content across all services.
- Developing and managing key strategic partnerships.
- Ensuring good practice in the management of partnerships and alliances through the implementation of contracts, service level agreements and review meetings.
- Ensuring excellent quality control on opportunity content provided by and to partners.
- Developing and delivering specialist training that promotes and ensures excellent quality control of all content provided by and to partners

- Scoping and developing products and services as part of Do-it's membership scheme, thus providing excellent services and support to our partners.
- Generating income in the region of £100k p.a

The current team working on Do-it consists of:

- **Head of Partnerships** - 100% of time. Oversees YouthNet's partnerships and the development of key areas of YouthNet's partnership activities, products and services.
- **New Partnerships Manager** - 100% of time. Responsible for the recruitment of all new partners of volunteering opportunities, developing and implementing the recruitment strategy and developing new strategic partnerships.
- **Applications Support Manager** - 100% of time. Responsible for application and technical support function and helpline and development of support mechanisms
- **Partnerships Assistant** - 100% of time. Responsible for the general administration of partnerships activity, retention and renewal of opportunity providers and assisting with general day-to-day account management.

Total Staff costs for Partnerships team for 2013/14 is £107,159 (excluding NI and pension).

## Technical Team

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The primary goal of the Technical team is to support the operational delivery of our services and the infrastructure of the organisation. The technical team's purpose is a combination of preserving and safeguarding the systems we already have in place, as well as developing new applications and services and harnessing services that the organisation can take advantage of to deliver its services.

Core activity supported by the Technical function:

- Liaison between technical team and project stakeholders (internal and external) in matters of Technical development, signing off all Technical projects before they enter development
- Core programming and development (Java, HTML, CSS etc) of new systems within the organisation as well as supporting and maintaining existing ones
- Delivery and support of V-Base 3.0, our volunteering management software, to meet the business needs of the user community.

The current team consists of the website and V-Base technical developers, who work using an agile approach.

- **Head of Do-it** - 100% of time. Strategic lead on user service development and partner service development, leading technical teams on delivery and collaboration with Partnerships team to deliver. Acts as product owner for Do-it and lead on Do-it transfer supporting the CEO.
- **Software Development Manager** - 75% of time. Leads on development of web platforms, including do-it.org.uk, Recruiter, admin systems and management of database.
- **2 x Senior Software Developers** - 100% of time. Responsible for developing of web platforms and database.
- **Senior Software Engineer** - 100% of time. Responsible for developing our desktop software product V-Base 3.

The Head of Do-it role is new for the transfer of Do-it and is a senior role reporting to the CEO. Historically, aspects of this role would have been undertaken by YouthNet's Operations Director and our Head of Projects, Do-it Lead would have reported to the Director leading project delivery on the service. Since January 2013, the overall lead on Do-it is the Head of Do-it who is responsible for both the operational and technical aspects of the service and project management of new developments and for the transfer. Whilst not responsible for the Partnerships Team, this role coordinates with the Head of Partnerships. Previously, there was an additional Technical Director with overall responsibility for the technical infrastructure and delivery of the service, as well as for our other services and overall systems and support for the organisation.

Due to the current organisational set up, the Systems Team sits outside the Technical Team, however they work closely with them. Currently Do-it is supported by:

- **Head of Systems and Support** - 50% of time. Responsible for managing and developing and future-proofing our internal/external systems and infrastructure as well as our development/testing/production environment.

Total Staff costs for Technical team for 2013/14 is £218,755 (excluding NI and pension).

## Staff conditions

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Of the nine staff who work on Do-it for the majority of their time, three are on fixed term contracts and six are permanent staff. Of the permanent staff, five have worked at YouthNet for more than four years, and two of these have worked at YouthNet for more than eight years.

YouthNet staff benefit from an employer contribution to a stakeholder pension worth 6% of their annual salary, triggered by a 1% contribution from them.

Terms and conditions of working for YouthNet include;

- Normal hours of work are on Monday to Friday between the hours of 9.30 am to 5.30pm with an hour for lunch, and YouthNet also operates a flexible working policy where individual roles may be subject to altered working hours.
- Staff are entitled to 33 days annual leave per calendar year, including 8 Statutory Bank Holidays, in their first three years of employment. After three complete years of service, employees are entitled to one additional day per annum for each year of service, up to a maximum of 38 days per annum including Bank Holidays.
- Notice periods vary between one month and three months for Do-it staff, until an employee has been employed for four complete years, and one additional week's notice for each completed year of continuous employment thereafter up to a maximum of 12 weeks' notice.
- To the best of our knowledge at the time of publishing this document, there are no outstanding liabilities or claims or complaints relating to current or former Do-it staff.

As an asset of Do-it, it is assumed that staff will be transferred under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) regulations. Please see appendices for more information on TUPE.

## Other staff

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There are additional staff that spend less than 50% of their time on Do-it.

