



Co-East Content Group
Content Strategy
February 2002

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1. About Co-East

Co-East is a consortium of 10 public library authorities operating in the East of England region. In addition, associate membership of Co-East will soon be available to libraries from other sectors in the region, including special libraries and academic libraries.

Co-East is an innovative organisation, which aims to put in place ICT solutions to enable members of the public to easily obtain resources from libraries across the region, either via computers in libraries or over the Internet. These resources include library catalogues, which are available to library users across the region for searching and requesting, together with community information and other online content.¹

In all aspects of Co-East's work, there is a commitment to:

- Demonstrating **Best Value** in securing the economies of scale possible when working as a consortium
- Developing services which are focused on the **end user**, whether that library user is accessing library services from home, work or the library itself
- **Modernising service delivery** through the provision of innovative electronic solutions, both in libraries and remotely, which will enable citizens to participate fully in the democratic process
- Building **partnerships** with other bodies and work cross-sectorally to maximise access to resources and to provide opportunities for future bidding

2. The work of the Co-East Content Group

The Co-East Content Group was established in August 2000. Each of the ten authorities has a representative on the Co-East Content Group. This is usually the Information Services Manager or equivalent role. The Content Group meets approximately four times a year and communicates virtually through its own discussion list.

The Content Group was initially established to:

- Assess the quality and value of existing Co-East subscriptions in the light of forthcoming renewals
- Evaluate potential new subscriptions
- Explore the possibilities of creating new content specifically for Co-East.

Subsequently, the role of the Content Group has been enhanced and, in the latest version of the Co-East Business Plan², the Content Group has been additionally tasked with:

- Agreeing and implementing a Content Strategy to determine a purchasing strategy for future content, including lifelong learning materials
- Developing links with other content groups
- Agreeing a mechanism for distributing costs of electronic subscriptions
- Researching the feasibility of a regional enquiry service

¹ For more information about the Co-East region, see Appendix 2

² Co-East Business Plan is available at www.co-east.net

- Exploring with content suppliers access to electronic subscriptions via remote access
- Updating Co-East website
- Developing and maintaining links with University for Industry, in particular with the regional hub
- Working with the British Library with regard to the Inside service and other potential developments

Subsequent to the last version of the Business Plan, Co-East has also been pursuing funding from EQUAL, a European Social Fund (ESF) funding stream, to deliver learning opportunities at libraries across the region to previously by-passed learners (eg returners to work, etc). This strategy identifies the need for the Co-East Content Strategy to feed into EQUAL, particularly in relation to the identification and procurement of learning content to be used as part of the EQUAL Project.

The development of this Content Strategy should guide the work of the Content Group over the next couple of years.

3. Purpose of the Content Strategy

The purpose of producing a strategy for Co-East content is to ensure that:

- We maximise the cost-effectiveness of consortium purchasing, by ensuring Best Value for all products
- We agree a process for negotiating new subscriptions and existing ones
- We agree our requirements in relation to potential consortium purchases and agree criteria for selection (functionality and features)
- We agree how we review the criteria, given the emerging context, ie Co-East Plus
- We have in place a mechanism, which fairly distributes the cost of subscriptions throughout the consortium
- We have a strategy, which we can share with other content groups, especially E2B
- We use our expertise and consortium size to influence publishers and producers to shape future and emerging products, which meets the needs of our wide range of client groups
- We demonstrate the benefits of economy of scale and size of consortium to suppliers so that we are able to shape pricing models, authentication procedures, etc for the benefit of all our partners
- We give clear guidance to publishers regarding what we're interested in
- We develop a model licensing agreement.

It is also worth noting that, in due course, we expect some convergence between this content strategy and the work of the fledgling Co-East Resource Managers' Group, whose role is to procure and exploit hard copy materials.

This strategy is primarily aimed at potential suppliers. However, we recognise its value to other content groups within the East of England region and to other regional bodies across the UK, who are beginning to explore issues around consortium purchasing.

4. Negotiations with potential suppliers

4.1 General principles

- **Cost-effectiveness**

Suppliers should be aware that Co-East is seeking to benefit from (and being able to clearly identify) the cost benefits of consortium purchasing. It would therefore be helpful if the potential economies of scale a supplier is able to offer are clearly identified.

