eChicago 2008

Kate Williams, editor

Proceedings of the second eChicago symposium
held at Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois, April 3-4, 2008
A monograph co-published by the Dominican University and
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Graduate Schools of Library and Information Science
© 2009 Dominican University and the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois


The Publications Office supports the mission of the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science by producing a variety of scholarly and practical publications for LIS professionals around the globe. We draw on more than 50 years as non-profit publishing specialists to provide subject-specific publications that address current issues and also serve as historical archives. You can find here quality books, journals, papers, and conference proceedings for teaching, scholarly reading, and daily application.

This and other titles are available through the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship (IDEALS) at: http://wwwideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/154

Keep up to date on eChicago at http://echicago.illinois.edu
Introduction—Kate Williams
Symposium program
Symposium participation
President’s welcome—Donna Carroll
Libraries as technology centers: The Chicago story—Karen Danczak Lyons
Twenty years of organizing public access computer labs: What have been our victories? What is our agenda?—Shireen Mitchell
Mapping Ethnic Chicago—Brooke Bahnsen
Community dynamics and race relations in Chinese Chicago—Shanshan Lan
The Arab American experience: Fighting for identity & presence—Ray Hanania
The Black Metropolis Research Consortium—Kathleen Bethel
Community informatics at Dominican University—Chris Hagar
Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation/Chicago field work case study: Use of computer technology—What are we doing? What needs to be done?—Jan A. Rodgers
Empowering teens through technology: A look at Intel Computer Clubhouse—Donna Dohnalek
Using the Internet to build networks of people focused on helping kids through school and into careers—Daniel F. Bassill
Reuse is a real hardware alternative—Willie Cade
2010 Digital Literacy Collaboration Project with CTCs and CPLs—Licia Knight
Five themes of Chicago's eGovernment: Digitizing information, making it accessible, automating transactions, streamlining operations, and boosting productivity—Douglas Hurdelbrink
The State of Illinois promoting broadband, kids laptops, and eGovernment: A view from Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn's office—Ryan Croke
eGov: Embracing the capabilities of technology, organizations, and people—Jon Gant
Skokie teens and technology @ the library: Building community—Frances Roehm
Developing free tools for modeling elementary mathematics—George Reese.............. 143
Gaming, teens, and libraries—Jenny Levine ............................................................... 149
Chicago leading a digital nation ............................................................................. 175
  Don Samuelson ..................................................................................................... 175
  Roberta Webb ..................................................................................................... 176
  Ann Peterson Bishop .......................................................................................... 178
  Shireen Mitchell ................................................................................................. 180
  Abdul Alkalimat ................................................................................................ 182
  Thom Clark ......................................................................................................... 184
  Chris Hagar ........................................................................................................ 186
  Héctor R. Hernández ....................................................................................... 186
Introduction—Kate Williams

eChicago is an annual conference and a network of scholars and practitioners focused on how digital technology is transforming society. It began at a library school—not one of the i-schools that have been reinvented around bits and bytes, but a main-line library school that has been training librarians since 1930. (What a fascinating year to start educating librarians!) eChicago began as a 21st century expression of Dominican University’s mission, Caritas et Veritas, which means pursuing truth while also caring for other people at the same time. This continues thanks to the efforts of my symposium co-chair Chris Hagar and a continuing investment by her dean Susan Roman. As a result, here we are with the record of a second round of eChicago discussions about how all of Chicago is entering, or might enter, the digital age. And—as usual among librarians—this is also a dialogue about community, democracy, and education.

In 2008 we were particularly focused on the library and the ethnic community—the leading edge of community transformation and the ultimate treasure houses of community memory and cultural heritage. The branch library is the most universal and often the richest community technology center. The ethnic community has been the building block of Chicago, neighborhood by neighborhood. These two aspects of Chicago’s neighborhoods can only “go digital” together.

We are studying this process. In this volume, Brooke Bahnsen tells the first chapter—the mapping challenge—of the University of Illinois’ current study of Chicago’s ethnic communities in cyberspace. Shanshan Lan explains Bridgeport as a Chinese community of a particular type—battling persistent racism, yet reflecting the new global migration flows. Chris Hagar and her students report their successes in combining community informatics teaching with field research right across Chicago. Jon Gant reflects on the puzzle of meshing a government IT department with government services across the board. George Reese tells how his computer/math research group is practicing technological innovation in the challenging environment of the public school.

We are implementing various stages of transformation. As Karen Danczak Lyons puts it, Mayor Daley wants to see Chicago competing with Silicon Valley, and she details all that’s involved in shaping the Chicago Public Library to support us doing that. Shireen Mitchell walks us through the heroic 20-plus years of the community technology movement up to the recent victory where Washington created a line or two in their state budget to build and maintain community cyberinfrastructure. A library-owned, volunteer-based community network … digital journalism … cross-university digital collections … e-recycling that produces useful computing tools … networked tutoring activities, these are all part of eChicago 2008.

Kate Williams is Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Her research focuses on how local communities use information technology, including a current study of Chicago’s ethnic communities and information technology (IMLS funded) and a repurposing of the records of the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Technology Opportunities Program. She looks forward to continuing to bring together researchers and practitioners to consider Chicago in the digital age, continuing the 20th century social science tradition of examining the City of Big Shoulders. (katewill@illinois.edu)
We are formulating the policy that will build eChicago. Douglas Hurdelbrink explains the city’s five priorities and how they’re working out. Ryan Croke lays out how our now-governor Pat Quinn has been promoting universal broadband, among other technology imperatives. Licia Knight describes how our community technology centers and branch public libraries are experimenting at fitting themselves together. And Jenny Levine gives a whirlwind tour of the ferment as libraries test new policies towards the newest form of storytelling, the computer games that captivate so many of us.

All in all, we know our city was a mighty industrial metropolis. Its transformation into an informational city is our laboratory and our space of practice. This question of the informational transformation of such a major global city is an important focus of community informatics. For the first time in human history, more than half the world’s population lives in cities (two-thirds in the United States), and that proportion is expected to increase. We have all learned from the experience of Seattle; Austin; Blacksburg, Virginia. This volume helps add Chicago to the list.

One reason it does is that everyone mentioned above who spoke at eChicago met an enthusiastic and informed audience. No one can give a good talk to a bad audience. eChicago’s audience this year included people from nine universities, nine libraries, one foundation and ten other community based organizations, two government agencies and two school systems. Mixed in there were library or i-school students who bring energy and idealism to their chosen profession and are often refugees from post-college employment that is not life-sustaining in all senses. And several valuable other fields—social work, sociology, and computer science—swirled in for some discipline-breaking and -making discussion.

Just one closing word about and within my own discipline of community informatics, directed to those students, especially the doctoral students. We have an early-stage literature of the field. This includes national datasets to understand such as TOP and (coming soon) Broadband TOP. It includes literature about single experiments, wonderful things happening in particular community settings. We even have a start on literature about a handful of cities. But we have not synthesized this to find the exemplar cities around the world which everyone needs to know about in order to successfully practice community informatics. What would make Chicago one of those cities? Let’s make it one with our practice and study. We certainly offer this volume, and last year’s eChicago 2007, to that end.

The speakers here, the eChicago experience, and our motivation are all directed towards discussion that makes a difference. Our mission requires the unity and participation of scholars, activists, and policymakers. We welcome everyone willing to share our goal of building eChicago.
Two distinct networks exist in Chicago, and two kinds of community services: the community technology center (CTC) and the public library. They each provide public access to computers and the internet and a variety of online tools and resources. They do this in the context of changing ethnic communities, new and popular technology uses, and digital initiatives by local government. Now all these parties have a chance to meet and address these and other questions:

- How have libraries and CTCs served communities’ technology needs and what are our current tasks?
- How can we better understand ethnic Chicago?
- What are our young people doing with new technology?
- What does e-government mean for Chicago?
- How are we training librarians and CTC staff?

The second annual eChicago gathering is a practice/policy/research symposium sponsored by the two library and information science schools in the state of Illinois. Co-chairs are Kate Williams, University of Illinois, and Chris Hagar, Dominican University. The symposium is hosted with funding from both of the state’s graduate schools of library and information science and parallels a research project of the same name funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

**Thursday April 3, 6:30 - 8:30 pm in Springer Suite**

- **Chair:** Chris Hagar, Dominican University
- **Welcome:** Cheryl Johnson-Odim, Provost, Dominican University
- **Speaker:** Karen Danczak Lyons, First Deputy Commissioner, Chicago Public Library. “Libraries as technology centers: The Chicago story”
- **Q and A**
- **Hands-on opportunity:** Try out one of the XO laptops from the One Laptop Per Child project, guided by George Reese, University of Illinois
- **Buffet dinner**
Friday, April 4, 2008

8:30-9:00 Coffee and registration at back of Springer Suite

9:00-10:15 Plenary in Springer Suite

Chair: Kate Williams, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Welcome: Donna Carroll, President, Dominican University

Speaker: Shireen Mitchell, President, Community Technology Centers Network and Director, Digital Sistas. “Twenty years of organizing public access computer labs: What have been our victories? What is our agenda?”

10:15-10:35 Break

10:35-11:50 Morning breakout sessions

(In Springer Suite) Mapping ethnic Chicago. What is a modern ethnic community and how do we understand it? Researchers and representatives of several ethnicities will share the methods and access points that work for them. This is important for anyone who wants to serve all Chicagoans. What and where are Chicago’s ethnic populations? What are their local resources and cultural institutions? Who can be our guides?

Chair: Kathleen Mullaney, Dominican University
Shanshan Lan, Northwestern University
Brooke Bahnsen, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Ray Hanania, Hanania.com
Kathleen Bethel, Northwestern University

(in Crown 330) Helping Chicago use technology. How do we prepare community workers and librarians to help community members use information technology? At our universities we call that community informatics. On the job we call it staff development. What are we teaching people? How is it working?

Chair: Adrian Kok, Dominican University
Dan Bassill, TutorMentor Cabrini Connection
Willie Cade, Computers for Schools
Donna Dohnalek, Dominican University
Chris Hagar, Dominican University
Licia Knight, Lumity
Jan Rodgers, Dominican University

11:50-12:50 Lunch in Dining Hall or Cybercafé, on your own

12:50-2:05 Afternoon breakout sessions
Public policy is steering our communities into the digital age. What are the city of Chicago and state of Illinois doing on this front? An eGovernment scholar will also put this work in a global context.

Chair: **Diane Velasquez**, Dominican University  
**Jon Gant**, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign  
**Ryan Croke**, State of Illinois Office of Lt. Governor Pat Quinn  
**Douglas Hurdelbrink**, City of Chicago

Young people are using technology in new ways. New tools and new approaches help them do this and help us serve them. This session will present the One Laptop Per Child project, the experience of computer gaming in public libraries, and organizing new media teams of young people.

Chair: **Jim Madigan**, Oak Park Public Library  
**Fran Roehm**, Skokie Public Library  
**Jenny Levine**, American Library Association  
**George Reese**, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

What do we need to know? What do we need to do? This session will tackle issues raised earlier in the day and map out a research agenda and a policy agenda that we can take back to our campuses and our communities.

Chair: **Kate Williams**, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign  
**Abdul Alkalimat**, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign  
**Ann P. Bishop**, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign  
**Thom Clark**, Community Media Workshop  
**Chris Hagar**, Dominican University  
**Don Samuelson**, DSSA, Inc.  
**Shireen Mitchell**, CTCNET/Digital Sistas  
**Roberta Webb**, Chicago Public Library

Each eChicago symposium becomes a published book. Pick up your copy of eChicago 2007 (complimentary to last year’s speakers) and celebrate both 2007 and 2008’s events with a glass of wine.
Symposium participation

Organizations attending in 2007

Universities (14)

- American College of Education
- College of DuPage
- Dominican U
- Evergreen State College
- Florida State U
- Indiana U
- Loyola U
- Northwestern U
- U of Illinois Chicago
- U of Illinois Urbana Champaign
- U of Michigan
- U of Missouri
- U of Toledo
- U of Wisconsin

Libraries (6)

- Bethel Community Library
- Gary Public Library
- Glen Ellyn Public Library
- Homer Township Public Library
- Waconda Area Library
- Skokie Public Library

Community (15)

- Association for Community Networking
- Benton Foundation
- BronzevilleOnline
- CAN-TV
- Center for Neighborhood Technology
- Central States SER/Jobs for Progress
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Community Technology Centers Network
- Computers for Schools
- John Stroger Hospital
- Mather LifeWays
- Prairienet
- Sunshine Gospel Ministries
- Technology Assisting People in Need (TAPIN) Cincinnati

Organizations attending in 2008

Universities (9)

- Dominican U
- NILRC: Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges
- Northeastern Illinois U
- Northern Illinois U
- Northwestern U
- Truman College
- U of Illinois at Chicago
- U of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
- U of Illinois at Springfield

Libraries (9)

- American Library Association
- Chicago Public Library
- Elk Grove Village Public Library
- Evanston Public Library
- Indian Trails Public Library District
- Oak Park Public Library
- Skokie Public Library
- Westmont Public Library
- National-Louis University Library

Community (11)

- Benton Foundation
- Cabrini Connections/Tutor-Mentor Connection
- Chicago Digital Access Alliance Inc.
- Circle Urban Ministries
- Coalition for Humanity
- Community Media Workshop
- CTCNet
- Digital Sistas
- DSSA, Inc.
- Lumity
- Prairienet
- www.RadioChicagoland.com

Government (4)

- City of Chicago
- Oak Park Public Schools
- Office of Lt. Governor Quinn
- Prairieview Elementary / Downers Grove
It is a delight to welcome you to Dominican University—actually, Kate, it is a delight to welcome you back. Kate said much of what I would say—that our shared perspective is part of the reason that this symposium is such an exciting, interdisciplinary, effort for Dominican, because the marriage of theory, practice, and service to the community is so mission-centered. In fact, if you were trying to describe Dominican, you could not describe it more succinctly than just that.

And so our having the opportunity to sponsor an event like this not only showcases, obviously, our graduate school of library and information science and all the disciplines that collaboratively feed into that, but it really does express our mission, and by participating today, you are helping us carry that mission out into the communities of Chicago. What is exciting is that you do not often see faculty and practitioners together in conversation and with the level of mutual respect that a program like this identifies. We all know that information and talents are packaged across a whole spectrum and so the

Donna Carroll is the president of Dominican University, a comprehensive Catholic university of 3250 students located ten miles west of Chicago. As the first lay (external) president of Dominican, appointed in 1994, Dr. Carroll has experienced firsthand the challenges and satisfactions of transforming an institution, and she is actively engaged in issues of strategic planning and fund development. She is currently a trustee of Fordham University and Catholic Theological Union and serves on the boards of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, and the Council of Independent Colleges. In addition, she is a director of Rush Oak Park Hospital and Oak Park Development Corporation and Vice President of the Business and Civic Council of Oak Park.

Dr. Carroll brings substantial management and organizational development experience to her role as president. It was during Dr. Carroll’s tenure as president that Rosary College changed its name to Dominican University. Enrollment has doubled since 1994. The operating budget has exceeded $50 million and donations to the University now average almost eight million dollars annually. In the context of a well-orchestrated strategic plan, Dominican University has introduced sixteen new academic programs, six new degrees and two additional schools, currently offering coursework at seventeen locations throughout the Chicago area, in neighboring states, and abroad. In 2002 the university completed a $25 million capital campaign, and a $50 million campaign already is well underway.

President Carroll came to Dominican University from New York City where she served as Secretary of the University at Fordham University. Prior to her position at Fordham, Dr. Carroll was the Senior Vice President, Dean of the College and Dean of Students at Mount Vernon College in Washington, D.C. In addition to the above board affiliations, she has served on other national, corporate and statewide boards including, TCF Bank, University of Scranton, the Cook County Commission on Women, and Fenwick High School. Dr. Carroll recently stepped down as Chair of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities.

Donna Carroll received her BA in English from Wellesley College and master and doctoral degrees in higher education administration and counseling from the University of Cincinnati. She is a graduate of the Harvard Institute for Educational Management, Leadership Washington, the Snowmass Institute and recently the Oxford Roundtable. President Carroll has been named one of the 100 Women Who Make a Difference by Today’s Chicago Woman, and was listed as one of the top ten women in education by the Chicago Sun Times. She received the 1998 Woman with Vision Award from the Illinois Women’s Bar Association, the 2004 CEO Leadership Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the 2007 Athena Award from the Chamber of Commerce. She is a frequent keynote speaker and workshop facilitator.

Dr. Carroll is a member of The Chicago Network, the Economic Club of Chicago, and the Women’s Athletic Club. She resides in Oak Park, Illinois. (dompres@dom.edu)
extent to which we can tap into each other’s gifts, whether they are scholarly or practical, allows us to serve our communities in the best way possible.

Again, Dominican is delighted to sponsor this event. I encourage you to visit our new academic building, Parmer Hall. We are quite proud of this little gem of a campus in the suburbs, but serving the city. So enjoy your time, walk around, poke your head into different offices, ask students about their experience. We are proud of all that. Again, welcome. Have a great day.
Libraries as technology centers: The Chicago story—Karen Danczak Lyons

First, I’m going to provide some background on the introduction of technology coming at public libraries, followed by a discussion of the Chicago Public Library and how we fulfill our role as a community technology center and as a leader in knowledge guidance. I think our profession is becoming the key to navigating through the information explosion. Finally, I’m going to share some provocative and perhaps scary facts to set the stage for how we think and talk about technology in libraries moving forward and some of the challenges that we’re going to be seeing as we continue to deal with technology and information in a community center. Preceding each portion of my remarks, I will display an object to serve as a symbol to the evolution of technology.