These include:

- Operations Director – 20% of time. Historically this role assumed overall service delivery for Do-it, yet in light of YouthNet's decision this role has moved to focus primarily on TheSite. However, continues to provide both strategic and line managed support.
- Senior PR Officer – 25% of time.
- Marketing Manager – 25% of time.

In the past other staff have worked on Do-it. However, they are not included in the staff costs as their proportion of time is less than 5% or they are no longer working on Do-it:

- HTML/CSS Developer – responsible for developing the user-facing elements of our site design and navigation.
- Contributions from the Editorial Team for content creation and Engagement and Support Team to engage volunteers to write blogs and share experiences.

# Appendices

## Volunteer Satisfaction Survey

Previous annual Volunteer Satisfaction Survey is available here:

<http://www.youthnet.org/2012/11/volunteer-satisfaction-survey-2012/>

## Partners Satisfaction Survey

Previous annual Volunteer Satisfaction Survey is available here:

<http://www.youthnet.org/2012/06/do-it-partner-survey-2012/>

## Do-it contracts

Information on becoming a partner of Do-it, including terms and conditions:

- V-Base 3: <http://www.do-it.org.uk/partners/v-base/apply-for-a-v-base-3-0-account/>
- Recruiter: <http://www.do-it.org.uk/partners/recruiter/apply-for-a-recruiter-account/>
- Copies of syndication and uploader contracts will be available at the open sessions.

## Do-it technical documentation

These documents on the syndication and uploader services can help understand how our services work:

- <http://do-it.org.uk/documentation/syndication>
- <http://do-it.org.uk/documentation/uploader>

We are currently ensuring that our codebase is fully documented, and this will be available to the new owner.

## Do-it Entity Relation Diagrams

Both a simple and complete entity relation diagram of the Do-it database is available on request

## Information on TUPE

Department for Business Innovation & Skills information on Employment rights on the transfer of an undertaking guide to TUPE regulations for employees, employers and representatives

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tupe-a-guide-to-the-2006-regulations>

## Definitions used

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### Opportunity

An opportunity is the basic listing item that we have within the Do-it database. Each opportunity has a title, a description, and interests, activities and skills look-ups associated with it (Not all opportunities have skills associated with them yet).

Opportunities also have start and end dates, and advertising start and end dates. This controls when the opportunity will be displayed. When we talk about 'live' opportunities we are referring to only those that meet the criteria for being displayed.

There are currently roughly 80,000 live different opportunities on the database.

### Instances to volunteer

Each opportunity can have multiple instances. An instance is essentially the location that opportunity takes place. Therefore the same opportunity can be listed as taking place in multiple locations. The instance contains the organisation name, address and contact details.

When a volunteer searches our database, they are actually searching the instances. The instance ID is the number in the URL that identifies a particular listing.

There are currently around 97,000 instances of live opportunities on the database. If you searched on the website under every postcode and counted the unique number of listings, this is the number you would get to. However, these are predominantly available for multiple number of volunteers, which is why we refer to the number of opportunities to volunteer on Do-it.

### Opportunities to volunteer

When we talk about there being a million opportunities to volunteer on our database, we base this on the number of instances multiplied by 10.

This reflects that many opportunities allow multiple people to undertake the opportunity. For example, a charity shop advertising for helpers will not simply be seeking one volunteer but many people to do different days of shifts, just as an employer may have 10 vacancies for a particular role. The multiple of 10 is based upon analysis carried out several years ago looking at a range of instances and the average number of opportunities for volunteers these presented. Whilst this is an indicative calculation, it does represent the scale of opportunities available to individuals looking. It is YouthNet's understanding that this calculation is used by other opportunity providers.

Therefore, the 1 million opportunities to volunteer means that we believe we could find opportunities for 1 million volunteers.

## Important Notice

This document is being made available to parties who are interested in acquiring Do-it. The sole purpose of this document is to assist recipients in deciding whether they wish to proceed with a further investigation of Do-it. This document is not intended to form the basis of a decision to acquire Do-it or any other investment decision and does not constitute an offer, invitation or recommendation for the sale or purchase of securities. Neither the information contained in this document nor any further information made available in connection with Do-it will form the basis of any contract.

The contents of this document have not been independently verified. This document does not purport to be comprehensive or to contain all the information that a prospective acquirer may need. Each recipient of this document must make its own investigation and assessment of Do-it. No representation, warranty or undertaking, express or implied, is or will be made or given and no responsibility or liability is or will be accepted by YouthNet UK, or by any of its respective directors, officers, employees, agents or advisers, in relation to the accuracy or completeness of this document or any other written or oral information made available in connection with Do-it. Any responsibility or liability for any such information is expressly disclaimed.

In furnishing this document, YouthNet undertakes no obligation to provide recipients with access to any additional information, or to update, or to correct any inaccuracies which may become apparent in this document or any other information made available in connection with Do-it.

Any prospective acquirer interested in Do-it is strongly recommended to seek its own legal and financial advice.

Any enquiries you may have should be addressed to:

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