

Wired up to Wellbeing



E-empowered in Birmingham
“Be Heard. Get Informed. Know Your Rights.”

Introduction

Welcome to 'E-empowerment in Birmingham'. We all know that the Internet is a gateway to a world of information but let's not forget that local news and advice and guidance is also just a mouse-click away. Whether it's information about upcoming events, help on getting your rubbish collected, becoming more actively involved in community affairs or having your voice heard with those that matter: the Internet can help you make all this possible.

'E-empowerment' aims to give you a taste of some of the services that are available online, how to use them and how to contact someone when things go wrong or you need help.

There are seven tasks altogether and most of them can be completed either at home or in a local library or IT centre.

If you're relatively new to using the Internet, try working through the activities below in order as the exercises get progressively more difficult.

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Finally, if you enjoy this lesson, make sure you try the next one in the series which looks at using email to keep in e-touch.

Good luck and enjoy this Module!

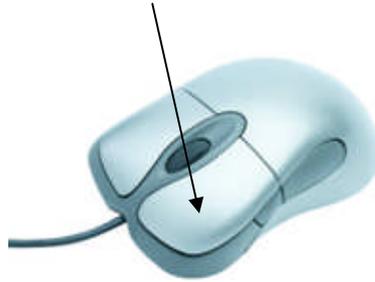
Birmingham Library Services

Wired up to Wellbeing grew out of an initiative from Birmingham's Yardley Libraries to empower the over-50s with support in using the Internet. The pilot project was part of the wider strategy of Birmingham City Council to foster greater independence among older citizens. Yardley Libraries partnered with Flo-Joe Training and Consultants to devise the course and deliver sessions to Library staff and members of the public.

Finding Your Way Around

Tip 1

Your mouse has two buttons, one on the left and one on the right. For all the activities in this lesson you will need to use the left button, not the one on the right.

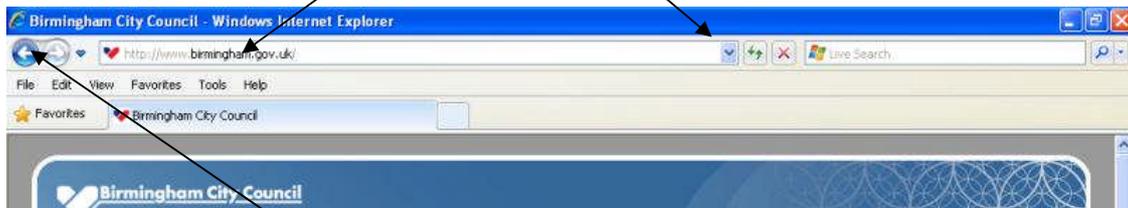


Tip 2

If an activity asks you to go to a particular website and includes the address, type the address in this part of the browser window. Try now. Open the Internet and type:

www.birmingham.gov.uk

Then click the green arrow to go to the website:

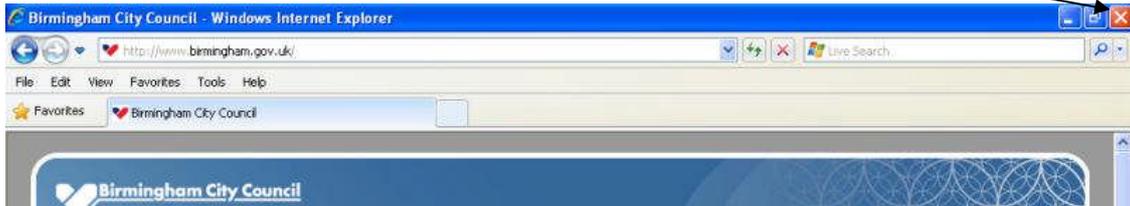


Tip 3

If you get lost don't forget the 'Back' button. This will take you back to where you started. You'll find it in the top left corner of your Internet browser window:

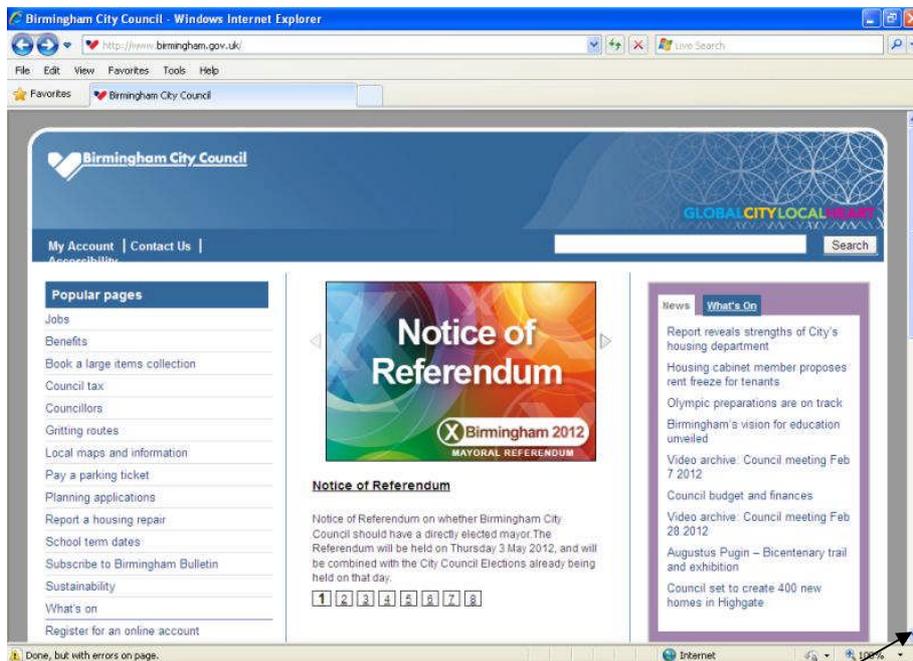
Tip 4

If things go wrong, websites don't work or the computer misbehaves don't worry: it's not you and you almost certainly haven't broken anything! Close the Internet browser window by clicking the red box and try again.



Tip 5

When you visit most web pages you only see the top section of the page.



To read the content lower down click and hold the arrow here. Alternatively, you can use the wheel in the centre of your mouse. This action is referred to as 'scrolling'. So if you are asked to 'scroll down' this is what you do.

Birmingham.Gov.UK

So, just what services does the City Council offer online? Go to the Birmingham City Council website: www.birmingham.gov.uk
 Scroll down and find '**Rubbish and Recycling**'?



Use the items in the menu to answer these questions:

Click '**Refuse Collection**' on the left. What's the telephone number for information about collections?

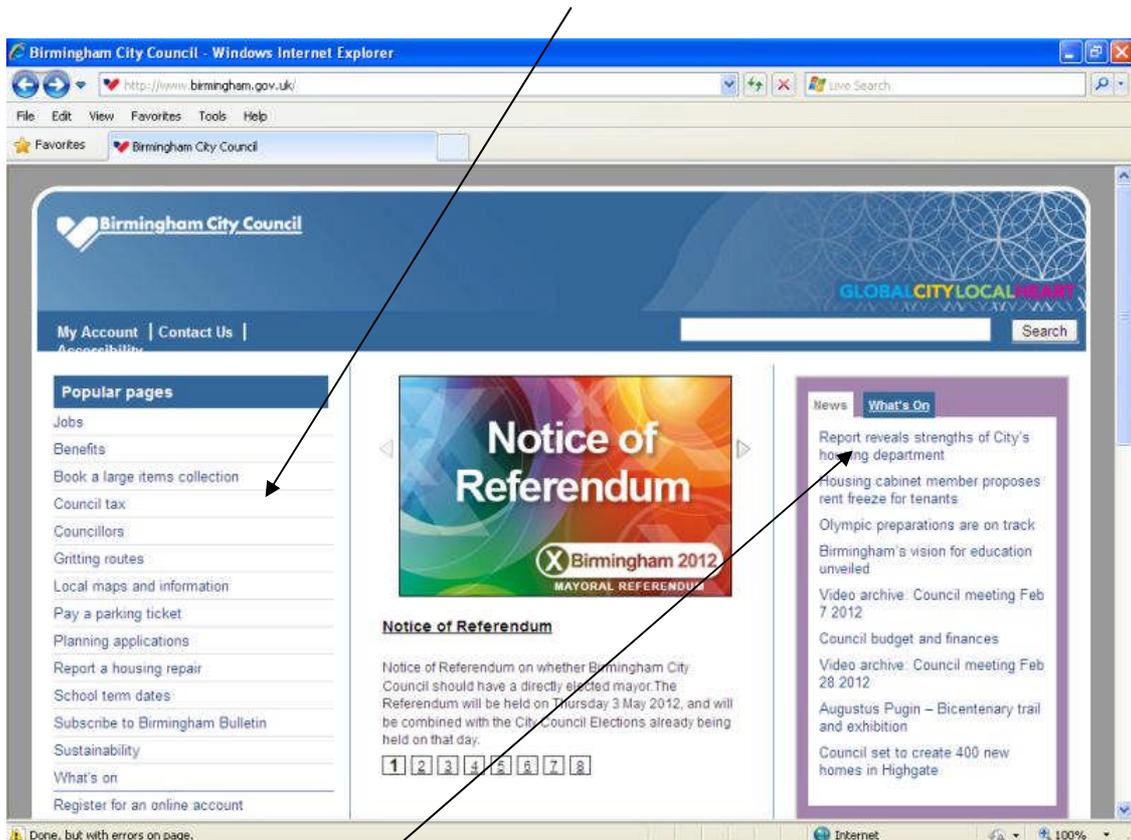
Click '**Waste and Recycling**' again then '**Large Items Collections**' on the left. Is there a charge for this service? If so how much?