- **The Benefits for the Publisher**

The benefits of negotiating with a consortium are clearly obvious, particularly a consortium with the potential to reach over 5 ½ million people within the East of England

- **Communicating virtually**

Communication from potential suppliers should be by **email** to the Co-East Project Manager or Chair of the Content Group. Suppliers should read this strategy and complete the Co-East questionnaire before pursuing negotiations with Co-East. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaire, the Chair of the Content Group will assess whether or not the potential subscription meets the criteria for Co-East. Where a product meets the criteria, the Chair will contact the supplier to request trial access to the subscription for all partners. Subsequently, the Co-East Project Manager will canvass opinions as to whether the Consortium wishes to pursue the negotiations and the supplier may be asked to attend a Content Group meeting.

- **Joint purchasing**

Co-East is not able to compel any partner to participate in consortium purchasing. Suppliers should identify how many authorities would need to participate to ensure that consortium discount applies.

- **Regular monitoring**

Co-East wishes to regularly monitor and review its satisfaction with its existing subscriptions. We expect any supplier to be prepared to answer any questions we have (either regarding the content itself or the technical aspects) via email from any of the partners.

5. Subscription models

Co-East is aware that there are a variety of pricing models available: eg numbers of terminals, population, number of libraries, usage, etc. We want to distribute costs within the consortium on an equitable basis. We also wish to be able to compare prices across different products.

6. Criteria for Selection

	Comments	Priority ranking (where ***** indicates highest priority)	How will this be evaluated?
General Requirements			
Brief overall description of product; target audience; etc		***	Supplier questionnaire (Appendix i)
Material that is predominantly UK sourced	Co-East has a commitment to making relevant content available to users in the East of England. It is therefore not interested in products intended for an American audience.	*****	Supplier questionnaire and free trial
Material which is regularly updated and where date of updates is clearly visible to end-user	Currency of information is a key consideration for the Co-East Content Group. There is an expectation that newspaper products will be updated on a daily basis. For more general products, we would expect information to be at least as up-to-date as hard copy equivalents.	*****	Supplier questionnaire and free trial
Clear and timely information on product or content changes with option for termination and/or refund	We would not expect suppliers to remove significant parts of content from their product during the period of the subscription without recourse to a refund. Similarly we would not expect significant changes to front-end and searching options without prior notice, and with recourse to new publicity materials.	*****	Supplier questionnaire and, where appropriate, during the lifetime of the subscription
Technical Requirements			
A web-based subscription	Generally speaking, Co-East is only interested in web based content.	*****	Supplier questionnaire
Access through IP address	For most Co-East partners, this is the	*****	Supplier questionnaire

	preferred method of accessing content. Those partners requiring access via IP address will not accept an alternative means (eg username and password) of accessing the content		
Access via username and password	Several Co-East authorities have dynamic IP addresses so are unable to access content via the method outlined above. For these authorities, access via username and password is acceptable. These authorities would prefer user name and password to be incorporated into a startup file.	*****	Supplier questionnaire.
Unlimited access	Generally speaking, Co-East is interested in products which offer unlimited number of simultaneous users. Where this is not possible, suppliers should indicate how many simultaneous users can access their product.	***	Supplier questionnaire.
Clear user interface and straightforward searching options	Must be able to search across all titles (where appropriate) and limit selection by title and date range. Advanced and natural language search facilities also desirable.	*****	Supplier questionnaire and free trial
An interface which is accessible to Visually Impaired People (VIPs)	Co-East serves a range of diverse users across the region. All public library authorities have made a commitment to developing services which meet the needs of people with disabilities. For this reason, we wish to know whether products can be read by Text-to-Speech software and whether they meet the W3C Bobby criteria. Does it meet W3C criteria?	*****	Supplier questionnaire and free trial (NB Need to add to questionnaire)
Ability for each partner to retrieve meaningful usage statistics	Individual partners expect to be able to run regular reports on the usage of the product in order to evaluate its impact. We expect	*****	Supplier questionnaire and free trial.

	to be able to retrieve number of visits to each title (where appropriate); length of visit; number of total searches, etc		
Remote access with user authentication	Section 1 outlines Co-East's commitment to modernising service delivery to public library users. For this reason, we are particularly interested in products, where suppliers are willing to allow access, limited by user authentication software, to their products. If there is an additional cost to this access, this should be outlined in the supplier questionnaire.	****	Supplier questionnaire.

