Beyond Broadband: Digital Inclusion Efforts in Minnesota

Selected List of Efforts and Organizations
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Broadband adoption efforts often focus on market concerns and technical matters of Internet Service Providers. These efforts focus on the end user experience and skills required to function in an increasingly digital society.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)
http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/Adult_Basic_Education_GED/
"Adult Basic Education (ABE) **is** available statewide at no cost to adult learners and is administered through the Minnesota Department of Education. " - website
View the Adult Basic Education Statewide Consortia Map
-ABE Centers and English Language Learning Centers routinely train in basic digital literacy skills and many are participating in the MIRC Project. (See next entry.)

The Blandin Foundation's Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) Project:
http://www.blandinfoundation.org/policy/policy-detail.php?intResourceID=1224
From their Digital Literacy Training RFP:
"The Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) Project is a broadband adoption project funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce through the Blandin Foundation to increase broadband adoption and digital literacy throughout greater Minnesota. The funding for this project is through the federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA).

To accomplish this, Blandin has partnered with many teams across Minnesota. Several of these teams will focus on training and include: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) for development and delivery of a college level Knowledge Worker online course, Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace (MnREM) for training and technical assistance in the renewable energy sector, the University of Minnesota Extension Services for education, training and technical assistance to small businesses, and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for workforce development-related digital literacy training.

For this grant opportunity, DEED's training will be deployed across the state through a collaborative, sustainable program that brings together the Minnesota Department of Education - Adult Basic Education (ABE), the Minnesota WorkForce Center System, non-profits and community-based organizations (CBOs.)

DEED is developing and supporting the WorkForce Center-focused digital literacy training which will be openly accessible online." – Digital Literacy Training, RFP

Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP) AmeriCorp
http://wip.technologypower.org/
"The AmeriCorps Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP) bridges the "digital divide" for recent immigrants and low-income communities in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. AmeriCorps members help youth and adults use technology to better access social, civic, educational and economic opportunities."-About Us

"In July of 2004, four partner organizations interested in providing better technology access for metro area low-income residents were awarded a three-year AmeriCorps grant for a new program– The Community Technology Empowerment Project, (CTEP). The CTEP project meets this critical need using a grassroots, neighborhood-based "technology empowerment" strategy. In this way, the project addresses the well being of children, youth and families by providing new opportunities for economic development and educational achievement in targeted communities."—About Us

The initial grant writer was local consultant and digital inclusion expert, Catherine Settanni, Community Computer Access Network, http://digitalaccessproject.blogspot.com/. The program is now under the auspices of the Saint Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN).

The program has placed about twenty-five AmeriCorps members in libraries and nonprofits each year. Since 2004, several St. Paul and Minneapolis libraries and their patrons have benefitted from the digital inclusion efforts of CTEP AmeriCorps members.

Digital Inclusion Forum 2010 (Minneapolis, MN)
http://www.ppl-inc.org/forums
Hosted by Project for Pride in Living (PPL), December 2010

Digital Inclusion Network / E-Democracy.org
http://forums.e-democracy.org/groups/inclusion and http://forums.e-democracy.org/
Although international in scope, the Digital Inclusion Network discussion forum is now hosted and moderated by Steven Clift, Minnesota founder of the broader parent organization for online civic engagement, http://edemocracy.org.

Digital Inclusion Network: "Welcome to the reborn home of the former DigitalDivide@ listserv - the new Digital Inclusion Network. Join over 350 members from dozens of countries exchanging knowledge on digital inclusion and strategies to close the many digital divides. This network is hosted as part of E-Democracy.org's Ford Foundation-funded "Participation 3.0" and will be used to gather input for our Inclusive Social Media initiative. This is a hybrid e-mail list and web forum with access via Facebook and Twitter."-Home page, Digital Inclusion News

E-Democcracy.org: "E-Democracy.org builds online public space in the heart of real democracy and community. Our mission is to harness the power of online tools to support participation in public life, strengthen communities, and build democracy.
Starting with the world's first election information website in 1994 in Minnesota, today we host over 30 local Issues Forums in 15 communities across three countries - New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition to these "online town halls," we promote civic engagement online around the world"- About Us, E-Democracy.org

Digital Inclusion Fund
https://digitalinclusionfund.tmfportal.org
The " Digital Inclusion Fund is designed to increase technology access and skills among non-traditional users of technology in Minneapolis, including people with disabilities, people of color, low-income individuals, new immigrants, displaced workers, seniors and others.
Established in 2007, the fund was created at The Minneapolis Foundation as part of a Community Benefits Agreement between the City of Minneapolis and wireless provider U.S. Internet. "— Home page

Sidenote: The Minneapolis wireless service, that generates this fund, offers 117 free wireless "hot spots" and provides home high speed Internet to Minneapolis residents starting at less than $20/month, to promote digital inclusion. A Community Benefits Agreement can be used to prioritize funds toward services that promote digital inclusion.

