

Continuing the WMN's series profiling the Digital Peninsula Network, **JEMIMA LAING** speaks to another member of the association for professionals working with digital technology in Cornwall

MEMBER PROFILE: *www.researchteam.co.uk*

ALTHOUGH Margaret Cook set up her company three years ago she still finds people who express astonishment that she could be running Research Team, her highly successful market research business, from the deeply rural setting of Gulval, near Penzance.

She was working in France for Socioscan Paris when the idea of creating a sister company in the UK was first mooted.

"The first location suggested was, of course, London but I had a house in Cornwall and knew that I could run the business just as successfully from here," she said.

And she has been proved right. Research Team's turnover for the last financial year was £300,000 and projected turnover for this year is around £500,000.

"But it's only because of digital technology that I have been able to set this up.

"We send and receive everything from the initial quote to the final data by e-mail."

The business started with just Margaret Cook and one part-time assistant and now employs three full-time staff and ten regular part-time workers. She also co-ordinates hundreds of workers across the UK, carrying out both quantitative and qualitative research for a whole range of international clients including Reckitt & Benckiser, British Midland and BAT.

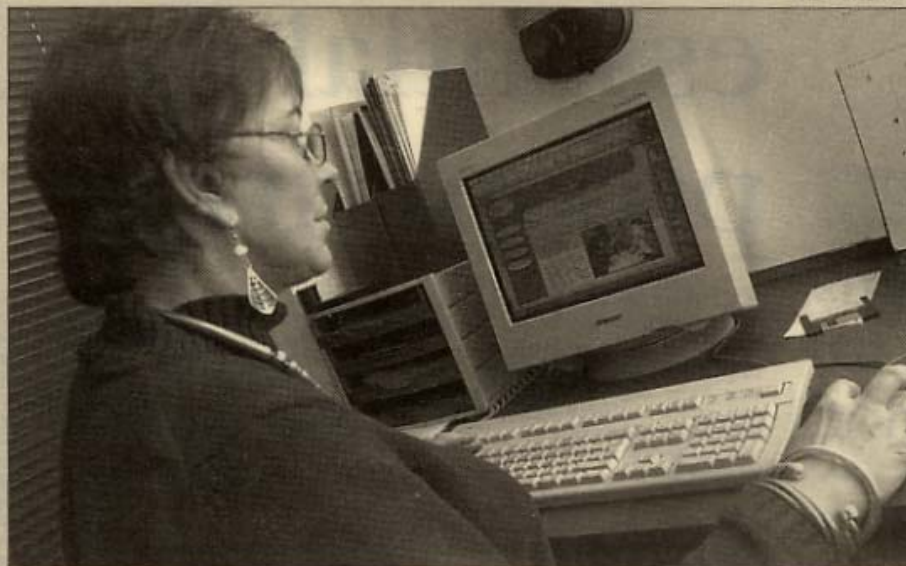
But Cornwall is the nerve centre and is where the questionnaires are printed and sent out and where all the data entry takes place.

Membership of the Digital Peninsula Network has been vital to the business in a multitude of ways, especially in terms of knowledge-sharing and recruitment.

"I joined the Network when it started because I knew I would need support as I had no background in IT," explained Mrs Cook.

"I find people there with specialised knowledge and it is always my first point of call.

"For instance if I suddenly need extra people for data entry I just phone the Network.



PHIL MONCKTON

● SUCCESSFUL: Margaret Cook, managing director of Research Team

"And recently we had problems with a data entry programme and someone from the Network came to give back-up and confidence to the people using the programme.

"It's a really good support network."

One of the matters highlighted by the Network is the lack of broadband provision within the county, a point particularly relevant to Margaret Cook's business.

"Because all the work I do is international every single element comes through the Internet.

"We urgently need more bandwidth as the amount of data we are having to send is increasing all the time.

"Being part of the Network gives me confidence and the reassurance that, if I have a problem, I'll be able to find someone very quickly who has the skills and expertise that we need, and it hasn't failed yet."