

ComputerXplorers

The News (Portsmouth)

11 December 2007

Tips for kids to master mouse magic

Businesses are cashing in on the government's pledge to improve IT and computer knowledge among schoolchildren and are helping to turn the city into a creative technology hub.

ClickandPlay, of Fratton, Portsmouth, has created a website for pre-schoolers featuring Bob the Builder and other kids' characters, providing a safe way to introduce children to computers, enabling basic skills like how to use a mouse and send an email.

Husband-and-wife team David and Christina Field are launching ComputerXplorers Solent, an educational programme aimed at children aged between three and 13 years. ComputerXplorers runs classes to enhance the learning skills of children that are age appropriate in pre-schools, nurseries, after-school clubs and summer camps. Their establishment comes as a stark warning is sent out by the chairman of the e-Learning Foundation who says that not having IT skills will soon be as serious as not being able to read.

At a seminar at St Paul's Catholic College in Burgess Hill, attended by representatives from 50 schools, local education authorities, education experts and influencers, Lord Mitchell, a keynote speaker, warned: 'There are few jobs that don't require IT, so people without these skills will become increasingly disadvantaged.'

According to the British Education Communication and Technology Agency, the UK is ranked fourth in Europe for the highest number of internet connected computers in schools. Clickandplay boss Alastair Gregory said: 'Getting basic computer skills at a young age is more important than ever. We don't think children should spend hours in front of a computer screen to the detriment of physical exercise and social skills. But for pre-schoolers learning how to use a mouse is as important as learning how to hold a pencil. Parents can help prepare children for school by adding computer time into their day-to-day play.'