Learner Web
Learner Web Partnership: A Multi-State Support System for Broadband Adoption by Digitally Marginalized Adults: http://www.learnerweb.org/btop

Learner Web Project-Minnesota: http://www.learnerweb.org/btop/minnesota2.html
"With leadership from the Minnesota Literacy Council and the St. Paul Community Literacy Consortium, the first six months of the project will involve development of consumer Learning Plans that will be used in over 60 community locations around the country during the following 24 months of the project. The Basic Computer Digital Literacy Standards recently developed through SPCLC will be integrated into the plans. In addition, the project will recruit and train numerous volunteer tutors to work with populations using the learning plans, utilizing a learning plan developed by ProLiteracy Worldwide.

During implementation, trained volunteers and staff will implement the learning plans at four workforce centers (two in the Twin Cities and two in Greater Minnesota), as well as a community-based non-profit and a public housing complex. Minnesota partners include Minnesota Workforce Centers in Ramsey County, Minneapolis South, Mankato, and New Ulm; Minneapolis ABE, McDonough Public Housing (St. Paul), and Project for Pride in Living."-website

Libraries

Public, academic, school and special libraries serve Minnesota residents. Libraries provide high speed Internet connections, hardware, application software, online databases, training and assistance with digital literacy skills and beyond. People rely on the library for Internet access and training for education, employment, e-government, entertainment, e-commerce, and communication. In Minnesota, there are 359 public library buildings, 150 academic libraries, and many school and special libraries.

- US/MN Reports: Public Libraries & e-Government, Public Libraries & Employment

- Minnesota Library Maps: http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/Maps/LibraryMaps (Interactive map provides overlay of WorkForce Centers, ABE regions, schools, etc.)
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- State Library Services: The Minnesota State Library Agency is a division of the Minnesota Department of Education. The state library provides leadership and support to the Minnesota library community in planning, developing, and implementing high-quality library and information services statewide. State Library Services administers federal and state grants-in-aid programs for libraries. It promotes cross- organizational collaborations toward digital inclusion.
  http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/Library_Services/

- Example of formal classes - Hennepin County Library classes:
  http://www.hclib.org/pub/events/Classes.cfm
- Example of special outreach effort: Saint Paul Public Library to Launch Mobile Computer Lab with Knight Foundation Grant

Minnesota Academic Standards for Schools

- **Curriculum and Technology Integration**
  http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/School_Technology/Tech_Toolkit/Curriculum_Tech_Integ/index.html

- **MEMO Information & Technology Literacy Standards**
  http://memotech.ning.com/page/memo-information-and
  "Information and Technology Literacy Standards have been developed by the Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) and provide guidelines for school districts who wish to ensure students are achieving 21st Century information skills in conjunction with the current Minnesota Academic Standards".-MDE website,
  http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Academic_Excellence/Academic_Standards

Minnesota Internet Study (Center for Rural Policy & Development, St. Peter, MN)
Reports: http://www.mnsu.edu/ruralmn/research.php
Source of Minnesota data on home computer and broadband access, rural and metro
Commentary: High Speed Internet Service Key to Rural and Small-Town Minnesota's Vitality
Commentary: The wrong side of the digital divide

Northstar Digital Literacy Standards
http://spclc.themlc.org/Digital_Literacy_Standards.html
"The Northstar Digital Literacy/Core Computer Literacy Standards are designed to help low-skilled adults perform a variety of daily tasks on the computer and online. The primary focus is to help people gain basic digital literacy skills needed to search for, obtain, and succeed in entry-level jobs. They will also help people communicate with their children's schools, connect to community resources, etc. Once adults master the skills, they can receive a Certificate of Basic Digital Literacy Skills (in process), which can be used with employers when applying for work.

The standards include basic computer digital literacy standards in five main areas - download by clicking - Introduction, Basic Computer Use, Internet, Windows Operating System, Email, and Word Processing (Word). Note that the standards documents are 'locked,' but there are columns by each set of standards that can be used when assessing students. A formal assessment tool is in preparation, and will be posted when complete." - website

The Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium (SPCLC)
http://spclc.themlc.org/
"SPCLC is a community-based collaborative building literacy in a collaborative, inclusive, comprehensive manner. Membership includes 11 community based non-profits, St. Paul Public Schools Adult Learning, and the St. Paul Public Library. Funded through the public and private sectors, SPCLC works collaboratively and cross-culturally to benefit adults and their families needing literacy services." —About Us

SPCLC has provided curriculum for basic digital literacy skills on its website for many years. See http://spclc.themlc.org/curriculum. SPCLC has provided space for the proposed Northstar Digital Literacy Standards, Core Computer Literacy Standards. See http://spclc.themlc.org/Digital_Literacy_Standards.html.