In order to introduce my first visual cue, let me remind everyone that before there were computers there were pens. And if you want to go back really far, there were troll pens. Probably two-thirds of you don’t even know what a troll is, so ask an older person sitting near you what one is.

Karen Danczak Lyons is First Deputy Commissioner, Chicago Public Library, began her Library career in 1993. Prior to joining the Library, she was Budget Director of the City of Chicago’s Office of Budget and Management, a position that involved management of the City’s $3.2 billion budget. In her position as First Deputy Commissioner of the Chicago Public Library, Ms. Lyons’ responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the oversight of several Chicago Public Library departments including Human Resources, Building Operations, Labor Management, Staff Development and Library Automation. In addition to her departmental management responsibilities, Ms. Lyons collaborated on the Library’s capital improvement program, which included 52 new or fully renovated libraries since the beginning of her career with the Library, the development and implementation of the Library’s two Strategic Plans (in 1995 and 2005) and the proposal and passage of the property tax increase to support library operations in 2007.

Ms. Lyons holds a Masters in Library and Information Science from Dominican University where she is a member of Beta Phi Mu, the International Library and Information Science Honor Society and past co-President of the Dominican Alumni Council.

Ms. Lyons has served as President of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Library System and is the former American Library Association Councilor representing the State of Illinois and past President of Mount Greenwood Local Redevelopment Board. She is currently President for the Illinois Center for the Book, is on the Board of Service Club of America, Chairman of the Public Policy Committee of ILA, and President of LACONI (Library Administrators of Northern Illinois). She is also newly active in leadership development on committees in PLA and LAMA.

Ms. Lyons is married to Brian and her interests include gardening, reading, cooking (and eating), playing with the family dog Sailor and knitting.
The Information Use Management and Policy Institute—I don't know how many of you are familiar with them—recently came out with a study where they looked at how technology and libraries have evolved. In 1996, only 44.6 percent of libraries reported having a connection to the Internet, and today the figure is nearly 100 percent of libraries reporting Internet connectivity.

So in a relatively short period of time public libraries really geared up. The average number of public-access Internet computers currently in libraries across the nation is 10.7; that figure hasn’t changed much since 2004. In Chicago Public Library branches, our physical footprint impacts the number of public-access Internet computers we provide. In our newest branch, the Beverly location, where we will begin construction later this month, we will install 30 public Internet computers. It really depends upon the library’s ability to support technology, the footprint, and the funding.

Wireless connectivity is a relatively new phenomenon. We began providing free Wi-Fi access in October of 2003. In 2004 across the nation 17.9 percent of public libraries reported having Wi-Fi connections. That figure increased to 54.2 percent in 2007.

And at least at the Chicago Public Library, a large part of the support we initially received in order to deploy technology, to move into the Internet, was through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. I think many public libraries, both in the nation and also internationally, can point to the continuing support of the Gates Foundation as a critical factor in bringing technology to public libraries at a time where we really needed outside support to expand our service.

Returning to a visual cue we are moving from the pen to the laptop as we focus on our initiatives contained in our newest strategic plan, “CPL 2010: a Vision for the Future.” Of the ten goals in that plan, which represent the core investment areas for the Chicago Public Library in terms of service, four of them have to do with technology.

The first goal is to expand online information access to patrons with balanced and reduced waiting times across all CPL locations. We realized that it’s not enough just to plunk a computer down—you really need to look at how you provide access. And so along with continuing to increase the number of desktops, we are experimenting with laptops that you can check out at library locations. We have made laptops for checkout available at seven locations, and it’s proving to be helpful as we deal with patron demand which outpaces our desktop access points. I mentioned the Wi-Fi access we offer: if our patrons have their own computers they can bring them in and easily work in our environment. In addition, we went into a print and time management system for reserving a desktop in 2005, so instead of the old troll pen and the clipboard, it’s now automated and a patron can have a reservation for today for up to two hours and make reservations for tomorrow and the day after. And to give you an idea of how that’s helped us increase access, in 2005 when we began we had 2.6 million reservations. Last year we were up to 3.833 million, which is almost a 47 percent increase.

We also wanted to conserve paper while providing patrons with printing. Before we implemented the automated print and time management system we observed that reams of paper were being printed, glanced at, and then thrown away. This behavior was very disturbing to us on many levels. Not only was it money being thrown away, but from a conservation or ecological standpoint this was a waste of resources.
I want to give you a couple of figures. In November, 2004, before the introduction of the print management system, 16.6 million pages were printed by patrons. In January, 2005, with the introduction of the new system, 369 thousand pages were printed and almost 17 million pages were canceled by patrons after being reviewed at the print release station. These trends have continued as patrons have become accustomed to reviewing information, not wasting paper, and operating the technology management and searching systems very easily.

Another one of our goals is to increase resources and provide staff development to insure every library location has the capability to assist patrons with their information needs. It’s not enough in a community setting to just install technology. We need to assist people in becoming navigators and in becoming consumers of information in a reasonable and in a reasoned way. We were fortunate to receive a substantial grant from the Bank of America. We recently hired Cyber Navigators, who are college students that we employ at our libraries to assist patrons with their technology needs. The Cyber Navigators have completed their first week on the job providing one-on-one assistance. In the future they will also provide training in a class setting in our community rooms.

We just received the Cyber Navigators’ first report today. Here are examples of responses that we have received from the Cyber Navigators: “I’m learning very quickly how vast the digital divide really can be. One gentleman wanted to find his credit report online. I thought we would have a quick fix to tell him about the different possible sites, but he didn’t have an email address, and he had never used a computer. It took longer to navigate the mouse than it did to set up the email address. We [didn’t] get a chance to print out the credit report, but the patron has to come back.” Many of them report assisting patrons on job applications because at many locations you can no longer fill out a paper application, as you know. It’s strictly though the computer. And the latest census information shows that for households with a median income of less than 15 thousand dollars per year, only 24 percent of those households in the nation have a computer in the home. So the digital divide continues, and the public library really helps bridge the divide.

Here is another report which speaks to some of the language issues that we deal with: “I answered some basic questions on email and how to save a file to one’s computer from an email attachment. My patron speaks English as a second language, and Spanish was her primary language. I used a Spanish-English dictionary in order to communicate more efficiently, and she was appreciative and felt that I truly had helped her. She made another appointment.” And you’ll see on our website that we offer not only an English version of the site, but we have translations and will continue to translate more of our content into both Spanish and Polish because in the City of Chicago those are two languages that are commonly used in the community.

One of our goals has been to provide patrons with access to online resources in an easy-to-navigate virtual library. I don’t know how many of you were familiar with our old website, which we had for a long time. It was a work horse and it served us well. In fact, we had a website at the Chicago Public Library before the City of Chicago launched a website. Well, we felt it was time to jazz it up a little bit, and so we worked together with teams of staff members for over two years. We launched our new website which links to a suite of patron services, including our library catalogue, on March 3rd of this year.
I’d like to touch upon a number of the features of the new site. There’s a Spanish language version of the “How Do I?” page; a page which helps you navigate our website and services. We have the page in Polish as well.

We have a variety of web pages intended to assist specific audiences. We have a new Kids’ page, which we didn’t have before. It offers the children some visual cues and different ways to dig down into the data. We work with a teen advisory council and they helped us design a Teen page. The first time we showed the Teen page to them they said it wasn’t “dark and edgy” enough, so we made it a little darker and a little edgier. They seem to like it. It has topics that are of interest to our teens.

Links include access to information about choosing a college, applying to a college, and improving study skills in preparation for entrance exams. We’re also offer quite a few money- and financial literacy-related programs, not just geared to adults, which is important, but also geared to children and college-bound students. We hope to assist teens and increase their understanding of financial literacy issues such as the implications of getting a credit card, or how to complete a financial aid application.

Another feature of the new site is the ability to choose a library by location or by zip code. Patrons can dig down into the information from a number of directions. We reorganized the access points to our data and our free databases. We provide links to over 75 databases which include our collections of resources, newspapers, and online data.

We also are creating more of our content, which I think is one of the important roles for libraries in the future. Content is not always easily accessible. We can organize it, we can present it, and we can digitize it, and make it available online. Our new system supports more independence. A patron can go online and place books on Hold. Before only a staff member had the ability to reserve material for a patron. Patrons can renew their books and materials online from their account.

In the future, patrons will subscribe to a new service based upon their personal reading preferences. If someone loves to read fiction or a specific genre such as romance or mysteries, they can choose to receive information about new books which resemble their past selections. The library will email the patron information about additions to our collections.

The new site has a calendar that can be searched by zip code, by type of program, or by area of interest to find programs of interest scheduled in your local neighborhood library and sorted by date or format.

Just to give you an idea of the difference that new front page web page has made, we compared statistics from March of 2007 to March of 2008, and the number of books placed on hold went up 69.54 percent. The website hits went from what we thought was a very respectable 29 million a month—we were happy with that—to 84 million last month. And the unique visits went from 588,000 to almost 963,000, so we think we’ve got a hit on our hands. It’s popular, it’s easy to navigate, and people are using it, which is the most important thing.

We’re also looking at expanding the teaching we do, both one-on-one and in the form of organized classes. Our goal is to have one class per location per quarter. There are 79 public library branches throughout the City of Chicago and we view our website as our 80th branch. When you roll out any new service on this scale, it’s pretty ambitious.

In the fall, we are going to start working with a Detective from the Chicago Police Department. He will meet our staff at our All-Staff Institute Day. The first formalized
public program we’re going to roll out will focus on Internet safety. The Detective will gear his presentation to the audience, and will stress the importance of parental responsibility and of being careful. His perspective places responsibility on the parents. He advocates that parents should be approaching use of the Internet in the same way they monitor their children when they go to the park: parents should know where the children are at all times, who they’re with and what they are doing.

That will be where we’ll start, but then we’re going to address some more of the basics: Internet basics, email, and resume writing. We’re also working with a vendor to create online tutorials. As you may have noticed from some of the comments that the Cyber Navigators made, much of their time is spent truly teaching the basics, such as using a mouse, using the Internet for searching, and setting up an email account. We’re going to be working with a vendor to create little view-lets or little movies which patrons can access from our website. These view-let based tutorials will walk patrons through basic Internet and computer functions.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the Mayor and the City Council who recognize the contributions of the Chicago Public Library. We support and assist patrons as they pursue academic studies, explore and learn throughout their lifetime, and access technology. The mayor has asked us to help create a City of Readers, and so we link everything back to our programs and to our books.

The mayor is also very interested in technology as a mechanism to jump start the economy. He would like Chicago to compete with the Silicon Valley. We’re a transportation center—he’d like us to be a technology center. The Mayor has created various task forces and committees and he’s funded incubators to lure new business to Chicago. He recognizes that in a global economy and in a competitive environment, technology and education are the keys to success. The library has a role to play, and so does the Mayor’s office.

In Las Vegas this week there is a conference on technology and communications. There’s been a lot of very interesting statistics and conjectures coming from the conference, some of which I will share with you. I would like to suggest a couple of other ways to think about the rapidly changing technology and what we, as librarians and as information professionals, will be faced with in the future.

Today’s learner will have 10 to 14 jobs by the time he or she is 38. And the former Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, stated that the top ten jobs that will be the most sought after in 2010 did not exist in 2004.

The amount of technical information is doubling every two years, and the mobile phone is replacing the laptop. If you listen to the conference participants in Las Vegas this week, the “techies” and communication experts, they are taking it one step further. They’re saying that within two to three years you won’t be able to buy a mobile phone anywhere. Mobile phones are being replaced by the iPhone, by smart phones, by technology in cars. And these devices will be the preferred way to access information.

So while a patron can come to the library and use a laptop, many more consumers are going to be looking at alternatives. We have “Ask a Librarian” on our home page providing reference service through email, but librarians will need to provide service via text messaging.

There are more text messages sent and received in one day than there are people in the world. People are texting a lot. To remain relevant, librarians must be aware of the
changes which are created through evolutions in technology. Librarians have to look at
the alternative spaces where our patrons gather.

If MySpace was a country, it would be the eighth largest country in the world.
And that is a dramatic jump from MySpace’s position as the eleventh largest country just
two years ago. People email, text, and gather in new and evolving virtual spaces. As
librarians, we need to look at blogs and Wikis and RSS feeds as ways to gather and
disseminate information. In the weeks and months to come, the Chicago Public Library is
going to launch services via blogs and RSS feeds. As members of the library profession,
we should and can be leaders in technology, the gateway to information, and the
teachers. In many of our communities, personal access to technology is limited; patrons
don’t know how to use technology and they don’t even know that the Internet provides a
vital and viable addition information seeking.

There were 5.86 billion searches on Google last month. Google was created as a
company in September, 1998, and since that time it’s grown exponentially. Google
claims 62.8 percent of the worldwide market for web searches. Where do people go when
they don’t have success searching through Google? Well, they come to librarians. We can
help guide people and help them to become better information seekers and critical
consumers of information.

We’ve strive to provide access, education and guidance at the Chicago Public
Library, and we’ll continue to work in partnership with the community technology
centers. What we’ve found in our early discussions with community-based technology
centers is that they’ve got very rich, very detailed programs, many of which are directed
toward receiving certification. When completing one of these programs, participants are
awarded a certificate. Hopefully this training and certification will assist participants
compete in the job market.

But as I’ve shared with you earlier, many of our patrons don’t even know how a
computer mouse is used. Some try to use a mouse as they would a remote control for the
TV. Some patrons don’t have email, they don’t understand the basics of computer
navigation. Libraries need to collaborate with community technology centers, to provide
the basic resources and then act as a source of new participants for their certification
programs. I certainly think there’s a role for all of us to play, both in the library and in the
community technology centers.

Libraries are also a gateway for new immigrants in a way that technology centers
are not always: we offer services in different languages and help people become
acclimated to America; to this country’s resources and the free services that are available.
We help them become citizens, help them learn a new culture, and learn languages so that
they can become assimilated and have a full and productive life here in this country.

I want to share with you a couple of success stories that really bring home what
we’re doing. The first story I want to share with you is from the Portage-Cragin library
which is a very attractive brown brick box of a building that was built in the 1960s. We
had a patron at the Portage-Cragin branch, which I’ll call Nancy, who looked like she’d
seen some happier days. She was at Portage-Cragin almost every day. Staff helped her as
she was learning to use the computer and when she was looking for resume-writing
books. This went on for weeks and months. Then, one day, she wasn’t with in the library
anymore. We almost felt that Nancy was a member of our team; we counted on seeing
her every day - working diligently, quietly. A staff member from Portage-Cragin ran into
her on the streets and said, “Nancy, we haven’t seen you in a while. We missed you. How are you?” And she said, “I found a job. By working with the staff in the library I was able to learn computer skills and write a resume. While I look forward to continuing as a patron, I’m not going to be with you every day. I’m working and I’m getting my life back together again.”

The next story is about a nun, so it’s especially appropriate because we’re here at Dominican University. We’ve had the Cyber Navigator program in one form or fashion for a while. The first time we piloted this program, Bret, a young man who was a DePaul student, was assigned to work at the Brighton Park Library. There he taught Sister Mary Jo how to use email. She was 85 at the time and had never used a computer, never touched a computer mouse.

She stopped by the branch last week. Sister Mary Jo is 91 now, and she uses email to keep in touch with Bret. Bret was in visiting from Georgia. After graduating from DePaul he went to work for a software development company. Next month Bret’s company will release their first computer game. Sister Mary Jo keeps in contact with the staff at Brighton Park and uses technology and the library to enrich her life; continuing relationships that she’s built up over the years.

I don’t know if any of you see the Unshelved Comics, but one of the comics features a patron who feels that libraries and their expertise aren’t relevant. That changes when he’s directed to an unfamiliar online tutorial resource. He turns to the library staff for assistance. Clearly, he needs the library more than he thought he did.
I’m happy to be here because I actually am happy to see sort of this conversation happening again between libraries, between community informatics, between community technology centers, and, I want to add, the area of community media, or what’s now being called social media. I think at some level what we’re doing is we’re actually converging all these issues into one place and we’re coming up with different ways to talk about them, but we’re really talking about some of the same things, which is what I’m going to talk about today. Basically, some of the things that were going on back in 1983 are still going on in 2008. So it’s been a while, and we still haven’t gotten over all the humps. We’ve gotten partly there, but we’re still trying to think about things in more of a community aspect instead of the silos, which Kate mentioned. What we're doing now is actually working separately to the same goal and we should be working more closely together.

So just to give you a little brief history of who we are, CTCNet is a national network of community technology centers. How many people know what community technology centers are? Great, because there were a couple hands not raised. How about those who don’t know what community technology centers are? One or two. So that means everybody in here pretty much understands what a community technology center is—it’s just basically a center or location where computing is used as a means for either

---

Shireen Mitchell is the president of Community Technology Centers’ Network (CTCNet), a national affiliation of initiatives and organizations around the country which collectively promote effective technology integration for the social, civic, and economic security of low-income communities. She also founded and directs Digital Sisters/Sistas, Inc. a non-profit organization focused on using digital media and technology to access self-sufficiency tools for women and children who are traditionally underserved. She is a graduate of the University of the District of Columbia.

Ms. Mitchell has twenty years of technology, human services, and non profit experience. She has combined information and communication technologies with policy, advocacy, and education to support women, seniors, youth, and individuals with disabilities. She works to promote equity and access for women as the Chair of the Media and Technology Taskforce of the National Council of Women's Organizations. She is also the Vice Chair and the youngest Executive Committee member in the history of the organization. She has served as the Younger Women's Taskforce Co-Chair. Addressing issues from Imus to Thomas, she is a member of the Women's Coalition for Dignity and Diversity in the Media. She is the author of “Gaining Daily Access to Science and Technology” in the book 50 Ways to Improve Women’s Lives, “Access to Technology: Race, Gender, Class Bias” in The Scholar and Feminist Online, and “What Does Tech Have to Do with Women's Rights?” and continues to blog about women, tech, policy, and media issues.

