

James Woodcock closes the door on...

Yamaha Personal Keyboard Owner



After six years in the driving seat of YPKO, the UK's busiest keyboard enthusiast website, owner James Woodcock feels it's time to point his mouse in a new direction.

Yamaha Personal Keyboard Owner (YPKO) Closure Announced - by James Woodcock

On March 30th I announced that YPKO, my Yamaha enthusiast website, would be closing in May 2011. Naturally this came as a great shock to the online membership but it had become impossible to cope with YPKO's high level of activity while keeping up-to-date with the latest Yamaha related news content and articles. This, together with forum moderation and general maintenance, has become a huge drain on my time and energy.

My decision to close the site was certainly not taken lightly because, for the past six years, it has been a pleasure to be administrator and owner of YPKO. Visitors to my website have all been extremely supportive of my situation and have left many lovely comments regarding my stewardship of the website.

YPKO has not been sold - and is not for sale. Members' details will not be passed to any third party and will be removed entirely from the online database at the time of the final closure.

The YPKO website opened in December 2004 and during its six year existence it became the central online focus for Yamaha keyboard and digital piano enthusiasts worldwide - attracting almost 12,000 members, 300,000 forum posts and a total of 34 million page views.

It is with great thanks that I acknowledge the support and recognition of Yamaha UK, Yamaha Corporation and the very positive influences of Glyn and Catherine Madden of the Yamaha Club. Finally, of course, "thank you" to you the valued visitor/member - for your support, participation and assistance in the YPKO online community.



What Next?

By profession I am a freelance journalist, so I have salvaged all of the YPKO podcasts, together with many of the articles and reviews I've written, and transplanted them on my personal website. All Yamaha Personal Keyboard Owner related Internet addresses will forward to a new section on my blog specifically created for Yamaha related posts, which will include performances, demonstrations and my experiences with Yamaha keyboards and digital pianos. Domains include ypko.co.uk, yamahapkowner.co.uk and of course yamahapkowner.com. So, if you would like to continue to follow my personal journey, encompassing all my various interests, you can do so via these links:

Website: www.jameswoodcock.co.uk **Twitter:** [@jameswoodcock](https://twitter.com/@jameswoodcock)

Kind regards - James Woodcock

Glyn Madden bids 'adieu' to James Woodcock and looks back at the success of his website 'Yamaha Personal Keyboard Owner' (YPKO)

The YPKO website first appeared in 2004 and it wasn't long before its growing popularity brought it to the attention of Yamaha UK who suggested that a meeting between myself and the site's owner, one James Woodcock, might be beneficial to us both.

I'm no whiz-kid when it comes to computers and at the time I first met James I was desperately trying to get to grips with the technology involved in setting up a website for the Yamaha Club. Having opened a forum

on the site I found, as is commonly the case, that I was rapidly falling into the time draining black hole that inevitably seems to follow such a move. For a forum to run smoothly it has to be 'policed' on a full-time basis - because it's a sad fact that, whilst the Internet opens the door to a wealth of instant information and entertainment, the anonymity it offers can also bring out the worst in a minority of people.

Such individuals get their kicks from making spiteful,

hurtful and occasionally libellous remarks - whilst hiding their true identities behind 'secret' names. These need to be effectively and firmly dealt with before other, more moderate users, are offended.

Ordinary everyday disputes and misunderstandings also need to be managed quickly and effectively to prevent them escalating from mole-hill to mountain sized proportions - and I soon found that I had little time for anything other than playing referee so when James, who had already gained a great deal of experience in this area, offered to take on the administration of the Yamaha Club forum - merging it with his own YPKO website - I thanked my lucky stars for the Godsend! Since that day he and I have worked on several projects together and, although Yamaha Club and YPKO have maintained their separate identities, we have blended the benefits from each - learning a few new skills along the way, and developing a friendship that, I am sure, will continue long into the future.

Ever since its inception YPKO, like many Internet based resources, has provided free access to all. It has grown, though, far beyond James' original expectations - demanding ever more of his time and energy in meeting the seemingly insatiable demands of its members.

A venture that doesn't provide an income has to be played at a level that is both affordable and 'fun'. James, as you will have read, is the first to admit that, as a Yamaha keyboard enthusiast himself, he has enjoyed some very happy times running YPKO, meeting members, discovering new musical techniques and learning skills. There have been moments of frustration too of course but, on the whole, it has been an experience he will remember with fondness and, I expect, not a little pride.

James has recently become engaged and, as happens to most of us sooner or later, the need to 'make a living' has taken on a more urgent focus. I know his decision to close YPKO was not taken lightly but, no matter how you look at it, it's a hobby - and it has begun to make demands on his time and energy that, in the current economic climate, can't be allowed to continue.

To be truthful Yamaha Club is little more than a hobby itself - but, happily, Cath and I have the advantage of being at the 'other end' of a career - with a paid up mortgage. If we could afford to employ James, or subsidise YPKO so that it could continue, we surely would. For the sake of his own future he now has to break away and look to richer paths to follow - and I'm sure all our readers will wish him well.

Your comments

Following his announcement YPKO was filled with glowing comments for James. We can't print them all but here are just a tiny few that portray the mood of the majority of well-wishers.

You created such a wonderful community with your website and it has been exciting to visit on a daily basis, to receive valuable advice and to have the opportunity to perform our music to one another. I wish there could have been a way to make it viable for you to continue.

(Susie Drage)

So sorry to hear the YPKO site is closing. Having been a member almost since it started I will be very sorry to see it go. I'm surprised that Yamaha UK hasn't stepped forward to take over as you have been one of their best unpaid salesman.

Bob Hargreaves

How sad that YPKO will soon be closing down. I have always been an avid follower of members advice and tips to set up the T, 2, 3 and now the fabulous Tyros4. Let's hope that, as suggested, someone will take on a similar site.

Paul Denny

So sorry to hear the news but fully understand your reasons. You have done a magnificent job with YPKO. I have derived a lot of pleasure and help from members to get me on the right tracks after I bought my Tyros2. Best wishes for the future.

Barrie S.

I am very sorry to hear about the closing of this wonderful forum! I want to thank you for all the hard work, time and effort you have put into this & wish you the best of luck for the future.

Gloria Hanson

The future:

Although we can still follow James and YPKO via his blog there is now, a huge void where the YPKO forum used to be. Whether anyone will be able to successfully fill it remains to be seen. Catherine and I will, like the rest of you, watch with interest. James is a difficult act to follow because his honesty and integrity will be hard to match - and it's these qualities, combined with an expert knowledge of Internet technology, that have played such a crucial part in YPKO's success.

At the moment there are two possible contenders. One has not yet publicly announced an intention to 'enter the ring'. The other is one of our contributors, Steve Selwood, who has already set up a forum based site called 'Yamaha Keyboard Owners'.

Steve is an excellent musician, a long time Yamaha enthusiast - and, naturally we encourage you to visit his website and wish him all the best with the new enterprise. For the time being at least, however, we need to be clear that there is no 'official' link between Yamaha Club Magazine and any newcomer.



Steve Selwood's new site at www.yamahakeyboard.co.uk