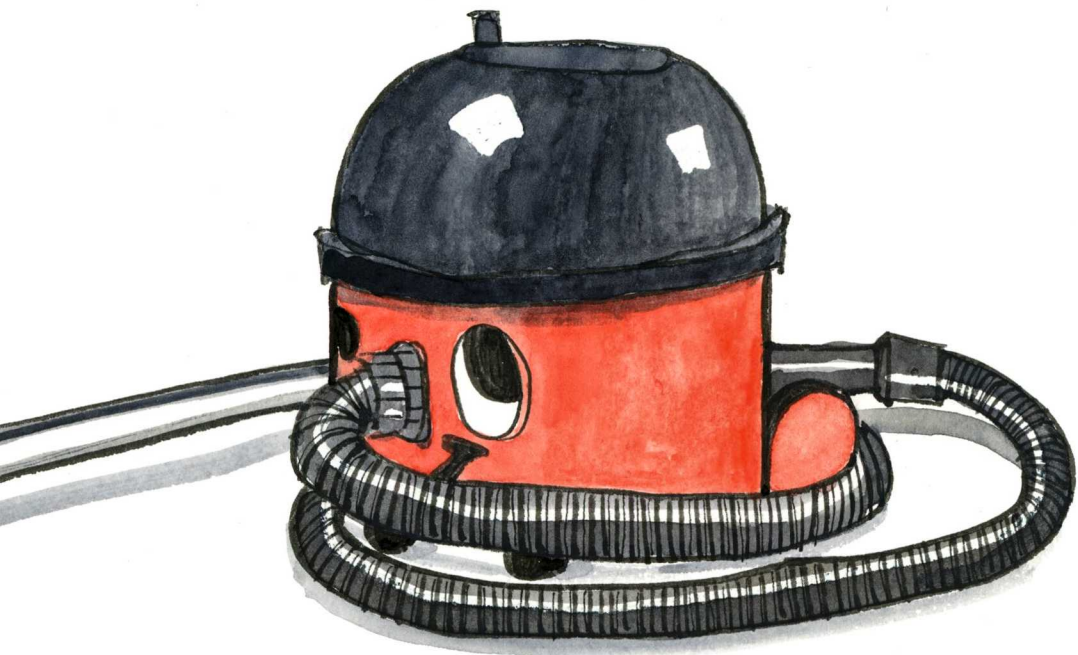
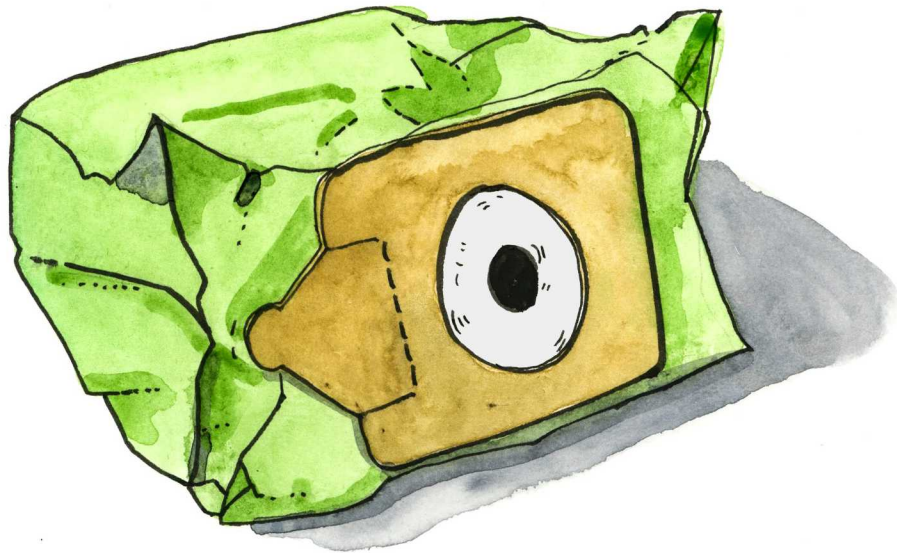


“I couldn't get the top off
to change the bag...”



“...so I Googled it, watched a little video and within minutes...”



Have you noticed how lots of things are online nowadays?

To renew licences, book appointments, write CVs, apply for jobs, even instructions on changing the vacuum cleaner bag.

We know learning about computers and the internet can be scary at first so we've been round the city collecting stories from other Mancunians who have taken the plunge.ww

Some are using their new skills in their jobs or voluntary work, others for keeping in touch with family and friends. All of them are glad they took the first step and got some support.