Ms. Mitchell also speaks on topics about the impact of technology on communities across the country, appearing on radio shows such as NPR's Tavis Smiley (“Digital Gap Among Minority Children”). She has been named a Heroine in Technology, a Community Technology Leader and a Young Woman of Achievement. She was born and raised in the projects of New York City, playing video games before they could be played on televisions and designing BBS boards prior to the Web going world wide. She and her family currently reside in Washington, DC. (director@digital-sistas.org)
education or civic engagement for helping low-income communities, and depending on
the community, the centers look very different. You cannot find a center in one location
that looks anything the same as one in another. For example, take LA and Washington,
DC: they look completely different, the communities are different, and what they work
on is different.

So what we do as an organization is we bring all those organizations together, all
those centers together, to talk about what their best practices are, what they’re doing in
their communities. We find ways for them to work and build resources and partnerships
so they can continue their work and not feel like they’re in a silo, not feel like they’re the
only ones dealing with this particular group of issues or group of communities. They
learn from our network that there are so many of them that actually exist, and we bring
them together to talk about what the best practices are, where to get resources, who to
talk to, and how to strategize around some of the issues that I’m going to talk about
today.

So basically, as you can see, they serve underserved communities, mostly low-
income communities, and we basically work through the resources and advocacy.
CTCNet also pulls together funding opportunities to help fund CTCs, which didn’t
happen in the early 80s. That wasn’t part of what we were doing. We were actually just
doing networking.

So as the story about Toni Stone is told, she actually started Playing To Win,
which is an organization, because she was a teacher and she was trying to help students.
What she ended up doing by 1983 was creating a computer access center that was in the
basement of one of the housing complexes. So one other very interesting issue is that the
housing and community tech centers, or community centers, also converged a little bit, so
you see HUD, Neighborhood Networks, was also part of that conversation because they
were thinking about the same thing, that is, using the community centers that were
already in the buildings—these particular projects all had community centers or little
daycare centers or places where kids came to play—and they started to build out. “Well,
let’s [build out] out these computers.” And that [was] basically because of Toni Stone.
Toni is the first one who thought about doing this.

So in 1993 Playing To Win decided to start a network, and at the time the network
was six community technology centers. Six. So they started a network with six. When
they were able to expand out—they got a grant from the National Science Foundation—
they expanded out to about 45 other centers. Now we have over 1000 members in our
organization, close to 1500, actually.

And so in 1992, they decided to have an annual conference of all the centers,
which they called at that time affiliates, CTC affiliates. They would come together, they
would have an annual conference, they would share best practices, talk about what was
happening in their communities, and then go back to their communities. In 1995 they
discovered that they wanted to make this bigger than just these 45 centers. They wanted
to make it national, and in doing that they decided to become a part of EDC, which is the
Education Development Center. They became a project and not an organization at that
point. The project itself was headed up by Laura Breeden, and Peter Miller was the first
director.

So this is when it expanded to become a more national project. By this point there
were so many annual conferences, which was the staple of what CTCNet does, it brings
every one of these centers together each year, to come together, to have these conversations. By 1995 we had had at least three of them. So by the time it started to broaden out it became even larger than most people had imagined. We were getting thousands of centers coming from across the nation.

The Community Technology Review was actually created at this point, and if you look at the year, 1996—does anyone think about that year in terms of what was going on? The Telecom Act? The tech boom? So if you notice, all this was happening before the Telecom Act, which got kick-started over after '06 into more policy discussion because when the Telecom Act happened, then everyone started talking about community technology in a very different way. The digital divide became a big issue because by 1996 the first digital divide report was out.

At www.comtechreview.org you can find some back issues on the Community Technology Review website and see some of the conversations that I’m going to talk about today—some of the conversations went way back into 2005. They stopped the Community Technology Review in 2005, mostly due to lack of funding. Under one of the topics, “Practicing,” under the Community Technology Review, you will see a conversation: enabling bottom-up ownership of the creation of information is the essence of the CTCNet difference. Bottom up. Sounds like grassroots, right? For powerless people, be they young or elderly, poor or victimized. This is 1996. We’re still talking about the same people. We’re still talking about the same issues. And you can see at that time the Internet was the most important issue. Getting access to the Internet was the most important issue. For the movement exists to remind and demonstrate that technology exists to serve people, not the other way around. The truth is obscured both for those in the new techno sweatshops—remember sweatshops back then?—and for the computer illiterate.

This is 1996. We’re still talking about some of the same things, and this is 2008. It’s not that different. Basically at this point technology was considered the thing that kept people from being socially connected. So in 2008, if this is the thing that’s keeping us from being connected, what’s it doing in 2008? Is it bringing us closer together? Is it making us a global nation? Those are things to think about. But this was written in 1996.

Some of the basic issues that were going on in terms of accomplishment that we were able to address after 1996, when was the National Telecommunications and Information Administration—which I always get wrong because I'm used to saying NTIA, and most people don't know what that means, but all I can think of is NTIA most of the time—started those digital divide reports. At that time it was talking about how big a gap there was between people who were connected and people who weren’t. There were such huge gaps at that time with dial-up access. We started in 1995 with rural communities, and in 1998 went into urban communities, then we started to notice that there was divides among those who were racially different, those who were economically different, those who had English as a second language, and the divide got wider and wider as we noticed how many people were not getting connected and then how important the Internet had become. At this time the Clinton/Gore administration had a lot of digital opportunities programs, including the Department of Education Community Technology Centers grants. This program started in 1999 and ended in 2002, and when it ended it given out 337 awards totaling at least $129 million. Kate did the legacy
project for the Technology Opportunities Program at the Department of Commerce. But I can say that program gave out 230 million dollars to 600 projects over eleven years starting in 1994. At this particular time the federal government was very interested in funding these projects. It was a key piece of what was going on. But if you notice the dates, 2001, 2002, there was an administration change. So we were no longer funding these programs.

One of the things that happened that can be considered an accomplishment was the response to Hurricane Katrina. It showed how CTCs could be an asset, that they can be available for disaster relief. They helped people apply for FEMA assistance, they helped people find their families through websites and Internet-based locations. All of a sudden, there was another conversation about CTCs and what they can contribute, and this is where we started to see another kick-up, again, about why CTCs were so important in our communities and what they were doing. CTCs were now becoming global enough to help people reconnect with families when they weren’t sure where they were.

If you saw those websites that popped up you saw that people were able to find family members that way. The other important thing that happened was at the Astrodome in Houston, Texas with Tech for All heading that up. They had a center where people could go to fill out the FEMA applications, and also put their names in the system. This put their names on the board that was in the Astrodome, so that family members who were in the same location would know that they were there. The Astrodome was so big that even though some of the families were still in the same space, they got sent out to other locations, and if they put their names up on the board, and they knew to go put their names up on the board, they were able to find family members in that same location without leaving. Some families still got separated—families had to go to that community technology center to get their names up there—but if that wasn’t there, if we didn’t have that center, we would have lost a lot of family connections. A lot of applications for support would have been lost as well because FEMA’s applications were all online, and these were communities that did not have the skills, the technology literacy, even to fill out these applications. This was critical for them. This was critical to their survival. So these are accomplishments.

Another big accomplishment was that on March 12, the Washington state legislature passed a piece of legislation on community technology. They formed a community technology opportunity program and basically passed a bill to say that community technology was an integral part of their community. This is a fantastic step from a state level—hopefully we can get this back to more of a federal level—Seattle is very progressive and has always had a director of community technology person. We need that in every state as far as I’m concerned. Because they had that division already they understood the value. They understood the connections that the community technology centers provided for their communities, and they were able to pass this bill without question. The money was nice, but they didn’t actually expect it. What they wanted to do was just institutionalize community and technology, and this is one of those big steps toward doing that.

Some new things that came out of community technology, something that CTCNet has been doing around youth visions, the multimedia component—as we talk about convergence, this is where community media comes up. This is a program where we had youth media tell the stories about what was going on in their communities. So it
wasn’t just the Internet anymore, they were actually going out, getting video and asking questions and talking to council members and legislators and asking questions about what was important to them in their communities.

Some of them asked about summer jobs. One student said: “Why do you think there’s so much problems with youth if there’s not enough summer jobs to be in during the summer?” They would pose this question to every legislator, so they would push the issue of having more summer jobs and money for summer jobs in their community. This was an important issue to them because many of them wanted to work. They didn’t want to be off doing anything with idle hands, you know. So they really focused on targeting their city council to get them to fund this summer youth employment program again. It was really important for them. That was one of the things that they did.

It also gave these young people an opportunity to talk to adults in a way that made the adults feel that these young people were really interested in what was going on in their community. They didn’t realize that—they always say young people are no longer interested in politics or issues—and these young people were going up to all the politicians, all the council members and saying, “We’re interested. And this is why we’re interested. This is what’s happening to us. Listen to our side of the story.” The young people were able to develop a curriculum that was field tested based on these stories, based on the actions that these students had participated in, based on their video footage, and they were able to do several things, such as talk to community members. They were able to talk about issues. It was all youth driven. In other words, none of the adults who were working in the program could decide what the issue would be. The young people had to come together and make their own decisions about what was important to them. Youth councils came out of it, so they were able to start convening on a monthly basis about issues that were important in their community. They were able to record the meetings; they were able to try their best to get their stories out.

So we used media in the same way—community media, in that regard—to get stories out that were important for the youth. It was something that they were interested in because they could show themselves—they were really interested in that—in a positive way. They appreciated that because from the media perspective they were seen as all bad, they were all bad youth. A couple of them did a couple of stories in which they showed themselves in front of their centers and were asking people, “If you walked by this group of kids, do you think they’re bad kids? What do you think they’re doing in front of this center? What do you think is happening? What is your perception of who these kids are?” And they showed themselves in front of their shops, and then they went inside to show what they were actually doing, what they were actually participating in, what they were actually learning. All of a sudden, people who walked down that same street started to think differently about the kids who were hanging outside of these centers. So it was really important for them to be able to get that story out. So CTCNet helped other centers nationally, across the nation, to focus on this project as well and funded them for doing this project.

What are some of the struggles? I guess the biggest struggle is, most people don’t understand that term. Or maybe we’ve changed the term; we’re talking about digital inclusion, we’re talking about broadband, we’re talking social media, social networking. These are now new buzzwords. So people forget that these are still all a part of community technology. There are different segments of community technology, but
they’re all a part of it. And when we talk about silos, what happens is you see people take social media over here, digital inclusion over here, and broadband issues somewhere else, and in reality they’re all connected. What we need to do—this is one of our struggles—is get people back to understanding that this is a part of community. This is why this is community. These are the issues that are happening in our community.

The other thing is, of course, the change in administration. When the president got into office in 2001—I won’t say his name—a lot of those projects were de-funded.

One of the biggest problems of the de-funding of those programs was the reports that came out. We got reports that were coming out almost every two years. The last report was 2004. And if you actually go to the website, it says, “A nation online.” So if you see “a nation online,” do you think there’s a problem? No. We’re a nation online. There’s no one who isn’t connected. But if you read through the fine print on that report, it says 29 million people are not connected at all. Nothing. 29 million. And yet we’re a nation online. It’s amazing to see that. But there’s not another report to prove it different. It's 2008. We haven't seen another report about the digital divide—of course, they won’t call it that—since. So those are big issues for us as we move forward because now we don’t even have the data and statistics to prove that there’s still a problem.

Another issue is net neutrality, specifically broadband hogs. I was talking to a couple of people last night about how people were checking to see who was hogging the bandwidth and who wasn’t. This argument has confused people on both sides of the issue, honestly. I work with women’s organizations and other organizations, and they’re really confused about which side they should be on. Some people opt out completely; they decide that they’re not going to take sides. Others are just really confused. It sounds the same on both sides.

One woman came to me and says, “Well, the other side said to me that this is going to help rural women, so we said yes to it.” And I was so amazed that something which we thought was simple and could be easily understood was easily confused and hijacked, actually—that they could just take the same language and say, “Well, we’re really trying to make sure that this can happen, but we want to control the hogs. If we can control the hogs, this will make it accessible to everybody.” Really? With Youtube and everything that’s happened across the nation it’s really difficult to control the hogs. You may be the hog that they’re trying to control. And yet, the way that the message was spun, they said OK to the other side of the issue.

So it’s been very complicated—the title “net neutrality” makes it really difficult for people to understand. It’s really difficult to get down to the bottom of the issues and figure out whose side anyone’s on. You see civil rights organizations on both sides of the issue and it’s really very interesting. This has also caused a lot of struggles for us because we can’t get everyone on the same page and saying the same message and focused on the same issue. So the battle of net neutrality just continues to go on.

Still another issue is the wireless municipal networks. I think it was last night that we were talking about how certain broadband companies were saying, “If it takes us a million dollars to do that, and we’re only going to get ten subscriptions, why would we do that?” It’s not profitable for them. They’re not going to do it.

So when a government decided to do wireless municipal networks initially, particularly in Philly, the telecom companies came back and attacked because they didn’t want the government to participate in the telecom industry. They wanted to have that for
themselves. So the battle became “If you’re not going to do it, then why can’t the government do it for people who don’t have access? Why not? What’s the problem?” But they felt that this was an intrusion into their industry, and that the government could not be regulated the way they were going to be regulated, so they didn’t want to have that competition in terms of numbers.

So that began a whole big conversation about broadband deployment, what that meant, where it would go, who would get it, who wouldn’t, and now we’re not talking about dial-up anymore, we’re just talking about broadband. Dial-up is gone. We’re no longer talking about the video camera or the Internet or the computer, we’re talking about mobile technology. Everything’s changed, so now the conversation looks different because we’re giving it a different title.

When you get back to the bottom of broadband deployment, however they’ll tell you the two things they still haven’t been able to do is get more computers in the household and do the training and education around them. But we’re not talking about that anymore. We’re too busy talking about deploying broadband. We’re not talking about how many people are not connected—29 million—and this nation online is still not connected. They still don’t have it, they’re still not getting access to it, and we’re not talking about it anymore because we’re too busy talking about wireless municipal networks, broadband initiatives for deployment, and if you listen to the language you can hear what they’re saying. They’re saying deployment. They’re trying to figure out how to drag those pipes out there. They have to take a donkey to drag it out there? They’ll do that.

The reality is that even if they get that out there, if that household does not have a computer, does not have someone who knows how to use it and trusts it, has a tech support person to help them, what is the deployment really doing, anyway? That’s where community technology comes in because it’s about the training, the education, and the equipment to do that. So one of the struggles is broadband deployment without training. It’s still an issue. We still have that struggle. We still need to have that conversation.

A fourth issue is the convergence of technologies. We talked about the mobile technology. Convergence, to me, is always very tricky because when we talk about convergence of technology, most people are talking about convergence to mobile technology, which is usually a PDA or cell phone or something like that, and what we miss is the convergence of community technology, which is not just centers and libraries, right? We’re talking about community media centers, we’re talking about radio stations, the convergence of everything that we’ve come to know. Public TV has become a part of the same conversation. Why? Because we’re in this digital era. We’re doing digital transition. So even community media centers are being cut out because they don’t have the digital access to be a part of it. Now you know about the digital TV, everything’s going to digital. Community media centers that only have analog signals will no longer be able to broadcast.

The conversation has changed; we’re cutting off a lot of voices because of the way that we’re talking about this, so we have to go back to the basics. What does community technology mean? It means community. It means asking how community can participate in this discussion. Every community cannot participate in this high-end area. How do we change that? Do we make sure that it’s available for them? Do we do the
education and training? Or do we say, “Well, they just don’t want it.” It’s just a luxury; they’re not interested, they’re not trying hard enough. That’s the old conversation.

When the Internet first came out, one gentleman compared it to driving a Pinto or driving a BMW. There was no comparison for me. It just was amazing that someone could think that this was just a luxury. Someone was choosing this luxury. Well, today we realize that this is no longer a luxury. People are not able to take care of their families economically in some instances, because they can’t fill out a job application. After Hurricane Katrina, if people weren’t able to fill out the FEMA application, they would not have gotten FEMA services. Things have really changed. We’re not talking the same language as back then.

So when we look at convergence of the cable, telecom, mobile, and voice over internet protocol, really what we’re saying is that the companies are competing, they all are trying to be a part of the same space. It’s like the newspapers saying that they’re online and they’re also having a fight with the bloggers and whoever else is providing news and whoever else is doing their own videos. The reporters now, they’re trying to incorporate that into their dialogue because everything has converged. So they’re not able to sell newspapers anymore and make their money from that. Now they’re trying to do it from streaming.

That’s where the broadband hogs come up. That’s why we keep having that conversation—because everyone is trying to figure out how to better use this access. But unfortunately, when we look at these items, we also realize that when we start getting into short codes and just sending things straight to cell phones we’re still jumping over people. There are people who will not be able to make the transition to the mobile technology with the short codes. They don’t understand it. The language is too curt and it’s too short, so it’s really complicated. When we talk about this we have to go back to the training and education, and if we don’t have the training and education, which a lot of people don’t understand, then we don’t have people who can get connected or even understand it.

One group created a wireless network and finally went door-to-door asking people to put up nodes, OK? So the community had embraced it enough that they finally got them to do that. First the doors would shut when the kids came to ask about it. Then, when they finally got some people to agree to it they had the kids go down and tell people whenever the network was down because people didn’t always know the network was down. And so what they discovered was a pattern—someone was unplugging the node. They found out that it happened to be this woman who would vacuum, unplug the node in order to vacuum, and plug it back in, not realizing that she was shutting down a complete network.

