

**SILVER SURFER WEEK 2006**  
**last-minute reminder that this week**  
**(May 22-May 26)**

The idea is to encourage UK older people (over 50) to find somewhere this week where they can have a good first experience of Internet/email free of charge.

There are all sorts of different venues throughout the UK kindly opening their doors (and making their computers available). There will be volunteers and staff helping guide newcomers on to the Internet .

The eventholders themselves are providing most of the resources. The whole show has been helped along by the Digital Unite/Age Concern partnership, and a galaxy of sponsors: BT, Intel, Microsoft. Ofcom and AOL have been supporting, too.

Between us, and with your help, we hope to help at least 10,000 over-50s to take their first steps across the great digital divide.

If you can publicise this at this late stage, please publish the free helpline number:

0800 100 900

so that people can help find a venue for themselves or their parents or grandparents. For those with Internet and skills to use it, you can find further information and a list of events throughout the country on

<http://www.silversurfer.org.uk> .

Additionally, people can nominate themselves or others as Silver Surfer of the Year or Silver Entrepreneur of the Year, to be judged later in the summer and awarded by MP Stephen Timms at the House of Commons in October. More on:

<http://www.silversurfer.org.uk/awards.html> .

**CONTACT:**

For more information from Digital Unite, contact:  
Gill Adams or Bob Holmes, on 0870 241 5091 , email  
gill.adams@digitalunite.net and bob.holmes@digitalunite.net .  
(Digital Unite is the national specialist in bringing IT learning to older people.) For more information from Age Concern England, email:  
silversurfer@ace.org.uk, telephone: 020 8765 7200

**EDITORS' NOTES:**

Age Concern England and Digital Unite (the new name for Hairnet UK Ltd) are partnering to help tackle the growing

problem of digital exclusion of older people in the UK. Sponsored by BT, Microsoft and Intel and supported by AOL and Ofcom, Silver Surfer Week is an expansion of both Digital Unite's (then Hairnet's) Silver Surfers' Day of the previous four years, and Age Concern's Silver Surfer Festivals of recent years.

Silver Surfer Week 2006 coincides with Adult Learners' Week, which is managed by NIACE, the adult learning charity:

<http://www.niace.org.uk> .

Google Research, March 8, 06: Britain turns off and logs on  
[http://www.guardian.co.uk/frontpage/story/0,,1726044,00.html#article\\_continue](http://www.guardian.co.uk/frontpage/story/0,,1726044,00.html#article_continue)

Ofcom Media Literacy Audit, March 06:

'Ownership levels for [internet] dip below the average for the population as a whole above the age of 55, and are lowest for those aged 65 and over.'

[http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2006/03/nr\\_20060302](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2006/03/nr_20060302)

Cabinet Office figures 2005:

- One-third of the nation are 'digitally unengaged'
- 80% of all over 65s 'unengaged'
- 50%+ of those aged 55-64 'unengaged'

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/digital/index.asp>