There are lots of drop-ins and short courses across the city with freindly staff who can help. Ask at your local library for details of opportunities near you.

Good luck !

Sherelle and Sade
Work and Skills Team
Manchester City Council

"I'm dead pleased with myself."

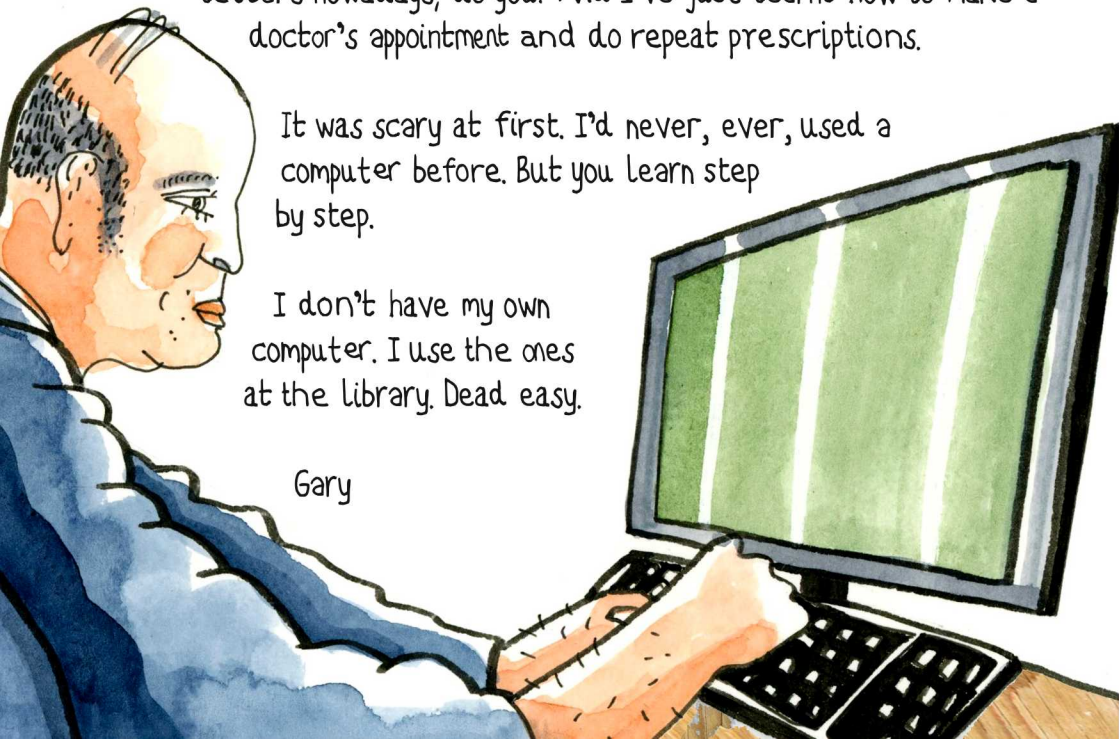
I started learning computers a few years ago but had to give it up when I became a carer.

But now I've started again. I can do my emails... you don't get many letters nowadays, do you? And I've just learnt how to make a doctor's appointment and do repeat prescriptions.

It was scary at first. I'd never, ever, used a computer before. But you learn step by step.

I don't have my own computer. I use the ones at the library. Dead easy.

Gary



"I can't tell you how useful it's been."

I now have a smart phone and a tablet. They are so handy.

I shop online, mainly for clothes. I've renewed my driving licence online, and my blue badge – that was like War and Peace but I did it – and this morning I'm going to book a service for my boiler... you can't phone for that anymore.

I was so determined to do it and now I have.

Vivienne



“Gale has helped me a lot.”

When I first came to the UK I went to the City Council to get my two children into school. They told me to apply online.

I had no idea how to do it but Gale helped me. I asked her if I could get lessons and I've been coming ever since.

At first I would panic in front of the laptop but she said, 'Don't worry, you can do it'. And now I can.

Pat



“Pat’s a good learner. She comes every week.”

We've helped her work through the Learn My Way course. It starts with the basics and you can take it at your own pace.

People come here who have no idea how to use a computer: they've never typed anything, never touched a keyboard. But, that's fine, we can help.

Pat is very committed, she comes every week and is seeing the results. She now uses her new skills in her Childcare college course.

Gale

I do everything on my tablet: I do my banking, I check the interest on our ISA, I do my emails and get photographs from the grandchildren. My friend Susan and I play Scrabble, she's in her house and I'm in mine.