So when we talk about training and education, that’s a key piece of training and equation. She didn’t understand the value of that node. She said, “OK,” to it, but she didn’t get it, and so when we talk about that we talk about a community of people who still don’t understand. Once she understood, she got the value of it, but initially she was just saying “yes” and thought she was just doing a favor for the community. So it’s always a very interesting conversation to have with people concerning what they think is really going on and what they think people really understand. There are still people who will never understand to the extent that most of us in the field will.
Yet another issue is computing technology versus mobile technology. If we make the jump from computing straight to mobile, we’re going to miss some people, and those people may never get back on. Honestly, they may never get back on, and we just assume that they will at some point.

I see a transition into cell phone technology, I see us moving into SMS text for certain information: we see nonprofits using that as ways to get information to their constituents. What we don’t see is it’s really difficult to fill out a job application using a cell phone. So how can we make that jump? We can’t imagine making that jump, but we assume that everyone will have access to their resumes or their applications in some way that they can still send it digitally. But imagine now, who doesn’t ask for a resume by email? We still have communities that come to us with their almost handwritten resumes. They’ve scratched out addresses—it’s amazing. They still haven’t been able to update them, and they still can’t send them. They can try to fax them, but they can’t send them. So we’re talking about an economy of people who can’t even apply for jobs. It’s very challenging when we talk about these issues. So these are some of the struggles.

The other struggles are just the fear that people still have concerning the cyber stalking, the cyber bullying, the internet predators, the identity theft, and the web 2.0 idea. Some people say to me, “It’s just too many moving parts. I don’t know which part to pay attention to, which part not to pay attention to, what I should be doing or not doing, how I should be engaged or not engaged.” And so this becomes part of the complication of information overload, to some extent. There are so many applications out there you can use, when you’re trying to choose which one is best for your community. That’s where community technology centers come in, to help people get through some of that.

But if they don’t come into the centers, if they don’t have access to those centers, they don’t get the education. We still have mothers that will unplug their kids—I told the story last night about a mom who couldn’t get her daughter off at night, and she was afraid of what her daughter could get access to, so she turned her phone off. She had no phone access because she was afraid of what her daughter was getting into while she was sleeping. We still have people that are in places of fear that will keep them disconnected. She purposely disconnected herself. This is not about luxury; she just purposely did it because she thought that her daughter was getting into something that she couldn’t control.

So I see five top priorities for the future. Sometimes I wonder if I’m asking for a lot, but I definitely want to see broadband initiatives that include computer equipment and training and education. We can’t talk about broadband deployment without talking about those two issues. We need legislation like Seattle has passed to create a community technology fund or bill and divisions of state governments that include either a community technology director or a digital inclusion director. Seattle has a community technology director, and the city of Houston has a digital inclusion director; having someone who can pay attention to this issue on a national level would be what we’re looking for as the best possible solution.

The other types of issues have do workforce literacy and other types of literacy. As we know that we’re getting to the point where applications for a TANF, which is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, are going online, FEMA’s going online, a lot of services are going online, even applying for DMV registration and things like that or
paying for tickets. We’re getting to the point where everything is going online, but we don’t realize that there are people who still need a place to come in the door because they don’t have access to apply for these things. Libraries are a key to doing that, but if they’re still having struggles with clicking and using the mouse, they’ll not be able to get through that process very easily. So I say the Chicago Public Library was very innovative in thinking about these cyber navigators because with someone like that who can help people on an individual basis, that makes it possible for people to come to the library to get access to some of these services.

But even with that we still have fears about privacy and information—people still don’t feel completely secure about. So we have to think about what public access means to the individual. What if someone can look over their shoulder while they’re putting in their financial information? Would you feel comfortable if you were doing your bank information at the library? I don’t think so. We have to really think about how we’re thinking about public access and how we’re asking people to get to information and apply for certain resources.

So when we look at the top priorities for the future, we still have to look at the work force because it’s the economic impact. We still need to look at literacy, and literacy shouldn’t be just reading, it should be all literacy, Family literacy, tech literacy, math literacy, finance literacy, all that should be a part of the conversation.

And then, of course, technology changes, but people remain the same. I wish this was my little saying, but it’s not. A woman by the name of Connie Reese actually said this. She’s a 58-year-old woman who uses online resources for advocacy, and this is one of the things she said: because the technology changes every six months to a year, and like I said about the broadband, from digital divide to digital inclusion, we’ll call it something different. Something will come up that sounds and looks a little different. But from my perspective, since I’ve been doing it for a long time, they just have different names. They do the same things. They’re chat rooms, BBS boards, as far as I’m concerned. They just look different; I can see faces, I can do more with them, but the technology is pretty much not that different from the way people communicate and talk and view and deal with each other. They still deal within their own social networks; the people they’re familiar with, the people they work with, the people they go to school with, the people who have common interests as they do, people who have same problems as they do, whether it’s an issue in their community or whether it’s working together on a diet for weight loss. It’s about the way people communicate and congregate with each other. That’s what happens online.

And, of course, from one of our community technology review projects, there was an actual document about how in 1998 a CTC got a librarian to come in part-time to house a library at the CTC. That’s 1998. It’s 2008, so we need to think about either CTCs as libraries or libraries as CTCs and look at a culture of communities making libraries an aspect of those communities. Although we still count libraries as community technology centers because they have labs that support the community, not everyone looks at it that way. We know that that’s still one of our challenges in the thought process that we want to bring together in this conversation.

So without further ado, here are some basic issues having to do with the presidential election. Think about the Youtube debate—how many people were able to participate in that debate if they didn’t have computers, they didn’t have video cameras,
and they didn’t have the tools to edit? It was only one group of people who were able to participate in that, and we have to think about that when we talk about ability to be a part of the political discourse. And then Myspace, Twitter, bloggers, oh my, there’s so much going on around the bloggers, their ability to change directions around politics and issues and keep things vital and keep things in the mainstream that we have learned individuals can have a bigger impact on our community if we give them the power and the resources and the skills. So I want to make sure that we talk about that. And then, of course, hopefully the new administration will bring new changes, and maybe we’ll get some of these things funded. You can go see more information about CTCNet at www.CTCNet.org.
Our first slide, Mapping Ethnic Chicago, shows the community areas of Chicago, which are divided into 77 areas. This presentation was put together by myself, Kate Williams, and John Sanders, who's also here from the U of I. This map is also in your handout, one of the back pages, if you need to refer to it later.

Brooke Bahnsen is a master's student studying Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. She currently holds a research assistantship in the Community Informatics Lab working with professor Kate Williams. Ms Bahnsen also works as a graduate assistant in the Geology Library. She received her undergraduate degree in Geography and Spanish from the University of Arizona, Tucson, and a master's degree in Education also from the University of Arizona. Ms. Bahnsen taught Spanish to grades 1 through 8, studied in Guadalajara, Mexico, and continues her love of studying Spanish by traveling often to Mexico. Ms. Bahnsen also published a map of Illinois land cover while working for the Illinois Natural History Survey in Champaign. Her interest in library science is broad, including community informatics, GIS (Geographic Information Systems), and Youth Services.
Our main question is: how do local communities go digital? Our project is eChicago. We’re studying IT use in selected ethnic communities in Chicago, asking questions such as where do people go online? Can people go online in these ethnic communities? Once they are online, what do they do with IT, especially community organizations? And do they make use of digitized ethnic content? Are they archiving their content?

Our first question is: who and where are the ethnic groups? This is our first stage of our research. We’ve started with webliographies, one of which is on Arab-speaking Chicago. This includes webliographies and bibliographies of information about Arab-speaking Chicago, specifically. And we’ve started off with maps, which I'll show you today.

One of the tricky issues is defining ethnicity. We took a look at Wikipedia, and the sociologist Max Weber once remarked that the whole conception of ethnic groups is so complex and so vague that it might be good to abandon it altogether. On the other hand, he also proposed a definition of ethnic groups that became accepted by many sociologists. He said, “Those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both, or because of memories of colonization and migration. This belief must be important for group formation. Furthermore, it does not matter whether an objective blood relationship exists.” So this is the beginning of our definition of ethnicity, starting from Wikipedia.

---

**Defining ethnicity**

The sociologist Max Weber once remarked that "the whole conception of ethnic groups is so complex and so vague that it might be good to abandon it altogether."[6]

In any case, Weber proposed a definition of ethnic group that became accepted by many sociologists[citation needed].

Those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for group formation; furthermore it does not matter whether an objective blood relationship exists.[6]
Then we turned from the theory to the data, looking at Census 2000, and we found that there is a patchwork of questions that can define ethnicity from the Census. A lot of these questions reflect the changing immigration patterns. The questions from 1790 up to 2000 are different. For example, question 5, Is this person Spanish, Hispanic or Latino? was added recently. Question 6 is still clinging to the obsolete concept of race. For example, it gives you an option to mark Korean, which actually means you’re a person from Korea. It’s not considered a race. Both questions 5 and 6 were asked of all households in the U.S.

**Turning From Theory to Data**

**Census 2000: a patchwork of Qs**

- Changing immigration 1790-2000
- Clinging to obsolete concept of race
- These Qs asked of all households
We continued to dig deeper and found three other questions that are only on the long form, which means only 16 million households answered these three questions. They go deeper to define ethnicity. Question 10 asks about a person’s ancestry or ethnic origin with a blank for you to fill out whatever country you may want to. Eleven asks about language, so if you see 11b, if you don’t speak English at home, you can fill in your own language. And question 12, if you were not born in the U.S., you have an opportunity to write in what country you were born in.

The important fact is not all answers were tabulated and available online. For example, a possible answer to question 10, Cambodian, that information is not available online. We’re assuming people might have answered that, but we weren’t able to take that data. Our starting maps consist of Cambodian, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Palestinian, African American.

More Qs:
Ancestry, Language, Place of birth

- These questions asked of 16 million households “long form”
- Not all answers tabulated and available online
This map [below] shows the number of persons who answered question 10 as born in China on the census. If you look at all the white space, it represents zero, so nobody exists in that community area who answered born in China. The darker space shows you the number of people, and if you find areas 60 and 34, in the central, that’s Bridgeport and Armour Square, so we have the number of people who reported being born in China. “As percent” is percentage of total population: for example, in Armour Square, 34.33 percent answered they were born in China out of the total population of Armour Square. So you notice that these concentrations, although they’re high, they’re not in the majority.
We have another variable of language, and if you look at Armour Square now [map below], 55% do speak Chinese. So the majority of Armour Square residents are speaking Chinese. You continue to see the concentration of Chinese-speaking people in Bridgeport and Armour Square. These areas are listed in the top ten. There’s others which are also in your handout. We just chose to put the top ten on the map.
And the census question 5, the option of identifying as Chinese, is represented in the map here [below]. Now if you look at Armour Square, it goes up to 59 percent. So more people answered identifying themselves as Chinese, and the top two areas are still concentrated, so there’s a correlation between language, foreign born and people identifying as Chinese.
Our next map was created for question 6, and these are persons identifying as African American. It’s interesting; area 25 has the most number of people—106,000—whereas the percentage is a little bit lower than the rest of the areas. So if you go down to West Englewood and Englewood, areas 67 and 68, you notice that area is 98 percent African American, but there’s a smaller number of people. So patterns have changed. People have relocated, buildings have been torn down, there’s more green space, the numbers are lower, even though the high percentage stays the same. This was also a question answered as one race only, so you could say African American. There’s also options where you could pick more than one. We did not include that on this map.
The next map shows persons of Palestinian ancestry. These numbers are smaller, so they’re less accurate. Like looking for a needle in a haystack, the margin of error is higher. But it does show you the main concentration of Portage Park and Irving Park, and then down in the Southwest Side, Ashburn, the dark green areas on the map. This was once again taken from question 10: What is your ancestry?
And we move on to people speaking Arabic at home. If you go back and forth you’ll notice that the areas stay the same, although the numbers increase, and that’s because people speaking Arabic at home includes people from many different countries, not only people of Palestinian origin. An interesting notation we found is the number of people speaking Arabic at home is actually larger than the number of people speaking Japanese, so there are more people in the city speaking Arabic. There are correlations between those Northside areas and the Southwest Side area.

Now the census 2000 is changing. The Census Bureau is in the process of ending the long form and phasing in something called the American Community Survey. One of the benefits is that the annual surveys supplement the census short form, so there’s more information. The data will be reported in two to three months instead of two to three years—the data will be reported much quicker. There is a greater range of social and economic data on the American Community Survey.

At the same time, the margin of error is one of the challenges. The learning curve for users is much higher. The user will now have to be able to tell the difference between one-year data, three-year data and five-year data, as will the producers of the American Community Survey. They’re in the process of training people all across the country on how to actually take this survey and use it.
Some final thoughts about our maps: I mentioned that one surprise is that more people speak Arabic than Japanese. There’s segregation and diversity. Englewood has a high percentage of African Americans. Albany Park was more of a mixture. So you can find places in the city that are still segregated and are still diverse.

One last map from among many we have of Latino Chicago. It’s interesting to see that Spanish is spoken in homes in every community area across the city. The highest concentration is the Lower West Side, where 77% of households speak Spanish at home. Just as with the other ethnicities there are multiple ways to measure Latinidad—by language, place of birth, and self-identification.

These maps are useful, although they’re just a beginning, and they also generate new questions for us to further our research, and we invite everyone to use and critique our maps and data. And our maps and slides—even some we did not show today—are available at this website, http://tinyurl.com/22kdec.
Community dynamics and race relations in Chinese Chicago—Shanshan Lan

I understand communities not merely as physically bounded entities, but intersections of a multitude of social political relations and human imaginaries. In other words, a community is not just a place. It consists of people who are moving and who are constantly crossing over various boundaries, race, class, gender, etc. in their daily lives. As early as 1969, anthropologist Fredrik Barth already proposed that ethnic identity develops out of interactions and boundary making efforts between different ethnic groups. Instead of holding on to an essentialized, mystified notion of racial and ethnic difference, it’s high time for scholars to adopt a more dynamic understanding of ethnic communities in light of the changing historical context of the global restructuring of capitalism, international migration and the multiracial transformation of major U.S. cities.

In my own research, I am treating Chicago’s Chinatown community as a meeting ground or an arena where different racial and ethnic groups construct and contest their identities through the making and unmaking of interracial boundaries.

Chicago’s Chinatown differs from that of San Francisco, Los Angles and New York in many ways. While the latter attract scholarly attention for their sweatshop workers, illegal immigrants, and economic potential, there are no similar studies on Chicago’s Chinatown, which solely depends on the restaurant industry. While Chinatowns in the two coastal areas are undergoing economic depression and population decline, Chicago’s Chinatown is actually expanding. According to Yvonne M. Lau, about 26% of Chicago’s entire Chinese population lives in the city’s Chinatown. In contrast, only 2% of Chinese immigrants live in Los Angeles Chinatown, 8% of Chinese immigrants live in San Francisco Chinatown, and 14% live in New York Chinatown. “Chinatown is no longer Chinatown. Bridgeport is Chinatown now.” Jane, a 60-year-old third-generation Lithuanian woman who lived in Bridgeport all her life thus told me. Despite her joking manner, Jane was telling the shocking truth that Bridgeport has exceeded Chinatown as the largest Chinese concentration in Chicago. The rapid expansion of Chinese population to Bridgeport began around 1980s and 1990s. Due to the 1989 Tiananmen Incident in China and the 1997 return of British colony Hong Kong to Mainland China, Chicago’s Chinatown experienced a significant population growth. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Chinatown grew 22 percent to about 8,300. Since affordable rentals in Chinatown are hard to find, most new immigrants end up in Bridgeport, where real estate prices are 20 to 30 percent lower.

Shanshan Lan is an Andrew W. Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow in Asian American Studies and Anthropology at Northwestern University. She received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2007. Her dissertation explores how class positions mediate Chinese Americans’ perceptions of and reactions towards racial difference in Bridgeport, a multiracial working-class immigrant community adjacent to Chicago’s Chinatown. Shanshan has conducted eighteen months’ ethnographic field research in Chicago’s Chinatown and Bridgeport communities, during which she participated in a wide range of community activities. She also worked and volunteered part-time for an immigrant social service agency in Chinatown for one year. She has published articles in Asian American Law Journal, City and Society, and Amerasia Journal. (shanshanlan@gmail.com)
According to the Coalition for a Better Chinatown (CBC), a political advocacy group, the “Chinatown community” geographically spans two Chicago neighborhoods—Armour Square and Bridgeport. Among the approximately 18,000 Chinese living in the community, only 8000 live in Armour Square, where the historical Chinatown is located; the remaining 10,000 who settled in Bridgeport are mainly post-1965 immigrants who desire a permanent home in the United States. Despite the CBC’s effort to keep the Chinese population together, in reality the community is politically split into two different wards. Bridgeport belongs to Ward Eleven, a white-dominated ward. Armour Square belongs to Ward Twenty-five, a predominantly Latino ward. The two neighborhoods also fall into two different police districts: Bridgeport is in District Nine, and Chinatown in District Twenty-one. These political and juridical divisions have significantly undermined the Chinatown community’s bargaining power with the city government. They also render it technically difficult for community organizations in Chinatown to address interracial harassment against Chinese immigrants in Bridgeport. Nevertheless, because of the proximity of the two neighborhoods, many Chinese immigrants in Bridgeport continue to come to Chinatown to take advantage of the Chinese language infrastructure and the various social services.

