

EdinburghSucks!

The logo for 'dot com' features the word 'dot' in white lowercase letters inside a blue circle, followed by the word 'com' in blue lowercase letters.

Craigmillar 1.
August 15, 2005

It all started when we ran the story on the £500,000 home page when Haywired was announced in the press and was very kindly opened by Deputy Communities Minister Johann Lamont.

We continued to watch the site to find that it recently re-launched with five page web site which totally abuses the rules on interface, web design and coding. It is a sad reflection on the community and especially the investment of half a million pounds. Two of the five pages happen to be job descriptions for soon to be employed workers. A further page linked from Haywired goes the job application form hosted in Chicago which is to be completed by applicants. After a telephone conversation with Haywired to ask for an application form to be sent out, we were informed that the only way to apply for the job was through this form.

What first worried us about the form was the fact that is not hosted on a secure server. If the form was hosted on a secure server then the URL would have started with https rather than http. The difference is that http is hypertext transfer protocol and https is hypertext transfer protocol secure. A further worry was that the form was hosted on an site in Chicago, which gives no protection under the Data Protection Act. Further, We were informed that this was a breach of the data protection act.

Luckily we noted that there was a Craigmillar Community Council meeting two days hence so we decided to attend the meeting. On Tuesday 9th August we turned up to the meeting to ask who was involved with Haywired so that we could pass on the information.

We waited through the meeting, which we openly recorded until the any other business section came and after a few other questions we asked if there was anyone on the Council who was involved with Haywired because we believed that there was an illegal form on the site. The chairman of the council through whom **ALL** interaction had to take place, a certain well known ex-regional Councillor Paul Nolan, informed us that the only person present was a Mick McNulty who was on the board and we were welcome to speak to him after the meeting which we duly did. It was a very strange and structured meeting for a community council.

When we went over to Mr. McNulty after the meeting he replied to our concerns that he knew nothing about the internet but to speak to a David Baird 'along the road'. Paul Nolan who had been standing by and listening also informed me that he was too old to learn the internet and he knew nothing about it and mentioned his problems with reading. (Keep this in mind as we go forward.) We know we should have switched the recorder off when the meeting ended, but we didn't.

Next morning, a leisurely drive took me to Niddrie Mains Road where the aforementioned David Baird's office is. Unfortunately, he was sick that day. Thursday morning same drive, Mr. Baird doesn't come in until 10.30-11.00 I am told. So a quick visit along to Haywired to kick the tyres, look under the hood and wait until Mr. Baird can drag himself in.

Nice facility - friendly staff. Unfortunately any questions about the facility especially after mentioning the insecure form all answers are "You will have to ask the Board". "Who are the Board" I ask. David Baird knows. The friendly staff was obviously under orders. Tell the Basa he has to ask the board.

I got 'along the road' at 10:28 according to my tape recorder. Mr. Baird was just arriving by taxi (nice hours and transport arrangements these community helper types have) but when he saw me he managed to find a mobile phone in his pocket as I waited in the reception and he stayed outside on the phone. (I don't believe the call was not incoming, it was outgoing – didn't hear any ringing.)

After the delay Mr. Baird came into the reception and I immediately introduced myself – gave him a 20 second rendition of my qualifications and went on to inform Mr. Baird that the form which had his email address on it was insecure. I explained that I had been at the meeting on Tuesday night; I had spoken to Mr. McNulty and Mr. Nolan. Mr. McNulty had told me to speak to you about my concerns.

"You will have to put your points into writing and send them to the board at 3 Hay Avenue."

"But, sir, that is not good enough. Something should be done immediately. If I am correct sir, and that form is insecure, then people are sending very personal information over the internet as we speak" especially when there is a global identity theft epidemic.

Mr. Baird replied that "we have been informed that it is on a secure server."

"That is not the point sir. Even if it was on a secure server sir, and it is not sir, the problem is that when a person completes the form on their computer, or indeed one at Haywired it is going over the internet to that server unencrypted therefore it is totally insecure. Would you do your banking on a site with that?"

