

# Case Study

## Flummix - How to Build an Online Shop

### Encouraging Ecommerce for Everyone

In 2019, Heart of Midlothian FC created its pioneering Innovation Centre, sponsored by Baillie Gifford and powered by Dell Technologies. One of the key goals for the centre was to create educational programmes which would provide the community with accessible opportunities to learn practical and valuable digital skills.

The Innovation Centre looked for experienced educators who could create classes, to help pass on skill sets which would help future career opportunities and employability.

Luckily, they had an expert in house.

### More Than Magic

Jody Grieg is a former computer science teacher and specialist in digital marketing, who also happens to be a professional magician (and is the resident magician at Heart of Midlothian Football Club).

Jody's STEM learning and performance arts company, Flummix, specialises in educational entertainment, combining Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths to develop skills in creativity, computational thinking, and confidence. With years of teaching experience, Jody now uses magic as a tool for delivering his unique form of educational entertainment.

"It encourages confidence, self-esteem and empathy," says Jody. "It's a great tool to build on the natural curiosity of 'how did you do that?' and helps learners enjoy solving computational mysteries and make meaning from direct experience."

When not teaching or astonishing audiences, Jody also continues to develop his career in digital marketing. Through his other company, [TreeTopFrog](#), Jody designs and develops websites and ecommerce stores. He also helps businesses grow online with search engine optimisation and pay per click (PPC) adverts.

### Build Your Own Online Store

In January 2020, Flummix was one of 25 successful applicants to the Digital Xtra Fund's fifth round of grant awards. The support enabled Flummix to develop and run a weekly 'ecommerce' club which teaches young people (from S2-S5) how to build and design their own online store, in a way they cannot learn at school. This can be used in a huge range of ways, to sell goods, offer services, or even showcase the developer as a potential employee.

“Creating an ecommerce site brings together a wide range of different STEM skills, which work together to create something really valuable,” says Jody. “It incorporates design, development and creativity. Participants learn how to explore new software and technologies. They integrate content writing and media creation, to build a brand and create something exciting and practical. They can explore their inner entrepreneur to turn their hobby into a business.”

“This is an amazing practical real-world skill that has endless possibilities”

Flummix worked in partnership with Heart of Midlothian FC who kindly offered their facilities at the club’s Innovation Centre without charge, and also supported Jody with the marketing and delivery of the course.

## No Coding Required

While some online courses are intensive coding exercises, Jody instead uses the popular WordPress content management system (CMS), which powers approximately [69% of all the websites](#) in the world today.

WordPress supports an enormous number of ‘plugins’ - pieces of software which enable the platform to utilise all of the leading software services, such as ecommerce providers, payment systems, social media sites, video providers, image sharing, and online security - without requiring an in-depth knowledge of coding.

This provides a course which requires computational thinking and computer literacy, but without the steep learning curve of traditional programming that can put off many young learners.

## Classroom Meets Covid

The ecommerce course was originally created to take place in the Media Suite at Heart of Midlothian FC where all the Innovation Centre programmes are run, to enable hands-on teaching and support. As with so many plans in 2020, the Covid pandemic changed that.

When it became clear that a lockdown of some kind would be highly likely for the foreseeable future, the course was adapted for online delivery. Working in partnership with the Club, the ecommerce course was able to use the same successful framework as the other Innovation Centre clubs and courses. Jody identified online tutorials with the core skills required and supported students directly via individual or group videocalls.

The new online course gave students the chance to study at their own pace, revisit material and still have a regular timeslot where they can ask questions, see others’ progress, get feedback, help and input from Jody and the other participants.

At the end of the course, each student will have learned all of the components necessary to launch their own online store.

## The Future Is Online

“Due to the impact of Covid-19, more and more businesses are now looking for digital solutions,” says Jody. “Young people with the skills to get themselves, friends, family, or small companies online are going to be really valuable.”

While the first cohort of online students started in October 2020, Jody already has plans for a more personal approach to future courses.

“I would love to produce my own video tutorials,” says Jody. “It would let me personalise things, use examples closer to home, keep the messaging focused and make it a lot more fun.”

While he doesn't say so specifically, there's a strong possibility that Jody's own online videos would be a little more magical than those produced by other, less mystically gifted teachers.

## Retail Reality

“Every kid should be exposed to the opportunities of building a business online,” says Jody.

“The BBC ran a news story in early 2020 about a 14 year old girl in London who had created her own [online dropshipping business](#). This means she's created her own storefront, full of products that are produced and shipped by other companies. She was earning good money whilst learning at school!

“Thanks to the help and support of Digital Xtra Fund and Heart of Midlothian FC's Innovation Centre, young people across Scotland will be able to bring their own ideas and projects to life and either build their own business, or kickstart a successful digital career.”

That sounds magic, Jody.