

P140 **COLLABORATION ONLINE**Barbara Gale *St Nicholas Hospice Care, Bury St Edmunds, UK*

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Hospices face the challenge of managing small and large projects, from developing a new service to a refurbishment or new build. An online system enables people to collaborate and share ideas and documents, quickly and easily.

Without an online system, people rely on meetings, minutes and email; often sending or printing large files with the difficulty of managing different versions.

This hospice has successfully used an online project collaboration product called Basecamp. There are now many similar products: Zoho, Glasscubes, Huddle and Manymoon; some offer charitable pricing and can integrate with Google Apps.

Features include:

- ▶ Storage of documents, spreadsheets, pictures, PDFs
- ▶ Message threads
- ▶ Action lists with allocated tasks
- ▶ Calendar and milestones
- ▶ Timesheets and Gantt charts
- ▶ Access by external contractors
- ▶ Collaborate on writing a document.

The systems are easy to use and often have video tutorials for new users. The Hospice found that their refurbishment project was completed on time and within budget, decisions and discussions with the architect could happen easily and quickly, without the need for extra meetings.

Other collaboration tools include Google Apps, where documents and spreadsheets can be shared and even worked on at the same time. Applications include email, calendar, sites (intranet), all hosted by Google, held securely accessed from anywhere with internet access including mobile.

Many companies are converting to Google Apps – Jaguar Land Rover, Rentokil, Sue Ryder. Google Apps is provided free to non-profit in the USA and plans to offer the same in the UK, but the date for this has not yet been confirmed.

With increasing numbers of staff needing remote access to documents, online applications can offer greater storage space, effective collaboration, better reliability and improved efficiency.