ANDOVER U3A - WEBMASTER REPORT

20 June 2021

Website Visitors

1.   Figure 1 shows website usage from 1st June 2020 to end May 2021.   Visitor numbers[1] to the website increased in July and August but interest subsequently waned and levelled off during the winter. Use of the website started to increase again from March, coinciding with - and maybe as a result of - the gradual relaxation in Covid-related restrictions.

2.   Also included in Figure 1 are Session[2] details. Comparing Visitors against Sessions, the higher figure for Sessions demonstrates that people are generally visiting the website more than once during a day.
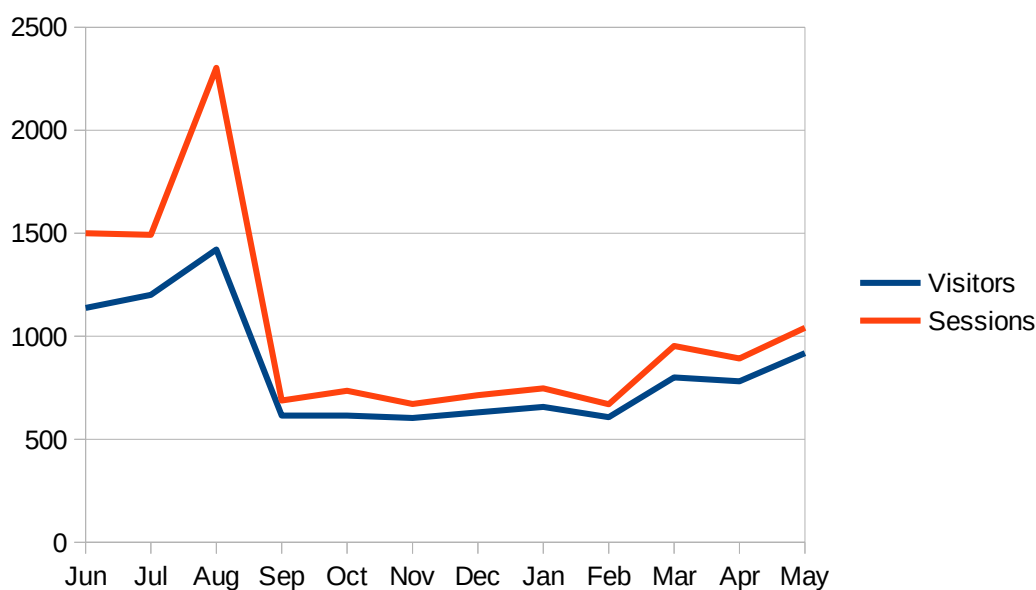

Figure 1: Andover U3A Website - Monthly totals from June 2020 to May 2021.

3.   The figures for June are not included in Figure 1 as this month is not yet complete, however available visitor statistics have shown that the week of the U3A Day activities saw a small increase in visitors. On 1st June, there were 34 visitors and this increased to 75 on 2nd June, however on the next day visitor numbers were already decreasing and by 6th June had dropped to 11 visitors.

Website Contract Change

4.   The contract with 1&1 IONOS, covering website hosting and email, has now been successfully downgraded from Premium to Web Hosting Pro and the monthly charge is now £7 (ex VAT). The new contract runs for 12 months from 28th May 2021, and provides all features as previously notified to the Committee, apart from a change to the total number of email address Inboxes that can be created.

5.   The information provided by 1&1 stated that the Web Hosting Pro package only allowed for the creation of **one** email address Inbox plus unlimited Redirection (forwarding) email addresses: for reasons known only to themselves, 1&1 have provided the Andover U3A with a package that allows for the creation of **one hundred** email address Inboxes plus unlimited Redirection (forwarding) email addresses.

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1   "Visitors" are uniquely identified on the basis of the IP address and the browser ID. If a "visitor" goes to a website more than once in a day from the same device, only one "visitor" is counted.
2   If a "visitor" goes to a website one or more times in a day from a device, each visit is counted as a Session.

Beacon Upgrade (Beacon 2)

6.   The new Beacon 2 application was expected to provide Membership, Group and Financial Management along with an Email facility. It was intended to be a replacement for the member-developed Beacon (Beacon 1) application in use with many U3As. A short introduction can be found at https://beacon.u3a.org.uk/2021/02/22/watch-a-short-introduction-to-beacon/ .

7.   As reported at previous Committee meetings, the developers of Beacon 2 - APT Solutions - released a statement in December 2020 indicating that there were some previously-unknown requirements that had to be documented for inclusion in the project. A Project update released in January stated that it was hoped that a firm timeline would be produced soon.

8.   On 9th April 2021, Sam Mauger, Chief Executive of the Third Age Trust, sent an email to all U3As stating that the Beacon 2 Project was to be delayed, that the delay might be permanent, with the suggestion that APT Solutions were to blame. This message has also been posted in the Public Domain on the Beacon website, and the full text can be found at https://beacon.u3a.org.uk/2021/04/09/imporrtant-message-from-sam-mauger/ . No further information has been made available since that date.

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