Click '**Waste and Recycling**' again then '**Recycling**'. How do you go about recycling batteries?

Click '**Homepage**' at the top of the screen. Then scroll down. Which link do you think you click to find out which events are on in Birmingham this year?

Click '**Leisure Museums and Parks**'. You'll then see the menu for this area on the left of the webpage. Click '**What's on**' and then select the month you are interested in. Are there any events of interest to you? Click the name of the event for further information.

Go back to the homepage (click '**Homepage**'). Which pages are currently popular on the site?



What's in the news?

Birmingham Bulletin!

Meet Kathy

Kathy's heard it's possible to sign up for a regular email newsletter called the 'Birmingham Bulletin', which gives news and information about what's happening in Brum.

She likes to keep fit and she often visits art galleries and museums. She's a keen recycler and likes to keep up-to-date with the latest news around Birmingham.

She's heard that people can find themselves bombarded by emails and text messages if they're not careful so she wants to limit the amount of information she gets sent. Her mobile is simply for friends and family!



Go to: <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/bulletin>
Would Kathy find the information she's interested in?



Scroll down and click '**Subscribe now**' Is there anything you'd be interested in signing up for? If so, sign up. If, like Kathy, you don't want to be bombarded by emails and text messages, be careful which information you ask to be sent!

Find out more about Birmingham Libraries online. Click '**Libraries**' at the top of the menu on the left. You should see 'Welcome to Birmingham Libraries Online'. Scroll down:



Q1: Which events or news stories are of interest to you? Click on the links to find out more.

Q2: What's the email address for Birmingham Library Services?

Q3: What information does 'Credo Reference' contain?

Find out more about the online websites Birmingham libraries offers you access to. Click 'Subscription websites' near the bottom of the Libraries menu on the left. What kind of things are available?

Online Catalogue

Search for books CDs, videos and CDs online using the Library catalogue.



Click '**Libraries**' again at the top of the menu on the left, then '**Catalogue**' on the left, and then '**Birmingham Libraries Catalogue**' in the centre of the screen. Search for a book of your choice. Are there any copies available? Where will you find them?

Community Spirit

A friend of yours has taken early retirement and told you that with all this spare time on her hands she'd be interested in getting more involved in the community. Use your Internet skills to give her some advice!

Go to www.birmingham.gov.uk and search for 'volunteering'

1) Look through the list of search results. Are there any that look interesting? Click any for more information.

2) Go to www.google.com and type **volunteers Birmingham**. How many results are there?



5) Now type "volunteers in Birmingham" using quotation marks "...". Do the results go up or down? Visit some of the websites to find out about more volunteering opportunities.



Putting quotation marks around strings of words means Google will search for examples of these words where they appear together, making your search more targeted.

Advice and Guidance

Each of the people below have problems they're looking to resolve. Choose one or two of the following websites and make a note of any telephone numbers, addresses and other specific information they may be interested in. Tick each person you think you can help.

www.adviceguide.org.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk

www.which.co.uk

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk



Benefits

Sheila's mother has just turned 80 and she's keen to make sure she knows about the winter fuel payments that her mother is entitled to.



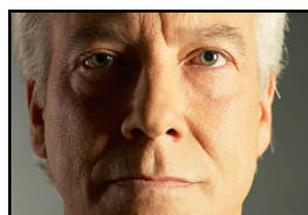
Consumer Advice

Mary has been refused a refund on some clothes she bought that are damaged. The shopkeeper claims they have a 'no money back' policy.



Pensions

Mehmet feels that his father has been unfairly treated following an unsuccessful interview for a part-time job. He'd like information about Age Discrimination.



Anti-Social Neighbours

Sam has a problem with neighbours who's garden has become overgrown, hedges are not cut and a large tree is posing a problem to his property.

Who are you able to help?

- Sheila
- Mary
- Mehmet
- Sam

Make Your Point



**Got something to shout about? Perhaps someone to praise?
Now's your chance!**

Your Local Library

Return to your local library page. Is there a 'Tell us what you think' link to let the team know about your opinion of the library? If not make a note of the telephone number.

Birmingham City Council

Go to: **www.writetothem.com**. Add your postcode and list three councillors in your ward. Can you contact them from this website?

Your local MP

Are your local MP's views close to your own? Go to: **www.theyworkforyou.com**
Add your postcode, read your MPs voting record and decide whether you're both on the same wavelength!

The Prime Minister

Paying too much tax? Not enough public services? Perhaps the Government are doing a great job! Now's your chance to let them know! Go to the website below and sign a petition or start one of your own. (look for 'e-petitions'):

www.number-10.gov.uk