



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 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.
- 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.
- 1.3 Content of web pages should be current – an out-of-date Web site reflects badly on the group and the U3A.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.

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.

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 **u3a.org.uk**

This central U3A web site is a mine of information on other U3As, regional & 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 OU. 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 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. *Salsa U3A* for example has New Mills as the number one hit and *Science & Society U3A* has New Mills pretty high on the list.