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Dear Comma user.

### **Major Changes to Commanet**

Firstly, sorry for this “cold calling” type of message but I really need to contact everyone who could possibly have interest in Comma and Commanet.

Blanket coverage is the only real way I can see of achieving that.

If you have received this and it is a mystery to you then you could visit [www.commanet.org](http://www.commanet.org) and view tens of thousands of photographs, videos, sounds, and stories entered by communities, primarily from the UK and Ireland.

Apologies for the history lesson below, but it explains the current situation:

### **History of Commanet**

I developed the original Comma in 1995. In 2000 Chris Levack and Patsy Cullen set up the charity Commanet. I gave Commanet all ownership of Comma so that they could use, develop and promote the idea of Community Archiving. At this point I became a sub-contractor for Commanet, working on the product and undertaking the vast majority of training.

Due mainly to an unfortunate/catastrophic decision, Commanet went into receivership in 2008. At that point I decided to take the whole system back to see if I could support all the users who have adopted Comma. However, having done this up to now, I have reluctantly decided that, as a one person business, I simply don't have the resources to continue to support the whole package of desktop software and web service.

### **The Future of Commanet desktop version**

I plan to continue with the desktop system; I am able to do so because it is not a drain on my resources and, as I am the only person who can usefully support users, this couldn't really be delivered elsewhere. However any ideas will be gratefully received.

### **The Future of Commanet web version**

I have reluctantly decided not to continue to support the web version unless this mailing gets a very enthusiastic response.

**Commanet web service will cease on 15th February 2010 unless a solution is found.**

### **This is the reason for this mailing!**

The options are as follows.

1. Enough users respond positively by email to [storyville.archives@gmail.com](mailto:storyville.archives@gmail.com) or the address above by the middle of February 2010 to say that, in principal, they are willing to pay an annual subscription of £150 for uploading and maintaining their web archives. This would be a wonderful outcome.

2. A sponsor steps forward to cover the modest costs of continuing
3. An organization says that it is willing to take over the server/service. This would be at no cost, but of course there would be ongoing expenditure. I would give the physical server and all rights to the web software away subject to some guarantees of intention.

In reality any organization like a university or public sector IT department with a solid infrastructure wouldn't notice any strain on their resources, but there would be costs in:

1. Organisation
2. Bandwidth
3. Physical maintenance of the server, a Dell PowerEdge 1650
4. Other maintenance, for instance OS patching and security
5. If there were to be uploading of new archives, this would, at least in the short term, would have to be done by myself
6. Any changes

There are approximately 65 Comma archives online at present and 150+ others who actively only use the desktop version. I believe that many Comma users would be prepared to pay a reasonable amount to keep their archives online. I can provide details. This could help justify taking over the service?

Of course any organization that took over the web system could commission any changes they thought appropriate, for instance translation of the interfaces into Gaelic or Polish. This would also be a great advance.

So, **I urgently need to have resolution** on the online/server issue. I will keep the server live until 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010, then, unless someone thinks it possible to help preserve all of the archives, or enough groups think it worthwhile to pay to keep the service, with great regret, the plug will be pulled.

If you can help, or have any ideas whatsoever as to who could take on this role or sponsor it then please reply ASAP. I am really loath to disappoint the Comma community, many of you friends of mine, and throw away so much of your wonderful work.



Geoff Clout

Please do NOT use old contact details, they won't work!  
[storyville.archives@gmail.com](mailto:storyville.archives@gmail.com)  
[www.commanet.org](http://www.commanet.org)

PS: There are the newest versions of Comma on the server  
(<ftp://www.commanet.org>) as well as a fully functioning free version.