A New Model for Digital Inclusion

Travis Lane, Connected Nation, Inc.
Chris McGovern, Connected Nation, Inc.
Connect Ohio

- Founded in 2008, Connect Ohio is a subsidiary of Connected Nation, Inc. and operates as a non-profit organization in the state of Ohio.

- Connect Ohio works to accelerate awareness of the value of broadband and to assist communities in identifying and developing solutions to the broadband technology access, adoption, and use challenges that they face.

- Connect Ohio collaborates with Ohio’s telecommunications providers, information technology companies, government entities, community organizations, community leaders, and universities.

www.connectohio.org
What is Digital Inclusion?

- Digital inclusion ensures individuals and disadvantaged groups have access to, and skills to use, the Internet and related technologies, and are therefore able to participate in and benefit from the information society.

- In addition to access, targeted education, training, and relevant content are needed in order to assist all residents in deriving value from the Internet.
“Until recently, not having broadband was an inconvenience. Now, broadband is essential to opportunity and citizenship... Absent action, the individual and societal costs of digital exclusion will grow. With so many Americans lacking broadband access or the skills to make it matter, the Internet has the potential to exacerbate inequality.”

- National Broadband Plan, 2010
Every Citizen Online (ECO) is a digital inclusion program developed by Connect Ohio with a mission to increase sustainable broadband adoption in Ohio.

ECO is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Commerce BTOP program and private partners.

The project provides free computer training sessions at public libraries and other community anchor institutions throughout Ohio and teaches new users how to access the Internet and how to best utilize all the Internet has to offer.

The goal of the project is to showcase the many educational, healthcare, economic, and communication benefits of broadband use, and to encourage adoption by residents statewide.
The Every Citizen Online Model

1. Partner with libraries to ensure adequate equipment and support;

2. Train staff to deliver the curriculum to potential adopters;

3. Promote local libraries as a source of broadband access and training;

4. Engage non-adopters with a comprehensive public outreach campaign, helping them understand the benefits of broadband service;

5. Provide curriculum to teach computer and Internet use, as well as the skills required to utilize the Internet effectively for essential services, education, employment, civic engagement, and cultural participation;

6. Offer compelling promotion to participants, giving them the opportunity to adopt the technology for everyday use in their homes.
1. Partner with Libraries

- 68% of Ohio libraries report that they were the only sources of free access to computers and Internet in their communities
- 76% reported an increase in the use of Internet workstations since the last fiscal year
- 86% reported that they have insufficient availability of workstations
- 50% reported decreased hours of public access since the last fiscal year
- 23% did not provide assistance to patrons in completing online job applications

Source: American Library Association
2. Train Staff

- Trainers come from local libraries, community colleges, and workforce development centers
- Same trainers work across multiple branches
- Many trainers are familiar local faces
- Provide technical support
3. Promote Local Libraries

PSAs run in 95 newspapers weekly

Want to learn about Computers and the Internet?

FREE COMPUTER TRAINING

Connect Ohio is providing six hours of introductory coursework to help adults understand:

- Computers
- The Internet
- And what Broadband can do for you!

NOW I CAN...

- Send mail instantly and without postage
- Pay bills or file taxes online
- Search for career opportunities
- Shop online
- Gain further education
- Get health care information anytime
- Keep in touch with family and friends

GET CONNECTED!
CLASSES FORMING NOW

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.connectohio.org
1-(855) NOW-I-CAN

FREE basic computer training for adults

Feel comfortable using a computer and learn how to browse the Internet

Classes are FREE and forming NOW at your local library or community college.

Call 855-NOW-I-CAN (669-4226) for local class information
4. Public Outreach Campaign

More than 39,000 PSAs have aired on 34 television stations

For more video contest winners: [http://connectohio.org/video-contest](http://connectohio.org/video-contest)
5. Curriculum

- Six hours of introductory material, including:
  - 2 hours of *Basic Introduction to Computers*
  - 2 hours of *An Introduction to the Internet*
  - 2 hours of *Tools and Benefits of Using the Internet*

- Available course work continually updated to include new applications

- Strives to provide relevant content and teach participants to be active creators of online content, not just passive participants
6. Opportunity to Adopt