Unlike earlier Chinese immigrants to the U.S. who were mainly from rural areas of Canton, post-1965 immigrants come from a variety of places of origin and social backgrounds: While Canton continues to be a major source of Chinese immigration, new immigrants are also hailing from other parts of Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Burma, Southeast Asia, and South America. Many of them are from middle class or lower middle class urban settings, and some even hold college degrees. Differing from their immigrant ancestors who were largely sojourners dreaming of returning to China with a big fortune, these new immigrants usually come with their families and with the determination to make the United States their permanent home. However, since the educational and social capital they brought from China cannot be readily converted to economic capital in the U.S., a significant number of new immigrants have experienced downward social mobility in their new country and had to rely on the ethnic Chinese labor market for employment. The concentration of new immigrants in the city also draws a small group of middle-class Chinese Americans who live in the suburbs but own businesses in Bridgeport and Chinatown, such as law firms, real estate companies, medical clinics, insurance companies and so on, which target new immigrants as major clients. Mostly educated in the United States, these middle class Chinese Americans function as community leaders and cultural brokers between working class immigrants and mainstream white society.

The reception of Chinese Americans in Bridgeport is largely governed by the multiracial power relations in the neighborhood. Chinese Americans are able to move in because they are perceived by many whites as a buffer group against the integration of African Americans and the growing political power of Latinos. Depending on the shifting interests of white privilege, they are perceived either as mysterious foreigners against long-time white residents, or as the model minority against poor African Americans and Latinos. In general, Chinese social life in Bridgeport is heavily confined to public places such as schools, parks and libraries. There are many traditionally white ethnic spaces such as private social clubs, pubs, ethnic churches and family parties that continue to exclude Chinese Americans. Many Chinese Americans in Bridgeport expressed feelings
of alienation during my interviews with them. One Chinese American community activist Tony told me, “I happen to live in a place called Bridgeport, but all my friends are in Chinatown.” Steve, a 20-year-old Chinese American college student who grew up in Bridgeport told me, “Harassment? It happens so often that it has become normal. I’ve gotten used to it.”

My own introduction to the Chinese American experience in Bridgeport was marked by a highly personal and emotionally charged incident in 2003, when I was doing my preliminary research in Chicago. One afternoon while on my way back from an interview in Bridgeport, I was harassed by some white teenagers on the street. They yelled racial slurs at me and threatened to beat me up. It was the first time I experienced racial discrimination so vividly at a personal level that my heart was consumed by anger, humiliation and helplessness. Fortunately, people in the Chinese American community comforted me. They shared with me their personal stories of being harassed in the neighborhood, teaching me about the various hidden racial boundaries in the city’s geography. That was how I discovered Bridgeport, a historically white working class neighborhood which has a reputation of racial violence against Blacks. As I talked to more and more people, my own little episode of “traumatic experience” faded away in comparison to Chinese immigrants’ daily struggles of coping with interracial harassment and hate crime in Bridgeport. Nevertheless, that incident served as a breakthrough moment when I was truly initiated into the immigrants’ world and started being accepted by them as a member of the community.

In 2005, I moved in with a Cantonese immigrant family in Bridgeport and participated actively in the neighborhood life. I also worked and volunteered part-time for an immigrant social service agency in Chinatown. This job gave me plenty of opportunities to travel outside Chinatown to Chicago suburbs to do outreach work among middle class Chinese Americans. Besides participant observation work, I conducted over one hundred interviews with people from different racial and class backgrounds. When conducting interviews, I made a point of asking people whether they wanted to be audio-taped. Generally speaking, my Caucasian participants had no problem talking in front of a tape recorder, but some of my Chinese informants got very nervous when I tried to audio tape them. I later decided to switch to note taking and informal interviews because they proved to be less intimidating for the socially vulnerable Chinese immigrant population. I also found out that people are more selective about things they say during an audio taped interview. As soon as possible after finishing each session and usually within twenty-four hours, I reconstructed the interviews on my computer based on my memory and written notes. While it was impossible to reconstruct the interviews verbatim, I am confident that I have preserved the main ideas and flavor of each interview. My choice of interview participants was largely context-based and event-based. By this I mean that I looked for specific occasions, social events, or topics in dispute within the community that functioned as “frames” within which dialogue and other forms of social interactions take place among social actors from various racial and class backgrounds. I also followed the suggestions of my former interviewees in retrieving new participants. Besides ethnographic study, I also conducted archival research in the University of Chicago and Chicago Historical Society. Data on hate crimes against Asian Americans (including Chinese Americans) was obtained from the Chicago Commission on Human Relations and the Chicago Police Department.
As an anthropologist in the field, I found myself constantly wrestling with the paradoxical absence and presence of race in daily life: while the word “race” may be absent from most of my informants’ narratives, the ideological and material impacts of race as a shaping force in organizing the neighborhood’s daily life are always present. As a woman born in China who was doing research on Chinese immigrants in Chicago I was often racialized in the field by non-Chinese speakers as a new immigrant who does not speak English. The plus is: I came to better understand the racialized experience of my working-class Chinese American research subjects. The minus is: I had to cope with the psychological trauma and emotional hurt of interracial harassment on a very personal level, which sometimes threaten to nullify my confidence as an anthropologist. Often time I find myself a walking embodiment of the contradictions and complexities in the entanglement of race with other modes of social differentiation, such as class, gender, language, place of origin and so forth. The researcher’s stories were so embedded in the stories of her informants that they merged into one, which points to the disturbing fact (at least for some academics) that the privileged has to learn from the underprivileged about the elusive meaning of race. During my research I found that far from being merely victims of the American system, Chinese immigrant workers are active social agents who have developed their own ways of navigating the racialized landscape of multiracial Bridgeport. In addition, due to their exposure to the multiracial city environment, Chinese immigrant workers have a more flexible understanding of race relations in the United States and their friendly relationship with Mexican immigrants has the potential for interethnic coalition building in the future.
Mapping the Arab American community is very complicated and challenging. And I do want to say I’m really impressed with this CIA lab notes, the bibliography, and the webliography because I think it’s really helpful. What’s really distressing to me is that usually when you see bibliography, they have to pick from a wide array of resources, but they’ve done a perfect job of capturing 99 percent of all the resources that are available on Arab Americans, which tells you what part of the problem it is that I’m going to be addressing.

Arab Americans are in a deep crisis. It’s very difficult to accurately map, record, and understand communities that are in a deep crisis like this, and just as an example, unlike African Americans, I mean, we don’t have the same problems that they went through in this country, nobody lynched us—they put us in jail. But we don’t have a civil rights movement to help us, either. There are aspects to the problems in the Arab American community that make it very difficult to really understand them. There are a couple of points, and I’m going to have this presentation on my website, at www.Hanania.com, if you want to get into more detail, so I don’t want to go into all of it. One, we have no long-term history of documenting ourselves that parallels our presence in this country. Two, we don’t recognize, as an Arab culture in America, the importance of documenting ourselves.

Three, why did we come here? For a lot of reasons. The Arab-Israeli conflict, political repression, the religious freedom. These are reasons for the immigration from the Arab world. We wanted to escape persecution. We wanted to assimilate. It was our goal to come here and blend in; we didn’t want to come here and identify as Arabs. So the first wave of Arabs that came to this country, they wanted to be part of this society. And we were told at first that we weren’t—that we were actually Chinese. That’s how they identified us at the turn of the century, as yellow people. And then they limited our ability to come into this country. We wanted to escape persecution, we ended up coming to America, and as we started growing our own presence, we found ourselves in another situation of persecution. We leave a place to get freedom—religious freedom, political freedom—and then we come to a country where these freedoms are basically denied to us.

And I’ll be honest, you just look over at the history of Hollywood movies on the presentation if Arabs. I grew up my whole life thinking, sitting around a dinner table at Thanksgiving, that all my uncles were terrorists because they looked exactly like the evildoers in the movies. Two hundred-fifty movies, and only two of them present Arabs in a positive light. And by the way, I’ll say something about that because when you talk to other ethnic groups they’ll say, “Well, you know, African Americans are portrayed badly in the movies, Italians, you know, the Mafia and the mob.” The difference, though,

Ray Hanania is an award winning journalist, author and radio talk show host. He is the author of Arabs of Chicagoland (1995, Arcadia Publishing) and eight other books. Hanania hosts a weekly radio program on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 6 PM at WCEV 1450 AM Radio. His web page is www.Hanania.com.
I think, is really significant, and it’s somewhat subtle. We don’t notice this, but in all the movies, you know, deprecating other ethnic or racial groups, there’s always a balance—a positive balance. It may not be properly scaled, but there’s some effort to at least present, especially over the last 30 years, positive images of the negative images that are highlighted in these movies. In the case of Arab Americans, the only positive image that I’ve ever seen was a cartoon character in Aladdin, and he really didn’t look Arab. He looked Hispanic. Or Puerto Rican.

Arab Americans continue to live in an environment of conflict and persecution that is, in a way, wrapped up in the ignorance and lack of education of Americans. And let’s be honest, Americans are the most educated people in the world, but the least educated about the world. Most of them can’t tell the difference between a Pakistani or a Palestinian, an Iranian, an Indian, or a good president and a moron—I don’t mind mentioning his name.

Arab Americans are in an internal conflict. Now, on top of all these problems, we come to this country and we fight with each other. We’re physically here, but we’re mentally still living in our original homeland. My cousins were born in this country, and their first language is Arabic. It’s not just the language. You can’t just speak English to be an American; you have to speak American to be an American. They don’t understand the fundamental basics of being an American and have a very hard time communicating. Of course they’re all doctors and engineers and lawyers, and I’m the only fool who somehow got distracted to become a journalist, which has no future in the Arab world. Our literature as Arab Americans is activist focused. It’s mostly political, it’s mostly academic, and it’s almost all nonfiction, and I’m not including poetry. And poetry’s a special case because the Arabic language isn’t really a spoken language; it’s a language that’s sung. It’s a poetic language; you don’t speak Arabic, you sing it. So this has made it so easy for Arabs to enter poetry and express themselves in poetry, but I found out that most Americans really don’t want to read Arab American poetry, except other Arab Americans. As a result there are very few stories that we’ve written about our lives in this country. It is so hard to find a story about what it was like to be Arab American when they first came to this country toward the middle and the end of the 19th century. We haven’t documented that, which I’ll talk about, really quick.

The problems in American society form another one of the problems that we face. If you want to document Arab Americans, it’s very difficult because this other wall is American society. The American understanding of Arab Americans is shallow and limited to the news headlines. They just don’t understand us. I think partly it’s our fault; we’ve never told our stories, we’ve never presented ourselves as human beings just like everybody else. And humor is a great way to do that, but I’ve only—after 30 years in journalism, it’s only been the last 7 years that I’ve actually gotten, since September 11th—into humor, and that was because a woman came up to me after September 11th and said, “I can’t believe you abandoned your Christian faith to become an Arab.” And so I said, “OK.”

We’re portrayed as terrorists in American society, as an anti-American threat. That’s how people view us. Hollywood, the lack of balance. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the lack of Arab empowerment in America makes us a double oppressed society. We not only have all these other issues, but we’re engaged in such a vicious political battle. We can’t break free to talk about the real issues that dominate our society. Sexual abuse,
seniors that have no place to go, oppression of women that isn’t driven by Islam, but it’s driven by male-dominated third world societies. Women are oppressed; I mean, the Islamic world has elected three, maybe four, women as heads of states. We Americans still haven’t gotten there yet. We’re arguing over whether we want to make a woman president or an African-American president which, to me, is the dream conflict, but we still haven’t freed women in this country to the point where they can become president of the U.S.

The only way we as Arab Americans succeed is if we abandon our primary level of ethnic identity in society and we limit our secondary level of ethnic identity to within our own ostracized and isolated ethnic communities. What I mean by that is that we step back, we hide. The most successful Arab Americans are those that have stripped themselves of their Arab American identity. Those Arab Americans who have assimilated—mainly the Christians, because I could go to a Lutheran church and let people think that I’m Puerto Rican or Mexican or—definitely not Irish, but, you know, among the darker, olive-colored strain of people.

And we limit ourselves in our own ethnic community. We’re so oppressed. On one hand we engage in a conflict in our community—it’s very discouraging. We don’t have a communications system in the Arab American community where we can talk to ourselves. Our newspapers in our own communities stink. They’re very unprofessional. They’re political activist publications; they’re not professional publications. I’m actually the only Palestinian journalist in the U.S. that has a regularly published column in the U.S. I’m not saying there aren’t Palestinians who write for newspapers. You know, you can submit an op ed to any paper, and you can get published. But there are none who write on a regular basis. That ended this month, though, with the Daily Herald, because for a lot of other reasons, nobody likes to read a column from even a moderate Arab American—everybody gets mad at me. It’s so much easier to be an extremist in this country than a moderate.

How do you overcome this, to identify us? It’s just amazing—you need to educate yourselves about yourselves first before trying to educate yourselves about Arab Americans. You need to understand the problems in your own society about how we deal with ethnic groups, the politics, and how those things apply to other racial groups. We need to expand beyond the glass ceiling of diversity.

There’s an organization called Unity of journalists who are black, Hispanic, Asian American and Indian—Native American. They won’t allow Arab journalists to join the group because we’re a political time bomb. And we’re in a fight with Unity to force them to include us. We say, “Look, this is about diversity. You must let us in.” They don’t want to do it because there are only ten seats at the American table for ethnic journalists, and now blacks have to compete with Hispanics. They say, “You mean you’re going to add Arabs to the mix? Forget it. You people are white.” And of course, white people look at me and say, “No, you people are black.”

We can’t rely on the mainstream media. It’s biased; it excludes Arabs. There are very few Arab Americans working in the mainstream media. They only cover the negative image, and they ignore positive images. Now, that’s so important because the media, for most part, has been the major resource for information and research on Arab and other ethnic groups. How a news media covers you—and the academic world—those are the two main sources of information. You want to study something? You look—you
go to a university and you look for a paper. The best paper that I’ve ever read was a dissertation which was done in 1952—the year before I was born—at the University of Chicago, and I used that for research for years. There hasn’t been a good one since then.

So when we’re not part of journalism; nobody covers our meetings. They don’t record our organizations, they don’t record our elected community leaders. The only time they come after us—and they’re shocked to say, “Wow. Tony Rezko is an Arab American and he’s involved in political empowerment, handing out contracts?” Yes, we’ve known this for ten years, but the only time you bothered—if you had covered our community, you would have known about this man ten years ago, not today when it had become a political issue.

There’s an absence of a professional Arab American media. There’s no newspaper of record. You know, one of the first things I learned about being a journalist is that the role of journalism isn’t just to find the truth—which we American mainstream journalists really don’t bother practicing because truth doesn’t sell newspapers. The role of journalism is to act like a publication of record. You document even the most insignificant, uninteresting thing. If an uninteresting little group of Arabs has a club and they elect new presidents, you document it even though nobody cares about it because 30 years from now, people might want to know: “Wow, what was the history of this person that we’re interested in today?” The only way to do that is if the media, the mainstream media or the Arab media, covers it.

There’s an absence of balanced Arab American literature in this country. And again, I’m excluding poetry. Ninety percent of all Arab American literature and writing is politically focused. Just go do a little study of any library. All the books are about why the Palestinians lost the war in 1948. I only needed to read one book about that, and I tried to explain this to my own community because we’re so engaged in a conflict we do not realize that we are not writing our story.

You know where you reach Americans? Not in the libraries, but when they’re on vacation in Cancun and they buy a book and they sit there and read that book and they absorb it and enjoy it in the context of a non-confrontational environment where they’re enjoying getting suntanned or relaxing, and all the negative stereotypes about Arabs which are in every book, are absorbed into their understanding of who we are. And Arabs, we insist on writing the political dissertation that nobody takes on vacation to Cancun. You will never see a vacationer holding Edward Said’s book, The Question of Palestine, going, “Wow, this is a compelling story.” He’s a great writer, but he wasn’t writing for the American people. Arab Americans lack a self-focused nonfiction.

One of the first things I recognized real fast was in 1976 I published my first Arab American newspaper called the Middle Eastern Voice—it was in English—right away, the FBI spent three years investigating me, wondering why I would do that. In 1988 I published an essay called “Growing up Arab in America.” It was the first feature-length article about what it was like to grow up Arab in America, even though we’d been here since the Columbian Exposition, and the first belly dancer, Fahreda Mazhar, on Cairo Street—she wasn’t even Arab. There were twelve of them, and none of them were Arab. In 1996 I wrote a book called I’m Glad I Look Like a Terrorist; Growing Up Arab in America, using humor and satire to convey my experience and say, “Hey, my experience is no different than African Americans, Chinese, Italians. We all have funny things, and they’re all exactly the same. Take it out of the politics.”
And then in 2005 I wrote this book, *Arabz of Chicagoland*, that many publishers said nobody was going to buy because they don’t care about the history of Arabs in Chicagoland. I finally convinced one publisher at Arcadia—thank God for that little press run that said, “OK, we’ll give you 128 pages. We want 205 pictures.” I begged them to let me write a little history, which is in there. Two years ago, the city of Chicago invited me on a test to lead a tour of the city of Chicago during their Faces and Places program in May.

So the past two years I’ve done a tour of the Arabs of Chicagoland. The majority live on the Southwest Side today. They come from two cities in Palestine, 60 percent of all the Arabs in Chicago came from Palestine. They’re from Ramallah, which is a Christian city, and Betuniya which is a Muslim city. The Christians moved into the Northwest suburbs, the Muslims moved into the Southwest Side of Chicago. Since then, they’re all moving into Orland Park because they just opened a mosque over there, and there’s a higher number of Arabs there now including Christians who identify with Muslim Arabs these days.

I’m going to end this really quick right now, and just say this: there are 22 Arab American countries. We’re like South America. It’s not like when you think, “Wow, our Arabs—they’re all the same.” No, Bolivians and Argentineans and Venezuelans and Columbians are completely different peoples. We speak Spanish, but we have different ethnic groups. Those play into them. And our community is changing; it used to be we were a secular community. Today we’re a religious community. Used to be that Arabs were Arabs; today now, we’re becoming Islamicists, and Christian Arabs are disappearing. There are 4.5 million Arabs in the U.S.; 60 percent of them are Christian who never get any recognition, and there’s 7 million Muslims in the U.S. Only 22 percent of them are actually Arab.

