

# the reading agency

## groupthing.org: HeadSpace brief

‘groupthing will give libraries the tools to reach out to the online generation and to work with them on their own terms.’

Sharon Kirkpatrick, ASCEL

### Information for HeadSpace Authorities

**groupthing** is an online community where young people creatively engage with reading and words. It is a major new initiative from The Reading Agency, who develop it with young people. **groupthing** gives the public sector and its partners a new tool to hook young people into words and reading. **groupthing** redefines reading so that more young people recognize themselves as readers, are empowered by that realisation, and start reading more.

**groupthing’s audience** is young people aged 13 up to 18 who consider themselves readers and those who don’t.

**groupthing promotes** all forms of reading and words: magazines, non-fiction, manga, graphic novels, adult cross-over titles, plays, scripts, music (lyrics), short stories, film, games, websites, blogs, journalism, fiction, poetry, spoken word and ‘how to’ manuals.

**groupthing manifesto** is spontaneous, vivid, irresistible, curious, passionate, pushy, lively, tantalizing, inventive, fun, different, informative, irreverent, expressive, diverse, engaged, independent.

**groupthing** is a safe, easy to use, accessible networking site. Young people’s content is post moderated by Tempero ([www.tempero.co.uk](http://www.tempero.co.uk)) and no personal details are visible. The site will have been risk assessed by the NSPCC. We are working with the RNIB to ensure that the site is accessible and that blind and partially sighted young people can join their sighted peers.

Young people’s participation is driving the site forward at every stage. They told us they wanted a place where they could communicate online, find out about activities locally, be part of virtual groups, create their own content, express and share their creativity.

### As a subscriber you can:

- Set up any number of exclusive group pages where your young people can showcase their creative work (audio, video, image, text), rate and review, chat about and debate what they are passionate about.
- Create ‘closed’ (invited members only) or ‘open’ (anyone can join) group pages.
- Advertise events, put in links to your web pages and catalogues, add a ‘group’ friend, let people know your news, create polls and use the locator to show where you are.
- Use the site as an outreach tool and for consultation and as online space for your reading, gaming and manga groups, book prizes and festivals.

Through the part of the site that is only open to professionals you can:

- Be part of an online 24/7 professional community, talking to others from libraries, education, the public sector and creative industries
- Get advance notice of what's coming up on the site - the latest news and offers
- Read our regular columns on manga and graphic novels, games and online (amongst others!)
- Be part of debates about what's affecting young people's engagement with reading, words and creativity
- Get opportunities to engage your young people in creating content and entering competitions
- Access opportunities from the site's content partners like author events, free stuff, focus group testing.

### **How can groupthing help to deliver my HeadSpace project?**

HeadSpace is about finding new ways of engaging teenagers, particularly those who are socially excluded, in reading and libraries. HeadSpace listens to what young people want from libraries and provides creative activities and volunteering opportunities to bring young people together to participate in the development, management and delivery of services. **groupthing** can add depth, inspiration and solutions to all of these challenges.

- **groupthing** takes reading further and challenges traditional methods of delivery. You will be able to reach out to more young people than ever; give your current HeadSpace teenage users an online presence; enable young people to create, market and showcase a creative reading programme for your HeadSpace; consult with and get feedback from young people; provide access to HeadSpace activities 24/7.
- **groupthing** can help you to meet your targets. Every HeadSpace site has targets to meet around the engagement of young people in creative reading activities and volunteering. Through **groupthing** HeadSpace sites will be able to offer a whole new range of creative and volunteering activities for young people. Every HeadSpace partner will be able to create their own HeadSpace group page which can be maintained by young people; offering them opportunities to become involved in developing content for the site, uploading images, creating new cover art, storyboarding favourite animations or writing lyrics. Forums open exclusively to HeadSpace young people also enable them to make friends with other volunteers and HeadSpace users across the national network of HeadSpace sites, to share ideas and experiences.

### **How will subscribing to groupthing benefit the rest of my library service?**

- Meet new statutory guidance for local authorities on positive activities and Local Area Agreement targets around volunteering and accreditation for young people aged 13 to 19 (NI 6 and NI 110).
- Contribute to local priorities and targets for literacy by encouraging young people to read for pleasure and develop the reading habit.
- Deliver the national Library Offer to Young People(<http://digbig.com/4wfby>).

