

the reading agency

groupthing.org: public library service 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

'It's going to be amazing. With groupthing, and the work already grounded in public libraries, we will be able to tap into young people's passion and creativity for words and narrative in ways we have never been able to before.' Tony Durcan, Newcastle Library Service

Information for Public Library Services

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 recognise 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) 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.

Subscribing to groupthing will help you:

- Meet new statutory guidance for local authorities on positive activities and Local Area Agreement targets around volunteering and accreditation for young people aged 13-19 (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/4wfbby>).
- Strengthen community cohesion – through improving group and inter-group dialogue and understanding (Local & 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 & 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.

groupthing 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).

What's the technical specification?

groupthing 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 groupthing IT file at: www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing

When can I be part of it?

groupthing is now in beta and starting to develop it's community. Young people can sign up and login from www.groupthing.org and professional subscribers can get access to groupthing professional.

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

You can see what the young people's side of groupthing is like by going to www.groupthing.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/groupthingvid

If you would like a member of the groupthing team to come to do a demonstration of the site at a regional or area meeting please contact us info@groupthing.org

For more information info@groupthing.org

What does a subscription to groupthing cover?

- Ability to use the site across any terminal and laptops for outreach work
- Access to the 'hidden' professional side of the site
- Unlimited ability to set-up as many group pages as you want
- Up to 12 people registered as professional users of the site
- If you run a School Library Service, this is included in the subscription rate.

Subscription rates: public library services

One year subscription rate from 1 May 2009:

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

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

Two year subscription rate: (10% off one year subscription rate)

Public libraries with more than 150 full-time staff: £1260 + VAT

Public libraries with more than 150 full time staff: £1080 + VAT

If you run a School Library Service (but are not part of a Public Library Service) please contact info@groupthing.org for information on our subscription rates.

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.
 - 1. Sign up for your subscription package on The Reading Agency shop (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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Special offers:

If you are a Headspace authority, part of a Fulfilling Their Potential regional project or are considering subscribing to **groupthing** as a regional consortium please contact info@groupthing.org for information on special discounted rates.

A two year subscription to **groupthing** comes as part of the Creative Reading Module of the Participate programme, for more information: www.readingagency.org.uk/young/participate

For more information:

Contact: info@groupthing.org

or go to: www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing

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