Again, my website is www.TheMediaOasis.com. I hope I’ve given you kind of a nice overview of how difficult it is and why, when you do the research, you’re only going to find a few resources that have been published about us because you have to be a champion academic scholar with so much political clout to do the research and get it published because so many people are going to be mad at you, not because of the research but because of the fact that we’re engaged in a terrible conflict. And I’ll tell you, the people that I hate the most are at the census, and it’s only been recently that they’ve allowed us to identify ourselves as Arabs and Palestinians. But the one way to keep people from becoming powerful is don’t allow them to know how big they are. Deny them their census count. Now they want to count us so they can find us and put us in jail. Thank you very much.
I wanted to chat with you today about is sort of a virtual community that Northwestern has been a part of officially for a year. It’s the Black Metropolis Research Consortium. It’s the brainchild of Professor Danielle Allen who, at the time, was head of the division of the humanities at the University of Chicago and also a MacArthur Genius winner—that helps. And it was to pull together organizations in Chicago—archives, libraries and museums—and to enhance access to and preservation efforts of primary resources in the Chicago area dealing primarily with the experience of African Americans in Chicago. Black Metropolis takes its name from the big research project done at the University of Chicago by Sinclair Drake, I believe, in the 1930s or so. So it’s a common term used to refer to Chicago.

Professor Allen’s thought was that we’re all very proud of the Schomburg Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, which is one of the research libraries of the New York Public Library, and the premiere collection looking at the African American and African descendant experience in the country. And she thought that if we pulled together everything that was in Chicago that we would have those same kinds of numbers and have that same kind of impact. Our largest public collection is the Vivian G. Harsh Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at the Woodson Regional Library of the Chicago Public Library. We began to know how much material was in area institutions, and we were looking for ways to enhance access through finding aids, perhaps, or by looking at grant opportunities to fund conservation efforts, public programming. We were also looking at how to impact the curriculum on an academic as well as elementary and high school level.

Our member institutions include the Art Institute, Chicago History Museum—sometimes I will slip and refer to it as the Chicago Historical Society, so forgive me for

Kathleen Bethel is the African American Studies Librarian at Northwestern University Library. A Dominican University M.A.L.S. graduate, Kathleen attended Elmhurst College for undergraduate work in Political Science and Northwestern University for graduate study in African History. She has worked at Chicago’s Johnson Publishing Company Library, the Newberry Library, and the Maywood and Wilmette Public Libraries. Currently serving on the Council, the governing body of the American Library Association, Kathleen is a member of the African American Studies Librarianship Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries. She is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium; the Dominican Alumni Council; the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc.; the Caribbean Studies Association; the Toni Morrison Society; and, several groups supporting Black research collections. She serves on the advisory boards for the Project on the History of Black Writing and the Journal of Pan African Studies. Ms. Bethel was a trustee of Chicago’s DuSable Museum of African American History, Inc., 1993-2007. She has written biographical entries, book reviews, reports, and bibliographies on a variety of topics in Black Studies. Her treatise, “Afrocentricity and the Arrangement of Knowledge,” was published in Afrocentricity and the Academy: Essays on Theory and Practice, edited by James L. Conyers (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003). She received the 2004 DEMCO/BCALA Award for Excellence in Librarianship and the 2003 Irma Kingsley Johnson Distinguished Service Award from the Chicago Friends of the Amistad Research Center (Tulane University). (kbethel@northwestern.edu)
that—DePaul, DuSable Museum, the History Makers, IIT, Loyola, Northwestern, University of Illinois of Chicago, University of Chicago.

We were looking for collections that are within a day’s trip of Chicago to do things, so we’re looking to expand our network throughout the Midwest and are looking at collections in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan as well as reaching further downstate and maybe even to St. Louis, which is a day’s trip in some folks’ mind. That is, we are seeking association: libraries, universities and other archival institutions with major holdings. The BMRC is dedicated to making broadly accessible the members’ holdings of materials that document the African American experience.

Board members and the executive committee include faculty, archivists, librarians, directors of the various organizations and institutions; the members are quite wide ranging. There’s a $2000 annual commitment from institutions, and we’re looking to creating an affiliate membership for those organizations and institutions who cannot afford an annual fee. And those might include, perhaps, the Pullman Museum, the Chicago Jazz Archive, the Blues Museum, any number of entities in the area. The Field Museum was recently approved to come on as a member.

I mentioned the Chicago Public Library—not the Chicago Public Library—I meant the Chicago Public School’s library because I spoke with the archivist there. I had a research question from a graduate student who wanted to look at the southern African American student experience at the beginning of the first migration with Chicago public schools. So when I was talking to the archivist, and he started talking about all the stuff that they had there, I’m thinking, I’ve been in this job and in Chicago a long time, and I vaguely knew about the archive but had no idea how much material the Chicago Public School library collection would have on desegregation, just having the yearbooks of the schools and all kinds of information and documents. There’s so much information out there. We’re looking for ways to pull this together.

We feature every month, I believe, an institution. This month’s was the History Makers, which is a local oral history initiative begun by Julieanna Richardson, and she got big support to do oral histories of Illinois black legislators and to work that into the Illinois curriculum. The interviews and the materials are there online with History Makers, so it’s a tremendous resource.

My experience with DuSable Museum is that people just bring boxes of things to the museum. And those of us in the profession, librarians and archivists, alike, you can’t think of an organization that doesn’t have unprocessed materials. Some of us can list our unprocessed materials, some of us don’t even know what’s there.

So there is an opportunity for the BMRC to facilitate work between organizations. For example, the University of Illinois at Chicago is working on the archives of the Chicago Urban League. There is a project—they’re working with the Chicago Defender. The ability to work with the Chicago Sun Times and that kind of thing, it’s just going to be, I think, really marvelous for scholars. Many of us at our own institutions are challenged concerning how to put across the holdings that we have. I’ve had a long tenure at Northwestern, and we, perhaps, have the finest collection of Africana in the country, and I think you could stop a thousand people downtown at Chicago, and you’re not going to find anybody that knows that.

Also, our institutions, we know that the public thinks that all these places are private. Library experience or museum experience, we’re not seeing that in a lot of
communities. Statistics bear out the fact that in the African American community nationally, statewide, and locally we just don’t have the numbers going to museums. So you can imagine the numbers not going to archives or wondering what an archive is or where an archive is, not even thinking of their churches as archives. Then we have the tragic church fire on the South Side, and the history of gospel music goes up in flames. Up in smoke. Church records of how much was being done.

There’s a professor at the University of Chicago who’s actually now coming to Northwestern who was collecting 8 mm family films of people in Chicago, documenting the community. So we see an impact on so many levels from the Chicago Metro History Fair, which works with high school students and their history projects to give them the resources because over the years we’ve seen an over-reliance on the Internet for people’s papers and presentations and exhibits and whatnot. We find that someone can actually do a presentation about the Sears Tower without having gone there, that kind of thing, and trying to facilitate this notion that there is no information about our experience out there.

The consortium model was actually picked up by the larger institutions. They were saying this is something that we need to be doing as larger entities as well. And so we’ll be looking at the impact of what the BMCR is doing as opposed to—not opposed to, but complementing what will be done just institutionally in Chicago. Part of it is modeled on the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries. One of the wonderful things that they put together was this directory of African American collections in greater Philadelphia and the selected suburban areas, which was published as a monograph, or book, in 1998 but is also available electronically.

And I was commenting to Professor Alkalimat yesterday that the last wonderful directory we had seen of Afro-American resources was done in 1970, the *Directory of Afro-American Resources*. There is a need for something to be done—we haven’t seen a directory done for Illinois in generations. It would say who has what collections and descriptions and put it in a way that is searchable, so that people can pull up and see what’s available in a particular institution, such as their art collection. Now 16 items doesn’t seem like a lot, but it’s access that you didn’t have before to know that there are, indeed, 16 items out there that may be what you’re looking for if you’re working on art collections in Philadelphia.

So the Philadelphia model is very much what we laid out to get the Mellon grant—we just received a Mellon grant to survey African American collections, and we’ll be using this Philadelphia model to give description to collections here. We began by pulling together a listing of what collections have and a listing of what finding aids are available online, and we’ll be looking to giving some uniformity to them and hoping we can get EAD cataloging or access for them that will make them easily searchable on the Internet.

And I think there are a number of projects that we’re going to try and undertake, and I think nothing would be stronger than a fellowship program or an internship. How do we develop and home grow our archivists since there aren’t really that many formal archival training programs, and how do we get students—particularly graduate students—into these collections to see what’s there, to help with the processing? The DuSable Museum has benefited with an intern processing their collections, and we hope to see much more of that.
We believe it’s an opportunity to make grant applications to look at preservation and digitization. We see it as a way, perhaps, to coordinate exhibits. I believe if the BMRC were a little further along we could have celebrated this big anniversary of Harold Washington virtually and programmatically. It would have been a wonderful opportunity for us, so I’m sure we’ll be ready for the next collection so we can say this is what Northwestern University has about Mayor Washington, and this is what DuSable has about Mayor Washington, and we can do an online exhibit and pull together audiovisual materials. We can support programming at area institutions and resources and have a calendar of events.

So those are the kinds of things we see the consortium being able to pull together and work on. It’s been a wonderful process: the strategic planning of it, hiring staff, including an executive director and an archivist (who is actually on the faculty here) teaching in one of the archives. We’re hoping to see many more Dominican students involved in the BMRC. We believe that it can be a model for so many areas, either ethnic studies or geographic, that while it’s a virtual kind of community, it is still very real and tangible in that it is here in Chicago. And you can reach out and see—the things that I have learned of what other places have are just amazing. It’s just amazing, so really getting down to who has what and trying to get an effort coordinated to do that. There isn’t an awful lot on the web pages. We talk about the Mellon grant and the fellowship program—we’re looking to create fellowship opportunities that are not just for students, but also for researchers, artists, scholars, people who want to do research in these collections on a topic involving the African American experience in Chicago.

We just briefly link to some other resources. Virginia has done a very good job of pulling together the kinds of resources available in Virginia, looking at African American history and culture. Of course, there is the Amistad Research Center in New Orleans—and that’s a particular concern for us too because the Amistad Center has a very strong friends group in Chicago, and they’ve been funneling Chicago archives down to New Orleans for years, decades, and a lot of that we’d like to keep here. The Amistad Research Center in New Orleans grew out of the archives of the American Missionary Association and pulling that material together and pulling together archival material about the African American experience in the New Orleans area and down in the delta. So I know there’s a strong friends movement. I’ve seen just lists and lists of manuscripts and documents and materials that have gone down to New Orleans. I kept thinking, “Oh, we need them in Chicago.” Or at least now we could perhaps scan them and make them digitally available to both institutions and that kind of thing.

Of course, the historically black colleges have tremendous collections and have been less likely to have had access to digitization efforts, and less likely to have archives be at the top of the agenda when they get together and talk about their libraries and museums and archives. The money’s just not there. Certainly there is the film center in Indiana and what’s happening there as well as what’s happening at Duke—a lot of work is happening in North Carolina. A lot of work is happening in university libraries. We’re also seeing work in new collections in public libraries. The Broward County Library in Florida has an African-American Historical Collection. Denver just opened a new collection—San Francisco, too. There has been an explosion of African American museums, particularly after the bicentennial, with this recent spate. We’re seeing the birth
of just virtual museums—no physical space whatsoever—as well as the birth of the new slavery museum in Virginia.

So there is just a lot happening, and I think you’ll be hearing about the BMRC more and more. I know that on occasion we've heard—I belonged to, at one point, the Joint Committee of Archives, Libraries and Museums of the American Library Association, and a number of members at meetings talk about this—that students want the training that will enable them to work in these three types of organizations, that there is more commonality than differences, but indeed, there are the nuances that we need to pay attention to. So keep an ear out and an eye out for what’s happening there.
I’m going to talk about teaching community informatics here at the School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University. This is my first semester teaching community informatics here. So it has been a new experience. And I’m going to share some of those things with you. We have got three of the students of the class here, to make sure their classmates know I’m giving you a true accurate story.

I would just like to say, first of all, how I go into this. My research focused on a community network called the Pentalk Network. It is a farming network set up as a rapid response to the farming crisis in the U.K. It is a very interesting network to study, and one which has been sustainable, has carried on since that crisis, and is doing very interesting work with farmers. That is where my interest first arose.

I’m just going to give a brief kind of flavor of my class here. I asked my students at the beginning, why did you sign up for this class? And here are some of the reasons. It is interdisciplinary; it has an international, global perspective; it has a social justice focus, and a civic engagement focus. Also some of the students said that it sounded interesting. By the end of the class, (the learning outcomes) students will be to: define and articulate fundamental concepts of community informatics; discuss the social, economic, cultural, policy, contexts of CI; analyze and assess current local, national, and international CI projects; interpret findings of community informatics research; interpret theories which inform research and practice; apply lessons learned to a library context and, experiment with the development of new knowledge by combining theory with data students collect.

These are some of the topics that we cover in class: community networks, digital divide, social capital, social networking, different application areas of community informatics. We talk about ethics for community informatics researchers. We talk about community informatics development strategy—we look at crisis and emergency situations and how community informatics relates to them, as well as public policy and community memory technology. Finally, we wrap up with the question, where does this all go? And what is the future of this field? And we explore each of those topics within the context of both national and international case studies. Within those topics, each student leads a weekly discussion. So a couple of weeks ago, I asked people to sign up on

---

**Chris Hagar** is an Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Library & Information Science, Dominican University in River Forest where she teaches classes in community informatics and research methods. She holds a PhD in Library & Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Chris has also taught at the School of Library & Information Science, San Jose State University, the University of Northumbria, UK, and the International Centre for Information Management Services & Systems, University of Nicholas Copernicus, Torun, Poland. Chris’s research explores how communities manage, organize and disseminate information in crisis and emergency situations. Prior to taking up her position at Dominican University, Chris was Director of Library Development for INASP, an international non-governmental organization where she managed a UNESCO information literacy project in the South Caucasus and facilitated a library and information science curriculum review project at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. Chris has also worked in the USA and UK as an academic librarian. She has been a consultant with the British Council and the UK Department for International Development. (chagar@dom.edu)
the community informatics research network list serv, and to discuss and debate a topic that we have not discussed in class but which came up on that list serv.

There are two kinds of major assignments that students undertake. The first one is a Chicago case study, which they have just completed. The purpose of these is to analyze and observe a specific organization and look at a community informatics site. The case-study illustrates how the concepts discussed in class and in the readings may be applied to real-life contexts. Students present their findings to the class. A community informatics site could be the library it could be a community center, a community technology center, a local community organization providing IT access, an after-school club, a health agency etc. I want to give you some examples of the case studies that students have been looking at this semester. One student did a very interesting case study about Everyblock.com, which is a new form of community journalism—you might have heard of this. Another student worked with the National Ukranian Museum and the Ukranian Museum of Modern Art in Chicago to show how information and communication technologies can be used to build and bridge social capital. Another student is looking at ChicagoClassicalMusic.org. Jan is going to talk about the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation. And Donna is going to talk about the Computer Clubhouse in Rogers Park. Here we are disseminating what we are doing in class. At eChicago we can contribute to the knowledge base of the Chicago community informatics community. There are lots of opportunities here for us to detail further research and projects. We are going to create the Dominican CI website, where copies of these projects are archived. I am working with students to publish some of the papers. As well as looking at the local context, we are also focusing on international projects, because there is a lot we can learn about what is happening internationally and the role of ICTS in aiding development. A couple of examples of the guest speakers we have had in class. A guest speaker from Australia, Dr Sue Myburgh, School of Communication, University of S.Australia spoke about community knowledge centres for disadvantaged groups and Microsoft funded project at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa. The speaker who is coming in the next couple of weeks, Kathleen Robbins, will be talking about her work in Haiti. She is working on two projects, one of which is a replication of the Grameen Bank village phone program in Haiti. We are offering this course again in the fall 2008. I think this class is very thought-provoking. It has great discussions, and it has lots of controversial issues. We combine theory with practical subjects. We do this in the local, national, and international spheres. It provides an avenue for students to undertake their own research, identify a community site to study, and to share their research with key stakeholders in the Chicago community. It prepares students to go out and help people around the world.
Hi everyone: as part of the Community Informatics class at Dominican University, I did my field work case study at the Chicago Anti-hunger Federation.

Jan A. Rodgers, MSW, LCSW, BCD, brings over 35 years of micro, mezzo and macro levels of social work experience to her teaching at Dominican University’s Graduate School of Social Work as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Professor Rodgers was a Specialist Professor at Monmouth University in New Jersey in the Department of Social Work from 2000-2004. She has taught Foundation and Advanced Social Work Practice Courses, Advanced Field Practicum Courses, Human Behavior and Social Environment, Practice Evaluation, and Family Centered Policy in a Global Context. Research interests include human trafficking, the library as part of the social service network, community informatics, the use of technology in International Field Placements, social service agencies and international community development, spirituality and social work, teaching approaches to group work practice, self help industry in advanced social work practice, and international social work. She has her MSW from the University of Pennsylvania and graduates in May 2008 from the MLIS Program at Dominican University.
Why I took the course?

• As a social worker I wanted to learn how information and technology can impact domestic and international community development.

As a social worker, one reason I took this course was that I wanted to learn how information technology could impact domestic and international community development.

What I have learned?

• Librarians need social workers because they are not as familiar with the practice and knowledge skills in conducting community development projects and

• Social workers need librarians because they are not as aware of the positive impact of information and technology in social and community development.
What I have learned is how technology and innovation come together for librarians and social workers. What I have learned is that librarians need social workers, because they are not as familiar with the practice, values, and skills in conducting community development projects to bring about change. Social workers need librarians because they are not as aware of the positive impact of information and technology in social and community development.