And I buy lots of things online. I have arthritis and can't get about the shops like I used to.

You've always got this worry about fraud but if you follow the advice – and my daughter gives me lots of help – it's okay.

I use the GP website to make appointments online. There are two doctors I prefer so you can choose who you like. And it's easy to request repeat prescriptions. My husband is on lots of medication. I have them sent to the chemists at Tesco because it's convenient for me and they're always very helpful.

I didn't like going to the doctor's the whole time because you had to fight against the receptionist. I don't have to now.

Dorothy

“If you've got a family member who can help, that makes all the difference.”



“I needed to brush up my computer skills for work.”



Coming back to work after ill health, I was getting knocked back at interviews for not having up-to-date IT skills.

The JobCentre suggested a course at my local Adult Ed centre so I enrolled. Before I'd even completed the course I got another interview. I felt confident enough to ask them about their IT system and this time my new skills matched their requirements and I got the job.

Anna

“My smartphone is my lifeline.”



I had no idea how to use it at first but my son has taught me.

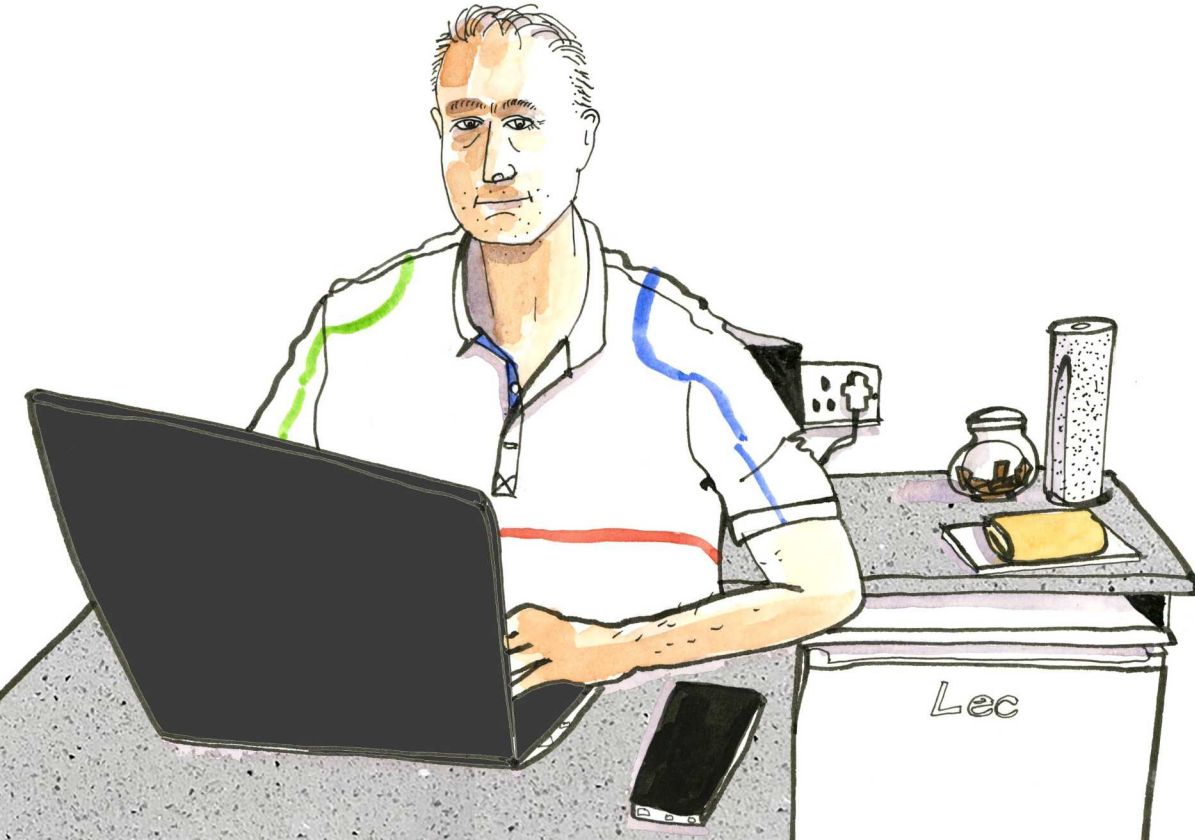
Now I use WhatsApp to ring the people who are important to me for free. I don't see my brothers and sisters – they live all over the country – but I can keep in contact with my smartphone.

When I'm at my lowest I video chat my sister and we talk for hours about everything.