"You will have to put your points into writing and send them to the board at 3 Hay Avenue" he repeated

I replied "I am not willing to accept that. Can I please speak to your boss."

"My boss is not in"

"Can you tell me when he will be in I would like to set up a meeting with him."

"I don't know."

"Can you check your calendars please and let me know."

"Hold on."

Mr. Baird then left me in the reception and went through to the offices. He returned and told me that I could meet him and his boss, a certain Mac Wilkinson 'next Thursday at 2pm."

"That is a long time away I said. Can I speak to a member of the board please?"

"They are not available."

"Can you tell me the names of the members of the board please?"

"Paul Nolan, Mick McNulty and the Managing Directory of Castle Rock Housing Association"

"Ah" I replied. "It was Mick McNulty that told me to come here. Paul Nolan was next to him and heard him. So now you can you help me sir?"

At this point it is worth mentioning - I am a member of the community that Haywired is meant to be serving as a resource. That resource has been 100% funded by taxpayer's money. I am an interested party with a question about the site of the project. I believe it is breaking rules and putting people's information at risk of abuse. I just want someone to look into it.

And, back to the story. We have gotten as far as I now find out that I had already spoken to two members of the board who had sent me to this guy. It baffled me that Paul Nolan never mentioned that he was on the board at the meeting when I asked him in front of about 20 people. Maybe that will be answered by the eventual investigation that the City of Edinburgh council and maybe others must surely order quite soon into what is happening in Craigmillar.

"No. You must put your concerns in writing and send them to the board at 3 Hay Avenue" says Mr. Baird. By this time he is sweating profusely.

"OK" I said. Can I bring some internet security experts to the meeting with me next Thursday?"

"You will have to telephone in and ask if that is possible" he said. By this time, I am getting quite angry at this sweating mass in front of me.

"Do you think you are serving the community well sir?" I asked.

"I am doing the right thing for my job" he replied.

"I never asked that" I said. "Are you serving the community well sir?"

"It's not up to me to tell you." The sweaty mass then left me in the reception and went to his office.

Is the City of Edinburgh council who are supposed to be overseeing these projects really allowing community projects to become projects where people do things for their jobs and serving the community is not what community projects do any more?

It is not too many years since some of the same people involved community projects in Craigmillar today were discredited in damning reports into their financial and management arrangements which eventually resulted in community organizations being wound up. It now looks as though Craigmillar is in the same situation today. Can the Council allow this to be swept under the carpet?

On Friday I got the following information from Mr. Baird, obviously serving the community:

Mac Wilkinson has asked me to e-mail you.

Unfortunately he will not be able to meet you.

He asks that if you have concerns regarding Haywired you put them in writing to the Haywired Board of Directors.

David Baird

So it is confirmed then. Any concerns in Craigmillar, put them in writing to the board of directors whether those directors are willing to be known or not. How about that for Social Inclusion? What does a member of the community do if they are dyslexic; illiterate or maybe just don't have the confidence to 'write a letter to the board?' My opinion is that the reason community organizations came about is that bureaucracies with this mentality had forced people to band together and form community organizations.

As a postscript to this story (so far) – We at EdinburghSucks.com emailed the company (formsite) who are hosting the form in Chicago, IL., USA and asked them about the security of the form. In true American fashion, Alex Powers from the company took care of themselves first just in case there is a lawsuit coming. "This form was setup by one of our customers and we don't have any way to verify that they are legitimate." They also said, don't complete the form I suggest contacting them by phone or email.

I also contacted a security expert friend of mine who happens to be an advisor to the Oracle board. He said, ***king hell who did that, good news is that nobody that would apply for those types of jobs would fill the form in anyway but have they used it for jobs where people don't need really geekabil. Those myte complete it and leave your guys open to the ambulance chasers.

Perhaps the Haywired board and maybe their tech advisors would like to write to us and inform us of their concerns with this report. We will be watching you and we prefer contact by email – thebasa@EdinburghSucks.com.