

Cybermoor Limited

Introduction

Cybermoor Ltd bridges the digital divide in rural areas by providing personal computers and next generation broadband internet access to communities.

Cybermoor's other services include supporting community websites and consultancy to public sector clients in usability, on-line engagement and participatory budgeting. It was established in 2002, has a turnover of between £100,000 - £200,000, 6 paid employees and 10 volunteers.



Social accounting and audit

Cybermoor has kept social accounts every year since 2002/03 – the most recent being 2006/07 but has not had them independently audited as they could not find the time to do all the work required. The Alston Cybermoor project was part of the Valuing the Difference project and were keen to keep social accounts as they wanted to prove their social value, set clear targets and add to their existing quality standards. They were supported through the process by a consultant from the Valuing the Difference project. Cybermoor found that they had insufficient time to do the social accounting mainly as the extra work was added to existing workloads.

Cybermoor felt that clarifying and agreeing their mission, values, objectives and identifying their stakeholders was straightforward – but it was much more difficult to decide on what information to collect, setting up systems and consulting with stakeholders. Although the analysis of the data was not so much a problem, the writing of the social accounts was difficult. Almost entirely Cybermoor used questionnaire surveys and web-based feedback.

Benefits and value of social accounting and audit

The main benefits Cybermoor reported are in three blocks: firstly, they felt social accounting helped them plan, understand how they performed and impacted and this led to improving their services; secondly, it identified issues that had to be addressed and some irrelevant activities; and thirdly, it contributed to their Annual Report, reporting to funders and publicity material. The Cybermoor social accountant also felt that social accounting had helped in his understanding of the organisation and provided him with skills which would help in his work with others. They now have *“a number of key performance indicators which feed into monthly and annual reports”*.

General thoughts on social accounting and audit

Having been practicing social accounting, Cybermoor feels that it would be huge benefit if funders, investors and contractors accepted social accounting as part of their reporting requirements. Also there would be merit in exploring different levels in social accounting and stipulating more exactly what is required. Having a Manual as a web-based resource would be beneficial; and so would having access to funding specifically for social accounting.

Finally they found the process of social accounting *“time-consuming but good to agree on objectives, values, etc.”*

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