Support Requirements			
Free helpdesk for product support	This should be available, wherever possible, for the majority of library opening hours and should preferably be in the UK.	****	Supplier questionnaire
Free access to promotional material, tailored to Co-East's needs	In order to ensure good take-up of the product, Co-East would appreciate good quality promotional materials tailored to Co-East's requirements. Co-East is willing to work with suppliers on preparing text for such publicity.	**	Supplier questionnaire
Free user education sessions for selected library staff	In the past, Co-East has benefited from bringing together groups of library staff for user education sessions with publishers. We have found that raising the awareness of library staff about a product has a significant impact on subsequent use of a product.	***	Supplier questionnaire
Price / Contract Requirements			
Transparent costs for the product and clear pricing structure	Clearly there are significant savings for a publisher in negotiating with one body on behalf of 10 authorities. We expect to be able to identify clearly the cost benefits of acting as a consortium. We also expect to see a clear pricing structure, which covers factors including level of take-up, number of locations, etc	*****	Supplier questionnaire. Negotiations with a supplier.
Ability to synchronise with existing subscriptions	Where authorities have existing contracts (on an individual basis) with a publisher, Co-East expects that these will be able to easily synchronised to enable other members of Co-East to participate.	***	Supplier questionnaire. Negotiations with a supplier.
Invoices to individual partners	Co-East would prefer for individual invoices to be sent to individual partners.	****	Supplier questionnaire

Renewal notices	Renewal notices 3 months in advance of renewal date to all partners	***	Supplier questionnaire
Information on any restrictions on libraries supplying the content to library users.		*****	Supplier questionnaire
Information on any restrictions on libraries or library users printing the content		*****	Supplier questionnaire
A modular approach to title selection	Co-East would prefer to be able to pick and choose which elements of a product they require. Please outline whether this is possible in the pricing structure section of the questionnaire.	***	Supplier questionnaire

7. Areas of interest

- Legal resources
- Official publications
- Business information
- General reference products
- Advice products (eg NACAB)
- Newspapers (see Appendix iii)
- Resources for library staff (eg Bookwise)
- Lifelong learning materials

8. Conclusion

We hope that potential suppliers find this Content Strategy a useful introduction to the work and interests of the Co-East Content Group. We would ask that suppliers read and consider this strategy and, if appropriate, complete the online suppliers' questionnaire, before contacting a member of the Co-East content group. For initial contact following submission of the questionnaire, please contact the Chair of the Co-East Content Group, Chris Hayes via email at chrishayes@southend.gov.uk

Appendix 1

SECTION A	
General information	
1	Name and contact details of person completing this form
2	Name of your company
3	URL of your company
4	Name of the product
5	Brief product description
6	What is the target audience of this product?
7	What age/ability does the product cater for?.
8	Who is the owner of the content ?
9	What % of the content is UK sourced?
10	What % of entries/records are updated/changed at what frequency?
11	What % of new entries are added at what frequency?
12	Are any fundamental changes in the content (eg. removal of significant content/titles) expected during the period of the subscription?

Technical information		Yes	No	
13	Is the product web-based?			If not is this planned?
14	If so which browsers are supported?			IE versions Netscape versions
15	Are any plug-ins required?			Plug-in name & version
16	Is IP address access available?			
17	If so is there a limit on the number of IP addresses (class B/C/D)?			
18	Is user ID/password access available?			
19	If so can user ID and password be incorporated into a start up file?			
20	Is unlimited access offered?			
21	If not what type of limitation can be applied?			
22	If limitation is by number of simultaneous users - what ranges are available?			
23	Is remote access by library user authentication available?			
24	Is the interface likely to change within the period of the subscription?			If yes please indicate plans in section B 1

	Support information			
25	Is there a free helpdesk for product support?			
26	If so is the desk available library hours?			
27	If not what hours is it available?			
28	Is contact by telephone, by email or both?			Please circle PHONE EMAIL BOTH
29	Is the helpdesk based in the UK?			
30	If not where is it based?			
31	Is promotional material available?			Please say if there is a charge
32	Can promotional material be tailor made for Co-East partners?			Please say if there is a charge
33	Is training provided?			Please say if there is a charge
34	Is information available on product usage by IP address/password?			Describe information available at Section B3
	Accessibility			
35	Is the product accessible for visually impaired users?			
36	Does the product meet W3C / Bobby criteria?			
	Price/contract			
37	What is the price for the basic product?			Please describe pricing structure at B2
38	What is the price of providing remote access?	£		
39	Can, and will, individual invoices be sent to participating partners?			
40	Can, and will, renewal notices be sent to participating partners 3 months in advance of renewal?			
41	Can existing subscriptions in other formats be set against the price?			
42	Are there any restrictions on libraries supplying the content to library users?			
43	Are there any restrictions on libraries or library users printing the content?			
44	Is the contract governed by UK law?			If not by the law of which country?