- Strengthen community cohesion – through improving group and inter-group dialogue and understanding (local and central government Shared Priorities 1-7).
- Support young people’s mental and emotional health by helping them enjoy life and make a positive contribution (Local Area Agreement Blocks 1-4 and Every Child Matters outcomes).
- Contribute to young people’s enjoyment and achievement through increased participation in cultural activities.
- Enrich individual lives, strengthen communities and improve places where people live through culture (Local Area Agreement Blocks 1-4, cross-cutting outcomes).
- Support empowerment, participation, consultation, and volunteering opportunities for young people wherever this needs to happen in your service.

**grouphthing** is underpinned by the principles of Fulfilling their Potential, the national libraries change programme for young people. It’s also part of The Reading Agency’s new modular Participate programme ([www.readingagency.org.uk/young/participate](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/young/participate)).

### **What’s the technical specification?**

**grouphthing** does not have a minimum operating system requirement – it will run on most modern operating systems (ie: XP, Vista/OSX, Linux). It does have a minimum browser requirement: for PCs: Firefox 2 (or better), Safari 3 (or better), Opera 9 (or better), Internet Explorer 6 or 7 and for Macs: Firefox 2 (or better), Safari 3 (or better), Opera 9 (or better). To play the audio and video content on the site you will need Flash player 9. The site will have cookies.

You can view the grouphthing IT file at: [www.readingagency.org.uk/young/grouphthing](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/young/grouphthing)

### **When can I be part of it?**

grouphthing is now in beta and starting to develop it’s community. Young people can sign up and login from [www.grouphthing.org](http://www.grouphthing.org) and professional subscribers can get access to grouphthing professional.

### **Can I take a look at the site before I subscribe?**

You can see what the young people’s side of grouphthing is like by going to [www.grouphthing.org](http://www.grouphthing.org) (but please don’t sign up here as this is just for young people). To get an overview of the whole site check out our videos at [www.youtube.com/grouphthingvid](http://www.youtube.com/grouphthingvid)

If you would like a member of the grouphthing team to come to do a demonstration of the site at a regional or area meeting please contact us [info@grouphthing.org](mailto:info@grouphthing.org)

For more information [info@grouphthing.org](mailto:info@grouphthing.org)

### **What does a subscription to grouphthing cover?**

- Ability to use the site across any terminal and laptop for outreach work.
- Access to the ‘hidden’ professional side of the site.
- Being part of the HeadSpace community on grouphthing.
- Unlimited ability to set-up as many group pages as you want.
- Up to twelve people registered as professional users of the site.
- If you run a School Library Service, this is included in the subscription rate.

### **Subscription rates HeadSpace authorities:**

- Save £100 on any of the standard rates
- HeadSpace Big Lottery Revenue Grants can be used to pay for this subscription.

### **One year subscription deal:**

Public libraries with more than 150 full-time staff: £700 + VAT

**With HeadSpace authority discount save £100: Pay only £600 + VAT**

Public libraries with less than 150 full-time staff: £600 + VAT

**With HeadSpace authority discount save £100: Pay only £500 + VAT**

### **Two year subscription deal:**

Public libraries with more than 150 full-time staff save 10%: pay only £1260 + VAT

**With HeadSpace authority discount save another £100: Pay only £1160 + VAT**

Public libraries with less than 150 full time staff: 2 years save 10%= £1080 + VAT

**With HeadSpace authority discount save another £100: Pay only £980+ VAT**

### **How to subscribe to groupthing:**

- A subscription package can be purchased either in the 2008 or 2009 financial year.
  - You can view the site Terms of Use at: [www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing)
1. Sign up for your subscription package on The Reading Agency shop ([www.readingagency.org.uk/shop](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/shop)).
  2. We'll send you a subscription confirmation email and a form which you'll need to complete, listing your professional users and confirming that they are CRB checked (we'll need their CRB number and the date they got their CRB check along with their work email address)
  3. Once we receive your form, we'll check it and upload the details on to the site, then send an email through with a dedicated URL so your professional users can sign-up and log in to **groupthing**.

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### **For more information:**

Contact: [info@groupthing.org](mailto:info@groupthing.org)

or go to: [www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing)

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