

Logging out of the archives...

Two former Oxford library staff with a passion for web design have moved their business to St. Just, near Land's End.



Overview

Emily Tarrant first came across IT and web development during her UCL MA Archivist course. Having studied one IT related module, Emily began experimenting with web development and design in her spare time. "Working on websites became a complete passion of mine" Emily explains, "I found myself spending so much of my time outside of work trying out different techniques, playing with new designs, reading up on web development and then taking additional classes and courses, that I began to think perhaps I could do it for a living."

Having spent many evenings working on web development, by August 2004 Emily had set up a web company and for a while ran the business with her partner Michael Rose, while they both also held down full time jobs. But as the business got off the ground and the work load grew, Emily and Michael began to discuss whether they could leave their jobs and move the business to Cornwall.

"Michael is originally from Cornwall, and I had spent a year in the county as well and just loved it. We were both becoming increasingly tired of working for large organisations, and we were so pleased to see how our business was taking off that we began discussing the pros and cons of relocating. The positives were overwhelming!"

In March 2006, both Emily and Michael resigned and bought a house in St. Just, Cornwall and made the move.

The business became an incorporated company with Emily and Michael as Directors; and Michael came up with the name "Webfooted Designs". Michael explains "the company's name is a play on sure footed. Not only does it highlight we are a web company, but we also thought of the webbed feet of seagulls, which reflects our move to Cornwall!"

Since making the move, Webfooted Designs has been incredibly busy. The business currently has a mixture of clients both in and out of the county. Both Michael and Emily are keen to work with local companies, as part of their commitment to contribute to the local community.

Commenting on their move Emily says: "moving to Cornwall has brought us a complete lifestyle change. We no longer have the security of working for a large organisation and are now fending for ourselves. We have had to teach ourselves all about how to run a business, but are loving every minute. We have also recently bought a house which we have been doing up ourselves, and at present run our office out of our new home. It's amazing - we have no commute, and we live in such a beautiful part of the county."

Michael added: "We are working crazy hours, so always relish the opportunity when we can take a stroll in the countryside or to the sea. But we certainly have no regrets making the move - there couldn't be a better place for us to work from."

Support

Webfooted Designs has been receiving business advice from Creative Skills which is helping them develop a marketing plan. Emily concludes: "we have been really impressed by the business support that is available to us. It's also great to know we can call upon Cornwall Pure Business if we have any queries."

Workforce

Webfooted Designs has plans for growth and is hoping to recruit in the next 12 months.

Clients

Clients include: The Lafrowda Festival, St Just Area Traders Association, local artist Tom Henderson Smith, the Bodleian Library, Oxford and Porthcurno Telegraph Museum.

Technology

The business uses industry standard packages such as Photoshop. However, it takes a different approach with its web building, and builds each site from scratch using a plain text editor, providing clients with a site that is tailored for their needs.