Introduction

While wealth and prosperity flourishes, the fact remains that hunger remains a reality for many persons in America, especially Chicago.

We need to look at hunger and poverty in Chicago in the context of the state of Illinois and the nation to understand what the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation is up against. While all of us are involved in wealth and prosperity, the fact is that hunger and poverty remain a very stark reality for people in Chicago. Technology can assist Chicago in dealing with the issues of hunger.
Here is a list of factors leading to hunger in Chicago from the Report on Hunger and Homelessness in American Cities (2002). These include high housing costs, low paying jobs, unemployment, reduced public benefits, weakening of the economy, homelessness, mental health problems, substance abuse, lack of income, child care costs, limited life skills, medical and health costs.
The agency that I evaluated was the Chicago Anti-hunger Federation. I'd like us to take a quick peek by what we mean by food security and food insecurity in terms of the definition of hunger. Food security indicates that there are no food access problems. Food insecurity is divided into two areas: food insecurity without hunger and food insecurity with hunger. You can see now there are different levels of being hungry, whether it is low food security, or very low food security indicating reduced quality and variety of foods as well as reduced food intake or food disruption.

The USDA’s new definition says we are no longer hungry, just “food insecure,” thus minimizing the effects of hunger.
Some 11.9% of U.S. households are food insecure, because of the lack of resources. In 2004, 38.2 million people nationally lived in households of food insecurity, one-third with children. Over 13 million children, approximately 17.6% of all children in the United States live in poverty, and that figure in Illinois is 17.7% percent. Four hundred thousand people in Illinois are hungry. And 1.4 million are without regular access to food.
The above Chicago map indicates areas of unmet needs regarding hunger in Chicago. One-third of all Chicago area children live in poverty. The demand for food pantries has tripled and 43% of those individuals receiving emergency food assistance are under seventeen years of age. Only 90,000 children out of 450,000 students in the Chicago Public Schools receive breakfast. The prevalence of food insecurity increased from 11.2% to 11.9% in 2004 and reportable hunger rose from 3.5% to 3.9%.
Food system includes both private and public sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illinois Hunger Coalition Hunger Hotline</th>
<th>Greater Chicago Food Depository</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>showed a 45% increase in calls</td>
<td>showed a 12% increase for food requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% are families with children</td>
<td>1/3 served are children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation
2006- 438,070 people served
2007- 632,456 people served
– Meals are up by approximately 800,000


Within the city of Chicago we have three major agencies that compose the food distribution system, which includes the private and public sector: the Illinois Hunger Coalition Hunger Hotline, Greater Chicago Food Depository, and Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation. All three agencies indicate an increase in calls and food requests and meals served and calls, requests and meals served continue to rise. Four programs within the Chicago-Anti-Hunger Federation are impacted by community informatics.
4 Areas Impacted by Community Informatics

1. The Food Development Program
   http://www.antihunger.org/

2. Westside Providers Network
   http://www.westsideproviders.org/

3. Oliver’s Kitchen

4. Project Newtrition

Interview with Daniel Gibbons, Executive Director, and Sister Donna Preston (MSW)

There were four areas of the agency that were reviewed, the Food Development Program—the Healthy Food Distribution program, the Westside Providers Network, Oliver’s Kitchen, and Project Newtrition. The food distribution program distributes 130,150 meals each month and serves over 3.6 million meals per year to children and family members. They have a huge database for 151 certified agencies. There are 61 shelters, 70 food pantries, and 20 day care centers. The agency is inundated with many statistics and demographics on the agency’s supplies, the number and type of foods, and the number of meals. The agency has a need for databases that can assist in budgeting and grant funding.
Mission and Aim

• “To alleviate hunger in metropolitan Chicago through the distribution of high-quality food, education, advocacy, culinary arts and other employment training”

The number of meals the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation serves is up by approximately 800,000 from 2006 to 2007. The mission and aim of the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation is to alleviate hunger in Chicago through distribution of high-quality food, education advocacy, and culinary arts training.
Framework for Evaluating Community Informatics

Five areas:

• strong democracy,
• social capital,
• individual empowerment,
• sense of community and
• economic development opportunities.

(O'Neil, 2002)

The framework (O’Neill, 2002) used for evaluating community informatics focused on five areas: strong democracy, social capital, individual empowerment, sense of community, and economic development opportunities. The framework is as follows and was used to evaluate each of the four departments of the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation:
Framework Defined

- 1) **Strong democracy.** Includes theories of increasing democratic participation with meaningful association of citizens with in a civic community.
- (2) **Social capital.** Includes features of social organization such as social networks, norms, trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit.
- (3) **Individual empowerment.** Includes discussions of information literacy and ICT access for disadvantaged communities so that all people have opportunities for meaningful participation in an increasing digitized society.
- (4) **Sense of community.** Includes discussions of increasing community involvement and commitment to geographic communities.
- (5) **Economic development opportunities.** Includes theories about the use of ICTs to encourage economic activity.
- (O’Neil, 2002)

Each component of the framework is further defined below:

Use Of Theories of Outcomes Framework for CAHP

- **strong democracy** -level of two-way communication through face to face and Web faced presence;

- **social capital** -level regarding social networks within communities where people are linked with machines locally and remotely that indicate a level of trust and co-ordination and cooperative levels of mutual benefit;
• **individual empowerment**- level of empowerment-
  “ability of people to gain understanding and control over personal, social, economic, and political factors in order to take action to improve their life situation” which can include capacity building and the use and access of technology to empower individuals;

• **sense of community**- level regarding the facilitation of communication among community members to connect disconnected communities;

• **economic development** - level regarding the use of ICTs and economic sustainability. (O’Neil, 2002)

---

**Food Development Program:**

**Strengths and Recommendations**

• Need tracking system of each agency for numbers of families, meals, ethnicity, those not served and why

• Need system to share resources with food banks, pantries, and shelters

• Community is resistant to collaboration, sharing resources and networking. Needs more face to face communication

• Need asset-based community development and community mapping with boundaries

• Need use and access of technology to empower others.

• Low capacity building, Has a web page

---

The Federation is very sensitive to the hunger needs and needs of the poor, and really desire that their clients become self-sufficient. Utilizing O’Neil’s framework (2002) the following recommendations for the food development program includes a
need for a tracking system at each agency for tallying the number of families, meals, and ethnicities of those who are not served and why they are not served; a need for a system to share resources, food banks, pantries, and shelters. At this point the community is very resistant to collaboration, sharing of resources and networking, particularly in the Austin area. Face to face communication is essential. They also need asset-based community development and community mapping. They need decent access and use of technology to empower others. There is very little capacity building for outreach in this program. The program does have a web page.

The second program of the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation is the Westside Providers Network. The Westside Providers Network was one reason why I wanted to evaluate this program for community informatics. I had heard about this particular aspect of the agency, which consists of 75 nonprofit agencies that serve the West Side of Chicago. And basically it is a group that has a network regarding issues that are not as much related to actual food issues, but more about other issues, such as healthcare or housing. It fills a gap and it addresses issues of sustainability. The providers’ network is working entirely via the Internet and provides a place for information and referral.
They actually did a first-year survey of their Westside Providers Network to see how the website is being used in terms of the technology and the tools and the results are still pending.

**Strengths and Recommendations**

- Quarterly face to face meetings- attendance at meetings has almost doubled in nine months
- High Web presence- needs two way communication on the Web
- High community usage of social networks and referrals
- Easy access to providers but not for clients
- High level of motivation for networking
- Network wants more assistance
Utilizing O’Neil’s framework (2002) the following recommendations for the Westside Providers Network are that they have face to face meetings, 75 to 80 agencies come together on a quarterly basis. There is a high level of Web presence, but it really needs two-way communication—right now it is only going one way. There is high community usage of social networking and referrals. It is easily accessible for the providers, but not for the clients. The clients really do not have access to the network, but there is a high level of motivation for networking and the network wants and needs assistance.

The third program of the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation is Oliver’s Kitchen. Oliver’s Kitchen is a culinary arts program with 18–20 students. This program prepares the unemployed and underemployed, welfare-to-work individuals, ex-offenders, and recovering addicts for a career in the food industry. These individuals become independent, self-sufficient, and capable of seeking employment.
Oliver’s Kitchen: Strengths and Recommendations

- High face to face communication
- Strong financial and food contributions
- Supplies information on the Web
- Strong sense of community and collaboration with agencies
- Partnerships with Culinary Institute of Chicago (CHIC) and financial supporters
- Provides a training program for the disadvantaged
- Commitment to sustainability of job and career
- Needs greater Web presence and marketing of program

Utilizing O’Neil’s framework (2002) the following strengths and recommendations for the Oliver’s Kitchen includes a high level of face-to-face communication, and strong financial and food contributions. It supplies information on the web, and it has a real strong sense of community. It collaborates with agencies, and has a partnership with the Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago. It also has supporters, a training program, as well as a commitment to community sustainability. However, Oliver’s Kitchen needs a greater Web presence and marketing of the program.
The third program of the Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation is Project Newtrition. Project Newtrition runs a program at the agency. They look at nutritional choices and budgeting and try to attack the problem of obesity and heart disease. There is a partnership through the Illinois Hunger Coalition with the Illinois Department of Human Services, with the Diabetes Educators Chicago- American Association of Diabetes Educators (DECAADE) and Dominican University GSSW to create curriculum for the nutritional program. Project Newtrition is based on Mari Gallagher’s work regarding food deserts in Chicago area, which she actually measures the distance of every block of Chicago to the nearest grocery store and fast food restaurant in terms of poverty as it relates to obesity and diabetes.
Utilizing O’Neil’s framework (2002) the following strengths and recommendations for Project Newtrition include a need for a database and tracking system for individual progress, food use, recipes, information about diabetes and use of support services. There is also a need for community mapping and asset mapping of different locations of fresh food and produce. They need linkage with the local library. Project Newtrition is a new program that needs funding—there is no web presence at this point.
Lessons Learned

- The Hunger Problem in Cook County and Chicago is huge.
- **One plan** for the city of Chicago needs to be developed and implemented to decrease duplication and gaps in service with:
  - Greater Chicago Food Depository and
  - Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation
  - Illinois Hunger Coalition
  - University of Illinois at Chicago's Center for Urban Economic Development studied Cook County and identified community “gap” areas where the distribution of emergency and supplemental food does not meet the need of individuals and families. These areas include:
    - Austin, East Garfield Park, Englewood, Humboldt Park, Ford Heights/Chicago Heights, Greater Grand Crossing, North Lawndale, Steger/Sauk Village, Washington park and West Garfield Park
- Context of **policy making** is non-inclusive to all agencies involved in the process

Lessons learned: The Hunger Problem within the city of Chicago and in Cook County is huge. Chicago needs one plan to deal with the hunger problem in the city. The city needs to decrease duplication and gaps in service in working with the hungry. The agencies involved are not working together and are competing for resources. Gap areas in Chicago include Austin, East Garfield Park, Englewood, Humboldt Park, Ford Heights/Chicago Heights, Greater Grand Crossing, North Lawndale, Steger/Sauk Village/Washington Park and West Garfield Park. Policy-making is non-inclusive to all agencies involved in solving the hunger problem. There is a lack of coordination between different agencies regarding the distribution of emergency and supplemental food.
The Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation needs and wants help. Asset-based community development and community mapping is essential on all levels for all parts of the agency. Resource jealousies among the major agencies dealing with hunger within Chicago are competing for resources and thus duplication of services and disorganization is huge. The “silo response” is operating and each agency provides services on an individual basis without collaboration. In other words each is “doing their own thing.”. Community networking is needed, along with more trained personnel in information technology, and more trained personnel in human development to help the hungry in the city of Chicago. Community informatics could definitely assist this city in this crucial matter.
Empowering teens through technology: A look at Intel Computer Clubhouse—Donna Dohnalek

Teens and youth in underserved communities often don’t receive opportunities for learning and advancement in areas of technology. Many low income households cannot afford the luxury of owning a computer, paying for monthly internet fees, or downloading the newest software programs. One group, however, has the vision to give underserved youth a chance to learn computer skills. It’s the Computer Clubhouse and it’s giving underserved youth a chance to empower themselves through technology.

The flagship Computer Clubhouse began in Boston in 1993 by the Computer Museum, which is now part of the Museum of Science, in partnership with the MIT Media Lab. Their vision was to provide youth ages 10 – 18 in underserved communities with adult mentors and the computer tools to explore areas such as in art, technology, and science – all for free.

The Computer Clubhouse has a network of over 115 sites in twenty-one countries. There is also a website (www.computerclubhouse.com) which is maintained by the flagship Clubhouse. According to their website, the Clubhouse is guided by four principles: To encourage members to be constructionists and be an inventor, designer, and creator; To work on projects of individual interest; To create a sense of community between members and adult mentors; To offer resources and opportunities to those who would not usually have access to them. The goal is to give its members the opportunity to become creators, not just consumers of technology.

Computer Clubhouse receives support from an array of corporate and regional sponsors. Corporate supporters include: The Intel Corporation, Adobe Systems, The Lego Group, Corel Corporation, Autodesk, Inc., Haworth Furniture, Inc., The National Science Foundation, and Harmony Line. Regional support and funding include: Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley (AZ), City of Chicago, City of Detroit, Department of Recreation and Community Services in Fairfax County, VA, Fundación Compartir (Columbia), Intel, Mariano Rivera, and Equal Footing Foundation. Over the course of five years Intel has invested $32 million in global sponsorships to the Computer Clubhouse Network, and software companies such as Adobe, Corel, Macromedia, Autodesk, and Procreate have delegated over $10 million to the Network in software and services. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has also been involved with the Computer Clubhouse Network.

Monies from funding are directed toward staffing and purchasing computers, scanners, equipment, and the instillation of professional level software tools in the areas of graphic and web design, writing, music, robotics, programming, and video editing. Each computer at a Computer Clubhouse contains the following programs:

---

Donna Dohnalek is a Library Associate with Chicago Public Library and is working towards her MSLIS at Dominican. She is interested in public librarianship and working with teens. Her CI interests include how to bridge the digital divide in the disabled community (ddohnalek@chipublib.org).
- **Graphic/Design/Animation**: Adobe programs - Illustrator, Acrobat, After Effects, InDesign, Pagemaker, and Photoshop; Credo INT Lifeforms; Mindscape KID PIX Deluxe; Corel Draw and Painter; Broderbund Printshop Deluxe; Unlead Face Factory; Macromedia programs – Director MX, Flash, Fireworks, Freehands.
- **3D programs**: Autodesk: 3D Studio Max & Plug-Ins; Corel Bryce 4; Curious Labs Poser; Havas Home Architect.
- **Writing**: Microsoft Creative Writer; Office XP Pro.
- **Web Design**: Adobe GoLive; Macromedia Dreamweaver.
- **Music and Sound**: Cakewalk Sonar XL; Mixman Technologies Mixman Studio Pro.
- **Robotics and Science Exploration**: Sierra Havas Incredible Machine; LEGO Mindstorms Robotics Discovery Set.
- **Video Editing**: Adobe Premiere; Unlead Video solution.

These programs allow its members to create digital artwork, design websites, and write, create, and produce videos and CDs.

In early 2006, the Intel Corporation donated money to launch four Intel Computer Clubhouses in the Chicago area. Each Clubhouse is located within an already existing community service agency: Austin YMCA, in the southwest area of Metropolitan Chicago; Howard Area Community Center, in northeast Chicago; Annie B. Jones (ABJ) Community Service, in the South Shore neighborhood; and Westside Youth Technical Entrepreneur Center (WYTEC), which serves the West Garfield community. Intel had provided a $75,000 grant to the Howard Area Community Center which was enough to hire staff and fund the Clubhouse for one year. Currently, the Howard Area Community Center maintains funding for the Clubhouse through fundraisers, state and private donations, and through the handful of volunteers who donate their time to assist the members.

I had the chance to visit the Howard Area Community Center’s Intel Computer Club, located at 1527 W. Morse Avenue in the Rogers Park neighborhood. Rogers Park is considered to be the most ethnically diverse neighborhood in the city. The housing within this community is comprised of mostly rental properties. Housing shortages in the 1940’s resulted in the subdivision of large apartments into smaller ones, thus increasing the population. Eventual deterioration of the buildings lowered the monthly rent and brought in a lower income populace. As a result, social service agencies began emerging in the neighborhood to provide assistance to those in need. The incorporation of the Intel Computer Clubhouse in this neighborhood allows the underserved youth a chance to develop and hone technology skills as well give them an edge for a future that they might not have had.

The Howard Area Computer Clubhouse is within walking distance, or a short ride on public transportation, for students at Gale and Jordan Elementary schools, Chicago Math & Science Middle School, and Sullivan High School. Also nearby is the United Church of Rogers Park, which has an active youth group. Across is the street is another youth assistance program called The Zone, which is also funded by the Howard Area Community Center, and provides tools for healthy living as well as educational assistance to the areas youth.
To gain entry into the Clubhouse you must ring the bell and be buzzed in from the street. Security is tight, so if you are not a recognized member you will likely be approached by a staff member inquiring about your intentions there. Staff members try to bond with the neighborhood youth population and are eager to sign new members up. The lobby is painted a lilac color, and although the walls are chipped in many places, it still gives you a calming sense. Photocopies of the members’ artwork line the walls around the lobby and up stairs into the Clubhouse. The Clubhouse has fourteen computers spread out among seven tables. Attached to each computer are computer microscopes, which allow the user to magnify images into their creations. This feature is often used by new younger members. There is a scanner located at one table, and one internet station located along the wall on its own small desk. The “recording studio” has a computer, electric keyboard, microphone, and technical sound equipment. There are enough chairs for three people to be working together in the studio. A large screen monitor is available to view video productions.

