



**10 January 2006**

**Press Release from Cognitive Applications**

For Immediate Release

## **ICONS website set to become a national treasure in its own right!**

***ICONS – A Portrait of England website captures the public imagination and takes 30,000+ votes and 1000+ nominations on its launch-day (9 January 2006)***

For Cognitive Applications ([www.cogapp.com](http://www.cogapp.com)), the interactive media company behind ICONS ([www.ICONS.org.uk](http://www.ICONS.org.uk)), the early success story is about more than developing a wildly popular website. It is also about demonstrating that digital companies with imagination can move beyond pure service delivery to devising reproducible new interactive formats and the organizations to exploit them.

Cognitive Applications was awarded the contract to develop the million pound site by Culture Online ([www.cultureonline.gov.uk](http://www.cultureonline.gov.uk)), a part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, after a highly competitive tendering process. Instead of immediately jumping into producing the site, the team embarked with Culture Online on an intense research and planning phase focusing on users, technologies, business models, licensing and strategic partnerships.

This research and planning phase suggested that rather than following the conventional route of service-based commission and delivery, the project's sustainability would be best ensured by setting up a not-for-profit organisation, and Cognitive Applications did just that, bringing the highly-experienced Jerry Doyle and Daniel Hahn on board as Managing Director and Editorial Director respectively, and establishing an Advisory Board to work alongside them. Cognitive Applications continues to incubate the new organization, ICONS Online, ensuring that the Cog App Technical Team are in close contact with Jerry's Marketing and Outreach teams along with Dan's Editorial team.

The technical research phase also produced a requirement specification and after carefully evaluating a number of alternative solutions, the open source content management system "Plone" was chosen. This was itself then developed and extended over many months to satisfy the unique needs of the project.

Unprecedented media coverage accompanied the site launch yesterday with the debate about English Culture extending as far as Australia, India and the USA. It even inspired a piece on Radio Four's 'Thought for the Day'. The site itself has experienced a correspondingly huge public response and the project is now going into its roll out phase with plans to extend and deepen the existing site and apply the formula in other domains.

Alex Morrison, ICONS Project Director and Managing Director of Cognitive Applications said of the "Icons experience" so far:

*As soon as we saw Culture Online's brief we knew that this could be a great project but that it wouldn't fulfill its potential if it was tackled as a conventional 'design and build'. The key had to be sustainability and that led us to this much more radical approach. By setting up the project as a stand-alone organization, ICONS Online, we now have a structure that can take the project forward into the future - perfect the Icons formula and then roll it out in other areas. If we hadn't done that to begin with it would be much too late now to put it in place now. ICONS is a new interactive format and ICONS Online's set up is a new pattern for interactive formats that deliver long-term results.*

Mike Greenwood, Commissioning Executive, Culture Online added:

*Cognitive Applications won the contract after a tough tendering process. They have a strong track record of working in the arts and culture sector and that experience has really come through in the way they have approached the project. We're delighted with the reception that ICONS has had so far.*

**For more information, please contact:**

Niki Strange  
Marketing and Communications Consultant  
Cognitive Applications  
Lees House  
21-33 Dyke Road  
Brighton  
BN1 3FE

Tel: 01273 821 600  
Mob: 07956945 824  
Mail: [nikis@cogapp.com](mailto:nikis@cogapp.com)  
Web: [www.cogapp.com](http://www.cogapp.com)

**Notes for Editors:**

**1. Cognitive Applications:**

Cognitive Applications ([www.cogapp.com](http://www.cogapp.com)) is an award-winning international new media consultancy founded in 1985. Originally working in artificial intelligence the company started using digital multimedia in the late 1980s and is now one of the most experienced of its kind in the world. Current clients include BBC, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Home Office and Culture Online. The company's aim is to produce well conceived and beautifully executed projects that will provide lasting value for client organisations and enrich the lives of the people who use them. The company has offices in Brighton, England and Washington DC.

**2. ICONS** ([www.icons.org.uk](http://www.icons.org.uk)) paints a virtual portrait of the country through an exploration of our favourite icons, from Stonehenge to the humble cup of tea. Delightful to use, and easy to navigate, with deep content from a wealth of contributing partners, Icons represents a wonderful experience for users and a creative collaboration between cultural institutions. Associated with the virtual collection, the project will provide activities, both on- and off-line including a vibrant education programme. On 9 January 2006 Culture Minister David Lammy announced the first twelve icons to make it into the collection. Celebrities joining in by nominating their icons include Richard E Grant, June Whitfield, Eddie Izzard, Sir Henry Cooper and Sir Terence Conran. For more information please contact the Icons Media Office – [jerryd@icons.org.uk](mailto:jerryd@icons.org.uk) or call 01273 821276, 01273 821209 or 01273 821 600.

**3. Culture Online** ([www.cultureonline.gov.uk](http://www.cultureonline.gov.uk)), part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, is an innovative initiative that seeks to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture.

4. For more information on **Plone** please visit: <http://plone.org/>

-Ends-