



New Mills and District U3A Group Leaders' Pack

SECTION 3 – Groups and the Internet

The Internet provides an effective information and communication resource for the U3A. These notes suggest ways in which group leaders and members can make use of this.

1 New Mills and District U3A Website (newmillsu3a.org.uk)

Various parts our website relate directly to groups and have content which is either provided by or agreed with Group Leaders. It is recommended that each Leader, or a designated member of the group, reviews the currency and presentation of pages relating to the group. In particular:

- 1.1 Each **Group Page** provides a general description of the group with, possibly, information on some forthcoming activities. It should be viewed from the perspective of a non-member – who may be interested in joining, looking to exchange ideas or merely curious. Reports of recent group activities with photographs are welcomed because they show the group as inviting
- 1.2 The **News Page** should be viewed from the perspective of the member and content should be short term. This page covers all aspects of news about the U3A. (Details of non-U3A activities, adverts and comments are not published.)
- 1.3 Content of web pages should be current – an out-of-date Web site reflects badly on the group and the U3A. Information included may indicate personal details but we recommend that full names and contact details are not included. Telephone numbers and email addresses in particular an open invitation to advertisers – or worse.
- 1.4 Photos to be published on the website should be taken by U3A members, and have the photographer's permission to publish them. Photos from elsewhere, eg. found on the Web, cannot be published because of the risk of infringing copyright. Ideally people on the photos should be amenable to having their pictures published.
- 1.5 The website is maintained by a team of web editors (Ann Apps, Eileen Gilligan and Hilary Harmer). Information and photos for publication on the website should be sent by email to: website@newmillsu3a.org.uk

2. email

Many group leaders use this as the principal means of communication with members and in some cases those with email pass messages on to others.

A word of caution if email is used; it should be recognised that a circulated email gives addresses of all members. As a courtesy (and under the Data Protection

Act) a group leader should get the permission of members before using this method.

For the same reason, members should be asked before issuing a group list of names and contact details.

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3. Using the Internet

Anyone familiar with the Internet will already have views on its usefulness for finding information and, possibly, for purchasing. A couple of points, directly relevant to Group leaders:

3.1 Third Age Trust website (u3a.org.uk)

This central U3A web site is a mine of information on other U3As, regional and national activities and, in particular, publications and resources. For some group leaders the resources include on-line and video materials and pointers to similar resources from, for example the Open University. Useful publications include back-issues of the U3A *Sources* magazine which can give information and ideas in particular group areas. Part of the site is restricted to members but registration is easy – just a name and arbitrary password.

Some may find it interesting to look beyond the UK. The web site worldU3A.org takes you to an international project for information sharing, with UK well represented. A monthly newsletter called *Signpost* can be found on this site or by clicking on *Subject Networks* in the members section of u3a.org.uk.

3.2 Similar groups

The u3a.org.uk website gives links to all U3As with their own sites. All will include some information on groups and many include Newsletters. A good starting point is to look at the sites of some local U3As to see where there are similar groups.

An alternative is to make a simple web search on *<topic> u3a*, where *topic* is the name of your group. This will, usually, give you a very large selection of U3As and a direct link to the relevant part of their web sites.