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SECTION B	
1	What changes in the product interface are planned within the period of the subscription?
2	What is your pricing structure? Please include all relevant factors – level of take up, number of locations, number of Internet terminals, number of active library members, number of simultaneous users, length of agreement, variations to take account of reduced content during the period of the subscription?
3	What usage information is available (number of hits/searches?) and at what level (IP address/password?), are reports provided or self service?
4	Please provide details of how interested Co-East partners can access a free trial of your product.

Appendix 2

The Co-East Region - Vital Statistics

Co-East comprises 10 public library authorities within the East of England. Its population totals over 5 ½ million and encompasses 318 static libraries.

To help potential suppliers formulate an impression of the size of the area covered by Co-East, we have drawn up the following vital statistics.

For information on numbers of public internet terminals within Co-East libraries, please refer to the Netbase database, managed by the People's Network Team, which is available at <http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/progress/libraries.asp>

Name of Co-East partner	Population	Number of static libraries	Number of mobile libraries
Bedfordshire	560000	17	5
Cambridgeshire	568400	41	7
Essex	1306300	74	19
Hertfordshire	1000000	54	10
Luton	181000	8	1
Norfolk	804000	48	12
Peterborough	156500	9	2
Southend	176500	7	2
Suffolk	679,900	50	6
Thurrock	134800	10	1
Total	5567400	318	65

Appendix 3**Specification for Electronic Newspaper provision (Draft)**

	Essential	Desirable
Access	Through IP address. Password authentication only at Library HQ	Remote access available to registered library members
Price	Consortium pricing principle to be decided by Co-East Board. Charge must be based on same principle Different priced options in terms of packages of titles	Do we expect a Consortium price regardless of take up?
Search facilities, user interface	Must be able to search across all titles and limit selection by title & date range Advanced and Natural language search facility Print and download facilities simple for public to operate	
Administration	Individual invoices to each participating partner Renewal notices 3 months in advance of renewal date to all partners Annual contract	
Guarantee	Security of content – reasonable guarantee Refund in case of product unavailability	
Support - training, publicity	Sufficient copies of training notes suitable for all library staff to familiarise themselves with product. Suitable publicity material, and guidance for public.	Promotional material incorporating Co- East
Support - technical	'24/7' UK Helpdesk with staff familiar with public library requirements Standards for response written into contract	
Licence	Unlimited concurrent users in all service points in each participating authority plus Library HQ	
Use statistics	Number of visits to each title; length of visit. Available online to subscriber	More detailed statistics (e.g. sorted by location, type of search) delivered to subscriber monthly

Content		
Title selection	Each partner able to select 'bundle' of titles	Able to change selection at any time
Titles available	<p>National: Times; Sunday Times; TES; TLS; THES; Daily Mail; Express; Telegraph; Guardian; Independent;</p> <p>International: Newsweek International; New York Times/Herald; Washington Post; Le Monde; Handelsblatt (English version);</p> <p>Regional/Local:</p> <p>Periodicals/Journals: Economist</p>	<p>National: Mirror; Sun; Observer</p> <p>International: Le Figaro, Die Zeitung</p> <p>Regional/Local: e.g. Sticks; Suffolk Journal; East Anglian Daily Times; Evening Standard</p> <p>Periodicals: e.g. Money Mail; Lancet</p>
Version	All titles must be UK version	
Text Coverage	Full text of all articles, letters, etc. Not advertisements	
Illustrations/images	Not essential	Desirable
Archive	At least 5 year archive on one 'core' title, e.g. Times. 3 year archive on all other titles.	For ever!
Currency	Updated daily. Electronic version as up to date as print. If this is not possible, could there be a link (or even cross searching facility) to the paper's website for the current edition?	