

the reading agency

groupthing.org: school and college brief

“groupthing.org allows young people freedom for expression and creativity. There really is something for everyone.”

Rachel Benson (18)

Information for schools and colleges

groupthing is an online community where young people creatively engage with reading and words.

groupthing gives the education sector and its partners a new engagement tool to hook young people into words and reading. groupthing redefines reading so that more young people recognise themselves as readers, are empowered by that realisation, and start reading more.

groupthing's audience is young people aged 13 up to 18 who consider themselves readers and those who don't.

groupthing promotes all forms of reading and words: magazines, non-fiction, manga, graphic novels, adult cross-over titles, plays, scripts, music (lyrics), short stories, film, games (on and off line), websites, blogs, journalism, fiction, poetry, spoken word and 'how to' manuals.

groupthing manifesto is spontaneous, vivid, irresistible, curious, passionate, pushy, lively, tantalizing, inventive, fun, different, informative, irreverent, expressive, diverse, engaged, independent

groupthing is safe, easy to use and fully accessible. Young people's content is post moderated by Tempero (www.tempero.co.uk) and no personal details are visible. The site will have been risk assessed by the NSPCC. We are working with the RNIB to ensure that the site is accessible and that blind and partially sighted young people can join their sighted peers.

groupthing is an initiative owned, managed and developed by The Reading Agency, an independent charity working to bring more reading to more people.

Young people's participation is driving the site forward at every stage. They told us they wanted a place where they could communicate online, find out about activities locally, be part of virtual groups, create their own content, express and share their creativity.

As a subscriber you can:

- Use the site and get access to the professional side of the site 24/7.
- Set up any number of group pages where your young people can showcase their creative work(audio, video, image, text), rate and review, chat about and debate what they are passionate about.
- Create 'closed' (invited members only) or open (anyone can join) group pages.
- Advertise events, put in links to your web pages, add a 'group' friend, let people know your news, create polls, use the locator.
- Enhance work in the classroom with students online in an active and creative space.
- Use the site: to promote student voice and participation, and as an online space for your groups, projects, book weeks and festivals.

Through the part of the site that is only open to professionals you can:

- Be part of an online professional community, talking to others from education, libraries, the public sector and creative industries
- Get advance notice of what's coming up on the site - the latest news and offers
- Read our regular columns on manga and graphic novels, games and online (amongst others!)
- Be part of debates on what's affecting young people's engagement with reading, words and creativity
- Get opportunities to engage your young people in creating content and entering competitions
- Access opportunities from the site's content partners: like author events, free stuff, focus group testing.

groupthing supports:

- The Secondary Strategy sections: 5 (reading – responding to print and multi-modal texts); 8.5 (writing – presenting texts in a variety of forms on paper and screen) and 10.1 (exploring texts using technology).
- The Every Child Matters outcomes and the National Indicators to which they relate, particularly: enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution and consequently to achieve economic well being later in life.

Creativity and engagement across the curriculum:

groupthing provides schools with the tools to ignite students' enthusiasm for words and narrative. It brings together advice, presentation space, and stimulus for all forms of writing and reading. They can use the technology to explore and create a wide variety of texts, and learn from both peer-to-peer comment and content as well as professional advice.

Just do it!

Lots of young people write poetry, diaries, raps, short stories, but never find a way to get it out of their notebooks and in front of an audience. Already this generation is using a huge variety of tools for creating narratives. **groupthing** brings them into one safe space and gives the focus of an audience and professional presentation. They can use their groups to work together and share tips, and join a community of other young people where they can get feedback, support and inspiration.

groupthing can be used across the curriculum, inside normal school hours and the extended school as well as for study support and enrichment activities.

What's the technical specification?

groupthing does not have a minimum operating system requirement – it will run on most modern operating systems (ie: XP, Vista/OSX, Linux). It does have a minimum browser requirement: for PCs: Firefox 2 (or better), Safari 3 (or better), Opera 9 (or better), Internet Explorer 6 or 7 and for Macs: Firefox 2 (or better), Safari 3 (or better), Opera 9 (or better). To play the audio and video content on the site you will need Flash player 9. The site will have cookies.

Take a look at the groupthing IT file at www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing

When can I be part of it?

groupthing is now in beta and starting to develop it's community. Young people can sign up and login from www.groupthing.org and professional subscribers can get access to groupthing professional.

Can I take a look at the site before I subscribe?

You can see what the young people's side of groupthing is like by going to www.groupthing.org (but please don't sign up here as this is just for young people). To get an overview of the whole site check out our videos at www.youtube.com/groupthingvid

If you would like a member of the groupthing team to do a demonstration of the site at a regional or area meeting please contact us info@groupthing.org

For more information info@groupthing.org

What does a subscription to groupthing cover?

- Ability to use the site across any terminal and laptops.
- Access to the 'hidden' professional side of the site.
- Unlimited ability to set-up as many group pages as you want.
- Up to 12 people registered as professional users of the site.

Subscription rates: schools and colleges:

One year subscription rate from 1 May 2009: £100 + VAT

Two year subscription rate: (10% off one year subscription rate) £180 + VAT

How to subscribe to groupthing:

- You can view the site Terms of Use at www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing
 1. Sign up for your subscription package from The Reading Agency shop (www.readingagency.org.uk/shop)
 2. We'll send you a subscription confirmation email and a form which you'll need to complete, listing your professional users and confirming that they are CRB checked (we'll need their CRB number and the date they got their CRB check along with their work email address)

3. Once we receive your form, we'll check it and upload the details on to the site, then send an email through with a dedicated URL so your professional users can sign-up and log in to **groupthing**.
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Special offers:

If you or your school is a member of the School Library Association you can take out a one year subscription to groupthing for £90 + VAT until 31 December 2009. When you subscribe you will need to provide your School Library Association membership number. Find out more about the work of the School Library Association at www.sla.org.uk

If five or more schools in your area are considering subscribing to groupthing please contact us for special discounted rates.

For more information:

Contact: info@groupthing.org

or go to: www.readingagency.org.uk/young/groupthing

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