Now I do my banking by phone, it's so much easier than before.

Rinjindar and Leeland

“Here’s me, no education at all, typing in all my stuff onto the computer.”



I left school unable to read and write. I couldn't even spell 'dog'. Back then there was no support for kids with dyslexia. Years later I taught myself to read. I didn't want anything to do with computers.

But then I started creative writing and because my handwriting is like a spider crawling through ink, I needed to type up what I'd written. At first I was hopeless, I'd delete everything I'd done.

Then I went on a course.

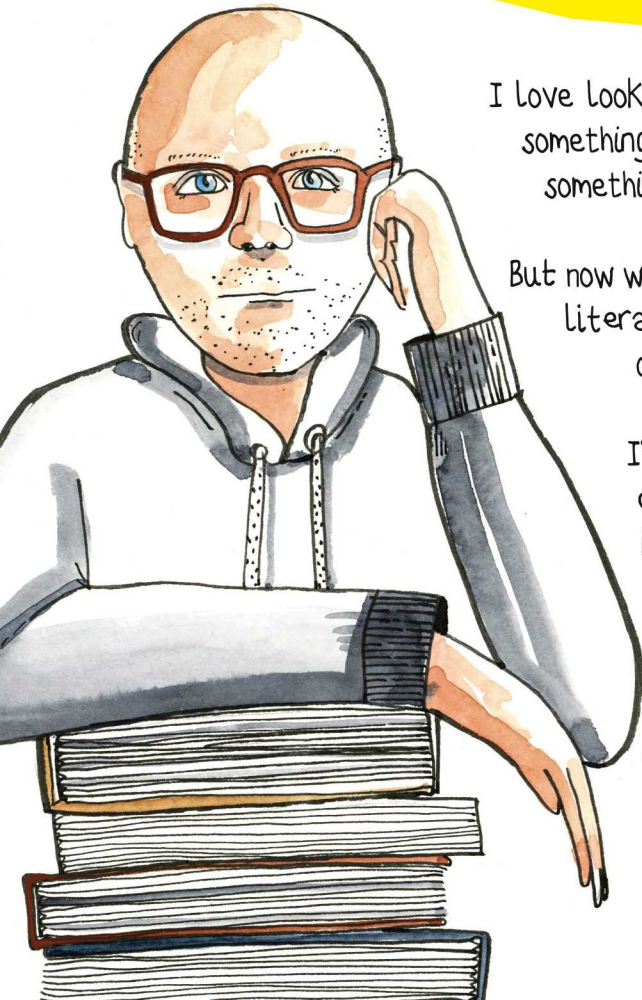
Nervous and literally sweating in the first session, I stuck at it. Believe it or not, I'm now 40,000 words into a novel about how crime doesn't pay, it's a message for today's young people.

I still can't spell. The computer corrects most things but for the long words I just ask Google on my phone and then type it in.

It's amazing what the internet can do.

Michael

“I’m happiest amongst books.”



I love looking things up, finding out why something happened or discovering how something works. I’m a bit old school.

But now we’ve got instant information, literally from across the world, at our fingertips. That’s amazing.

I’ve found learning computers difficult but Ian at Blackley Library is extremely patient. I get frustrated... and he’s taught me to slow down.

I’m still passionate about the ‘old world’ but there’s no doubt digital is an important tool.

Noel

“This is our community garden. It goes the whole way down our drive.”

Everyone gets involved. The Kids litter pick and our elderly neighbour waters the flowers.

I’ve just made a slide presentation on my Laptop. It shows all the work we’ve done together over the past 10 years. It’ll be part of our next grant application.

Computers don’t come easily to me. You can get only so far teaching yourself. But the course at my local centre has been really useful.

Maria



Have you been inspired by our stories?

Would you like to take the first steps to get online, or maybe brush up on the computer skills you already have?

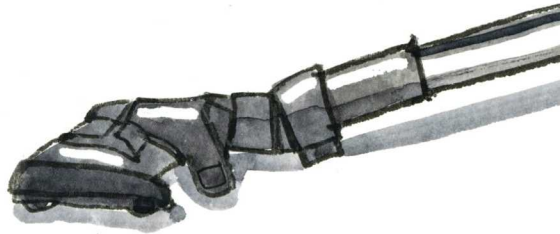
Then speak to a Manchester Adult Education Service tutor or a librarian in your local library who can tell you about computer drop-ins and courses in your area.

It's that easy.

Manchester Adult Education



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



Drawn and compiled by Len Grant