- Connect Ohio leverages relationships with broadband providers to help facilitate subscription of home broadband service by participants
- Participants are able to take advantage of special offers from local providers. Incentives vary, but include:
  - Free installation;
  - Contributions to initial subscription costs;
  - Low-cost refurbished computers;
  - Subsidized monthly broadband service;
The Impact of Every Citizen Online

As of March 2012:

- Partnered with 281 libraries and community institutions to implement ECO training
- 1,177 computers have been distributed
- 20,338 students have completed training
- 4,823 participant surveys have been completed
- Estimated 3,087 new household subscribers, many of whom are elderly or low-income
# Participation in Every Citizen Online

If all Ohioans are to benefit from the Internet and the new information economy, they must first participate in it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual household income among participants</th>
<th>Age of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $25,000</td>
<td>18-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>31-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $100,000</td>
<td>56-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $100,000</td>
<td>66 or older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual household income among participants:
- Under $25,000: 37%
- $25,000 to $49,999: 29%
- $50,000 to $100,000: 15%
- Over $100,000: 3%
- No response: 16%

Age of participants:
- 18-30: 6%
- 31-55: 26%
- 56-65: 29%
- 66 or older: 34%
- No response: 5%
### Internet Access Prior to ECO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before training, did you already use the Internet?</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low-Income</th>
<th>Elderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I subscribe to dial-up</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but not from my own home</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, we have high-speed service at home, but I didn’t use it</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I didn’t use it at all</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Intent to Subscribe After ECO

As a result of training, is it likely that you will subscribe [to broadband]?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low-Income</th>
<th>Elderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes; right away</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes; probably within the next 6 months</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes; probably within the next year</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I certainly won't</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Application Use After ECO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-training, I expect to use broadband to/for:</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low-Income</th>
<th>Elderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with friends or family</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop online</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare information</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct banking online</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access government services</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start or enhance a small business</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pat Klaus completed ECO training after losing her job due to a lack of computer skills. Klaus previously worked at a hospital that had updated to an electronic record system, requiring employees to have online computer knowledge.

“I was able to get away with limited computer knowledge for years,” said Klaus. “When I switched to working as an outpatient nurse, there was no one I could turn to for computer help.”

ECO classes helped her broaden her computer knowledge and enabled her to re-enter the work force with a new skill set. She says

“The trainers of the ECO classes are a great resource because they are able to teach to multiple skill levels... I have no idea [how many things] I don’t know how to do in different programs,” said Klaus. “There are so many capabilities.”
ECO Success Story

The story of Larry Parks is a good example of how ECO’s training provides practical and relevant digital skills. Parks, who participated in training through the Rossford Public Library in Wood County, is 65 years-old, had never operated a computer before, and felt it was time to learn some simple computer skills and see what the Internet had to offer him. Parks says before entering the class, he only knew how to turn a computer on.

“My son and daughter have been encouraging me [to use the Internet] for years,” said Parks. “You’re never too old to learn something new.”

Since taking the training, he is able to participate on his church’s prayer group list, which is communicated via e-mail, and he looks forward to checking out ChristianMingle.com.
Program Challenges

Issue:

- Reluctance of participants to provide personal information and/or complete the participant survey (regarding their intent to subscribe)

Problem:

- Difficulty in estimating incremental adopters as a result of ECO

Solutions:

- New element of the call center where the operator asks the participant if they would like to provide their contact information in order to be contacted at a later time for feedback.
- Make online registration (where personal information is collected) process more streamlined
Lessons Learned

Effective digital inclusion programs:

- Focus on targeted education, training, and relevant content
- Meet residents where they are
- Provide trusted intermediaries
- Address fear of technology
- Focus on demonstrating the practical uses and impacts of broadband
- Link participant needs with relevant broadband-enabled tools that can fulfill those needs
Looking Forward

- Broadband is a tool, not an end in itself.

- Policy interventions should be geared towards exploiting the potential of broadband access and training as a tool to break down historic divides that fall along the lines of age and socioeconomic status.

- Community-based digital inclusion initiatives should be seen as a long-term dimension of a community’s offering to its citizens.
Contact Information

Travis Lane – tlane@connectednation.org

Chris McGovern - cmcgovern@connectednation.org

1-877-846-7710

www.connectednation.org