SPCLC and the Minnesota Literacy Council represent Minnesota in a five-state federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant through the U.S. Department of Commerce.

St. Paul Digital Literacy Standards Task Force
"During early 2010, the St. Paul Community Literacy Consortium was asked to convene a community task force to develop basic computer Digital Literacy Standards. Over the next several months, professionals from community based non-profits, libraries, school district and non-profit

ABE programs, state agencies, and other organizations met regularly to develop a commonly accepted set of digital literacy standards that will facilitate empowerment of adults needing technology skills for daily living, employment preparation, and/or transition to higher education." - http://spclc.themlc.org/Digital_Literacy_Standards.html
The standards are called, Northstar Digital Literacy Standards. (See above.)

Technology Literacy Collaborative
http://tlc-mn.org
In 2006, Project for Pride in Living (PPL), Waite House, and Minneapolis Public Library collaborated to start a group that eventually became the Technology Literacy Collaborative.

"The mission of the Technology Literacy Collaborative (TLC) is to promote digital inclusion. TLC is a network of digital inclusion supporters committed to sharing best practices, advocating for technology and digital literacy skills and access, and promoting collaborative efforts. Community Technology Center (CTC), or, Public Computer Center (PCC), providers and others concerned about ensuring basic technology and digital literacy skills for all, use the TLC as a support network.

TLC meets regularly to increase communication and share resources among practitioners and policy-makers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area and beyond. Discussion items might include: trends, new studies, emerging issues, upcoming events, program design collaboration, sharing resources, training, workforce development, and TLC committee work.

For a list of participating members and organizations, see our Supporters page. For general questions or to volunteer, visit the TLC Contact page. To get involved with Technology Literacy Collaborative, we invite you to attend one of our general TLC meetings, which are open to the public and can be found on the Calendar. Contribute to the central database of Curriculum & Digital Inclusion Tools. You can also join a committee by contacting a committee chair on our Contact page." –About Us

To "Find a Community Technology Center," visit http://tlc-mn.org/ctc. Currently 163 locations are listed, including community centers, libraries, government agencies, nonprofits.

University of Minnesota Broadband Access Grant (BAP)
http://www.bap.umn.edu/about
"The Broadband Access Project (BAP) is a $3.6M initiative of the University of Minnesota's Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC) and its Office for Business and Community Economic Development (BCED), in collaboration with the Minnesota Multicultural Media Consortium, to improve high-speed internet (broadband) access, awareness, and use in four federally-designated poverty zones in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The project supports development and enhancements of 10 community-based public computer centers and one mobile computer lab for underserved populations, including African-Americans, Hispanics, and Hmong and Somali immigrants."-website

Workforce Centers (Department of Employment and Economic Development}
http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/WorkForce_Centers/
"Our WorkForce Centers help job seekers find employment, help businesses find workers, and help anyone at any stage explore and plan careers. There are nearly 50 WorkForce Centers statewide. Each offers a knowledgeable staff to guide you. Each provides essential tools to make your job search a success. Best of all, most services are free of charge. "– website

National Links:

Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP):
http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/about
"The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) with $7.2 billion to expand access to broadband services in the United States. Of those funds, the Act provided $4.7 billion to NTIA to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance and expand public computer centers, encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service, and develop and maintain a nationwide public map of broadband service capability and availability. NTIA will make all grant awards by September 30, 2010." – Home page

Several Minnesota organizations received recent grants under this federal program.

Many grant recipients across the U.S. have begun to develop digital literacy curriculum and other useful traing materials. High interest in sharing these materials has led to a developing national Digital Literacy Portal. (See below.)

Grapplings Technology Spectrum
http://www.bjpconsulting.com/files/MAPPSpectrum.pdf

National Digital Literacy Portal
http://www.wo.ala.org/districtdispatch/?p=5607
"[The American Library Association] OITP also is in communication with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), one of the government agencies working on digital literacy issues as an outgrowth of recommendations made in the National Broadband Plan. The Digital Literacy Portal is one of the initiatives underway at NTIA. NTIA has issued a request for organizations – including libraries – that are engaged in digital literacy projects to submit content to be considered for inclusion in NTIA's Digital Literacy Portal. A description of the Portal may be found here (pdf) and the content and comment policy is described here (pdf)."

National Education Technology Plan 2010
http://www.ed.gov/technology/netp-2010