The Howard Area Intel Computer Clubhouse is open weekdays from 3 to 7 p.m. and members can drop in and stay in the Clubhouse as long as they are working on a creative project or homework. Members must be engaged in an activity. If they are not actively working on a project staff will offer some kind of encouragement or prompt to get them started. If that doesn’t work, the member will be asked to leave and to come back when they feel like working. Members must adhere to a Code of Conduct which they read and sign when they join the Clubhouse. The Code specifically states that members may not use profanity, insight violence or vandalism, or disrespect any other members while at the Clubhouse. There are also specific rules about internet use. Since the original goal of the Computer Clubhouse it to provide the tools for creative outlets, internet use is for research purposes only and for a set amount of time – usually about 15 minutes. No email or social networking is allowed in the Clubhouse. These rules help to ensure that the Clubhouse remains a safe place for local youth to explore their creativity and focus on their work.

After signing the Code of Conduct and returning a signed permission form from a parent or guardian, the new member can now begin their own computer portfolio. The password protected portfolios can be accessed from any computer within the Clubhouse (each Clubhouse is autonomous, so portfolios can only be viewed within the member’s “home” Clubhouse).

There are currently 215 members in the Howard Area Intel Computer Clubhouse. Although not all members return (there is no expiration on membership so they are welcome back anytime) there are many who are monthly and even daily visitors. These members have very active portfolios which include some in depth projects. On average, there are around fifteen members working at the Clubhouse on a daily basis.

One young woman, Char (her name has been changed to protect anonymity), who is a senior in high school showed me her portfolio during my observation. Char first heard about the Intel Computer Clubhouse from another youth service agency she participates in. Her portfolio is extensive and she shows exceptional work. She learned how to sew her own clothes from her Grandmother and has drawn several original designs on paper. Char brings the designs to the Clubhouse, scans them into the computer and edits it. Char would like to start her own clothing line someday and was designing a web page the day I visited. She was also finishing up a tri-fold brochure about her
potential clothing line. The software programs offered to her through the Intel Computer Clubhouse has given her computer knowledge and the creative freedom which sparked an interest in getting a business degree. She is looking forward to starting college next year.

Not all members are planning for the future, however. Many of the members simply enjoy experimenting with the Photoshop program (this is evident from all the work displayed in the walls) or trying out new ways to mix sound in the recording studio. Some members bring in their poetry and work with others to incorporate it with music. Completed projects can be shared via the Computer Clubhouse intranet, which is a members-only forum in which to share projects, ideas, and techniques with other members all over the world.

A handful of members have had the vision and persistence to create short films, many of which can be viewed on YouTube. The films range from stories about basketball and conflict resolution to a young woman’s poetic narrative, set to rap music, about the respect she has for her neighborhood and her people. The videos are written, performed, and produced by the members. Staff and volunteers assist with equipment and transportation, but the conception of the product comes solely from the youth.

The Clubhouse follows the belief that children and young adults learn most effectively by doing, rather than memorizing. Therefore, there isn’t any formal instruction by staff, but rather enough of a tutorial to get the member started on their chosen project. Staff and volunteers allow the members to explore and learn on their own, yet remain close enough to answer questions when they arise. The Clubhouse strives to foster an informal, learner-centered approach that empowers members to create what interests them.

Outreach to the community is in conjunction with other social services and with the public schools in the neighborhood. Many of the youth in the area find their way to the Intel Computer Clubhouse through The Zone, which is another youth outreach program offered by the Howard Area Community Center. All the youth programs are designed to give underserved youth the tools to get off the streets and increase their success in life. This includes tools for healthy living, life and social skills, work and career preparation, and education, such as tutoring. The Clubhouse offers members a chance to learn and become active in the world of technology. The hope is to educate future IT workers.

The Computer Clubhouse is a successful example of how giving underserved youth the artistic freedom to explore and create with technology gives them the tools to succeed.

References

   http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1086.html
   http://www.chicagotribune.com/classified/realestate/communities
Using the Internet to build networks of people focused on helping kids through school and into careers—

Daniel F. Bassill

In the session this morning, during the opening remarks, we were talking about how we create access to the Internet and how we get computers to work for everyone, and stuff like that. We raised questions such as, “How do we use the access to technology and learning centers and the information people can find on the Internet to solve problems?” Another was, “How do we help inner-city kids that live in high-poverty neighborhoods get access to programs like a computer clubhouse, or to tutoring and mentoring programs?” “How do we get those programs in all the different neighborhoods where they are needed, when leaders of the different programs are unequally able to get the resources needed to make those available?”

That’s the problem that I focus on in my role with the Tutor/Mentor Connection. My comments to eChicago focus on ways we can use the information on the Internet to solve the problem.

We often hear the Mayor of Chicago talking about education issues, gas prices and the Olympics, but I have yet to see Mayor Daley, or the president of a University, stand up in a forum like this and say, “The goal of my city, or my college, is that everyone born today is going to be earning a career-based salary by the time he is 25.”

Some of us are pushing kids to make good decisions that lead to jobs and careers, such as, parents, teachers and volunteer tutors. Any of us who have our own kids know that most kids don’t listen to us all the time. If someone is shooting at you when you are going to school, then you are listening a lot less. Unfortunately, that is a common situation for kids living in a high-poverty neighborhood.

On the other hand, how many people here work at a corporation? Oh, no one. Where are the business leaders? The business community is looking for kids to come to their companies to do 21st-century jobs, but what are they doing with their jobs and resources and their manpower to pull kids to careers? When I say “pull”, I mean, “What are they doing to help kids in elementary school learn, read, write, and think and have aspirations that help build motivations to learn?” What are they doing to provide money to fund these different things—computer club houses, tutor/mentor programs, and so on—all over the city, or in neighborhoods where they do business? What are they doing to help kids get higher grades, to provide part-time jobs and vocational training?

Daniel F. Bassill is President of Cabrini Connections and the Tutor/Mentor Connection, CC,T/MC. He is also a Commissioner on the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. Bassill has spent more than 30 years, mostly as a volunteer, leading organizations that connect workplace volunteers with inner-city youth living in neighborhoods like Cabrini-Green. Through the Tutor/Mentor Connection, Bassill leads an Internet-based learning strategy intended to draw needed resources to all volunteer-based tutor/mentor programs, including Cabrini Connections, in Chicago and other major cities. This strategy is based on knowledge management and marketing strategies that Bassill learned during 17 years as an advertising manager for the Montgomery Ward Corporation. Visit http://www.tutormentorconnection.org to see this strategy in action. Read Dan's Blog at http://tutormentor.blogspot.com.
Example 1. This graphic illustrates the idea of Push-Pull. Role of business is to use resources to pull kids through school into jobs.

When we talk about the potential of the Internet, how many people are using their web sites to describe their vision of a strategy that reaches kids in pre-school and stays connected until those kids are starting jobs? If you use the Internet to find ideas, you can search on Google for the words “education pipeline” and find many articles written by business leaders that talk of diversity pipelines, or career pipelines. These concepts represent a variety of different things that need to be happening to help kids move through school and into jobs. However, I've not found much information on the Internet yet to demonstrate strategies companies are using to make this happen in many locations, or near where they have facilities or customers.

When I talk about a strategy, I point people to the Tutor/Mentor Connection blog (http://tutormentor.blogspot.com). You can search for articles tagged “strategy” and “concept map” and see graphics like the one below (Example 2), illustrating strategies that many businesses and community leaders could follow.
Example 2. Focus all strategies on preparing youth for adult responsibilities and career roles.

Using the Internet, the Tutor/Mentor Connection is trying to draw together groups from all kinds of places that work towards helping kids who are in poverty get jobs and careers by age 25. We are going to need the on-going, and strategic involvement of many workplace volunteers and a wide distribution of comprehensive volunteer-base programs that reach youth in every high poverty part of the Chicago region.
Example 3. Village map illustrates goal of focusing all stakeholders on common goal.

One question that could be asked is “What do you mean by comprehensive?” My answer would be to say that if you work with first-grade kids, they need a bunch of support systems to help them move to the next grade. The greater the degree of poverty, the more support they need. This system needs to be age appropriate, and has to continue in second grade, in third grade. Youth in every poverty neighborhood need comprehensive adult support systems to continue in an age-appropriate way as they move from elementary school, to middle school and high school and on to college, and ultimately to a job and career. Thus, we’re talking about a system of comprehensive supports that need to be in place for each youth, in each neighborhood for as many as 25 years.

But do we, the public, have the will power to stay focused on such problems every day for so many years? Are we willing to provide the public and private funding for such a system? Mom and Dad are expected to make this commitment. Many struggle to do so, depending on what their economic situation is. Thus, how do we educate the rest of the community so they share this responsibility with parents?
If you take a map of Chicago that shows where the highest poverty neighborhoods, based on the latest census information, are located, then add overlays showing locations of poorly performing schools, you can see there is a correlation between poor schools and poor neighborhoods. This suggests that poorly performing schools are not necessarily the result of poorly performing teachers, but of other factors as well. Example 4 illustrates this. You can see more maps like this at [http://mappingforjustice.blogspot.com](http://mappingforjustice.blogspot.com)

We can use maps not only to show where the problem is, we can also use maps in our marketing mentality, and in our public education. If we use maps in planning, many leaders in different sections of the city can be asking what they need to do to help get comprehensive youth serving programs in all of those high poverty neighborhoods.

Since 1993 the Tutor/Mentor Connection has been building a database that includes any non-school organization that operates a structured, volunteer-based tutoring
and/or mentoring program in the Chicago region. This database is available on the Internet. You can search it to find contact information different types of tutoring/mentoring programs is specific zip codes. For instance if you were to say, “I want to find a program that offers tutoring and mentoring to senior high school kids.” You can pull down the zip code map, and search for programs in specific zip codes, such as 60610, and the list of programs in that area will show up on a new computer screen, with the location or programs potted on Google Maps as shown in Example 5.

Example 5. Program Locator shows programs on Google Map. See http://www.tutormentorprogramlocator.net/programlocator/prgloc.asp.

You can find this Program Locator at http://www.tutormentorconnection.org. If you are on the site live, when you scroll down below the map on this computer screen you will see basic contact information for the programs in this area and a web site link if they have one (see Example 6). Using the organization’s web site you can learn what services they provide and how volunteers and donors can support them, as well as how parents can get children enrolled.

If you are one of those programs listed in the Program Locator, you can edit your own information to keep it updated. If you operate a program in this neighborhood, but are not listed, you can add it. Thus, this is an example of how we can use the Internet to collecting information useful to people throughout the entire Chicago region, and how m
any owners can help keep the information updated on a regular basis. Through this service we are providing information that a volunteer can use, a parent can use, a donor can use.

Example 6. Program Locator shows contact information for programs listed on Google Map. See http://www.tutormentorprogramlocator.net/programlocator/prgloc.asp.

These maps and the Program Locator database can also be used as an analysis tool. For example, in Englewood, there are nearly 25,000 school aged kids (in zip code 60636 and 60621). The area has a high degree of poverty and many poorly performing schools. If you are using the Tutor/Mentor Program Locator, and click on the zip codes for this area, you wouldn’t find many volunteer-based tutor/mentor programs. Yet, if you were to look at a map showing faith groups in Chicago (Example 7), you’d see many faith-based locations in the Englewood area. Many could be hosts for tutor/mentor programs. Others, including faith groups in the affluent suburbs, could be partners helping these programs find volunteers, obtain funding, and recruit students.
Example 7. Each dot on this map is a location of a faith group in Chicago. This shows that there are plenty of meeting places for kids and volunteers in poverty neighborhoods. See maps like this at http://mappingforjustice.blogspot.com.
At the Tutor/Mentor Connection, we feel that responsibility for making tutor/mentor programs and expanded learning opportunities available to kids in high poverty neighborhoods should be accepted by the faith community, the businesses community, and all the different people who want to help those kids succeed in school and be holding jobs by the time they are in their mid 20s. We use our http://tutormentor.blogspot.com articles to share these ideas on a daily basis. Example 8 is an example of how a map can focus on a smaller part of Chicago, such as on a state senate district.

Example 8. This map of the 15th Illinois State Senate District can be used by business, religious or elected leaders to mobilize members of the community to support the growth of tutor/mentor programs in the community.

The map is a unifying tool. And the website is a unifying tool. By putting these on the Internet, anyone can use this information to invite people from the 15th Illinois Senate district to learn more about the problems facing kids and families in that district and to become more active in solutions.

While the Tutor/Mentor Connection focuses on one kind of youth service, community and business leaders could use maps to help show where other needed family services, such as computer technology centers, are located, and to find different programs
and services in different neighborhoods. The [http://www.tutormentorconnection.org](http://www.tutormentorconnection.org) website has a map (diagram) of the library, and includes links to more than 200 different youth serving programs. There is a mountain of information that parents, youth, community leaders, volunteers, businesses and other stakeholders can use to collaborate.

This mountain of information is represented by web links to more than 1500 web sites, organized into specific categories, which makes it easier to search for sites that kids can use for homework help, volunteers and parents can use for tutoring and mentoring tips, and program leaders and board members can use for fund raising and program organization strategies. This represents information and ideas that people are already applying in some part of the country. They are using their web sites to share what they know. Anyone in Chicago can learn new ideas for helping kids by using the T/MC library on the Internet, if you know where to go and if someone is helping you.

There are thousands of people interested in helping kids and working to make life better. Most of us do not know each other. Most of the people attending the eChicago event have never met before, and never will meet again. Yet, there is no reason why all of us can’t be talking together as often as we want to, using the Internet as a meeting place.

In the eChicago discussions today we have talked about ways to help students get together. I think this is important. But if the students can get together with other students, or with volunteers, through a page in Facebook or on some other Internet forum, they might be able to stay connected to each other for the rest of their lives. And that to me is creating access.
Example 8. Join with each other on forums such as http://tutormentorconnection.ning.com.

Using the Internet to connect the people who could help (e.g. volunteers, donors, mentors, tech support, leaders, etc.) with the people who need help (e.g. youth, families,
non profits, etc.) is an ongoing process. It is an intentional process which needs to be adopted by leaders in business, education, healthcare, religion, media, and government (see Example 8).

If leaders combine face-to-face meetings with online interaction and information, and with a constant network-building effort, we can begin to see more people, with more knowledge, working in more places to solve some of the problems that have been addressing in this 2008 eChicago forum. I hope that by reading this you will be inspired to join the Tutor/Mentor Connection on-line, with a goal of connecting people in your own network, with us, and people in our network.

Thank you.
Reuse is a real hardware alternative—Willie Cade

Let me do something a little bit differently in this process. Rather than think about what happens once you get to the Internet, I want to talk about getting there. And I run a company called PC Rebuilders & Recyclers. We used to be called Computers for Schools. What we found was that was a way of limiting identification for us, because what we actually do is we take and collect the electronic waste stream that we all create, and try to divert it to reuse.

Something I’d like to tell you about is our laptop, which Linux based, not Windows based. With Linux being such a significantly more efficient operating system, we can take hardware that you would otherwise think is not up to snuff, and make it really usable pieces. Our desktop versions start at $99 at retail, and this laptop is $200. This nice part about this is for every system that you take out of the waste stream and reuse for two years, it is the carbon equivalent of taking one car off the road for a year.

We find that the average computer, a CPU, is 9.4 years old during our e-waste collection events. That is very old. It is estimated that people are using their machines for 6 years. So they must be putting them in their closets. That means they are storing them for 3, maybe 4, or maybe 5 years. Therefore I believe that they don’t know how to get rid of not just the computer but more importantly the information in the computer. So what our charge is right now, with the city of Chicago, is to become and create robust methods for people to get rid of their old equipment, where they feel safe doing it.

Right now, we man what is known as the Goose Island Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Center. This facility is open on the first Saturday of the month, as well as Tuesdays in the morning and Thursdays in the afternoon until 7pm. Earth Day is April 22nd and there will be a number of e-waste collection events. We are working with Whole Foods, we are with 7 out of the 16 stores in the Chicago area— on Earth Day we will actually have collection capability at the stores. And if someone brings in a system, Whole Foods will give them a $5 coupon on their next $25 purchase.

The other thing that is really interesting about this e-waste situation now is that throughout the United States, state by state, not federally, but state by state, there is legislation that is requiring manufacturers to pay for end-of-life disposal of this equipment. I think right now there are 11 states that have passed legislation, including Illinois. Basically what happens is the state, or contractors for the state, will collect these electronics, and they will put together a bill, based on a percentage of what is collected, and send that bill to the manufacturer, which is a pretty Draconian methodology actually. The state of Maine will probably be the first one to start sending the bills out. And by the way, they are also including TVs in this. Because of the 2009 switchover or the elimination of the channels as we know them, there’s a big concern. There is going to be

Willie Cade started working on the issue of bridging the Digital Divide back in 1996. The hobby became a fulltime occupation in 2000. Today his company PC Rebuilders & Recyclers (PCRR) is one of the première refurbishers in the United States. They are so confident in their refurbished product that they offer a 3 year warranty on the hardware. International aid organizations seek out their equipment for their relief efforts. Over the years he has taught introductory and intermediate computer application classes and even today he spends a few days a month staffing his companies 800 support line. (williecade@gmail.com)
a lot of that. I’m quite sure it’s going to come that far. People will pretty resourceful in getting the translation boxes and those kind of things.

But in Illinois Dell Computer enjoys about 16.7% of the take back share—I should say in Chicago. I mean 16.7% of the take back share by weight. So if the currently envisioned legislation passes, there would be a $1.2 million bill that the state of Illinois would send to Dell. Now why would Dell pay that? If they don’t pay it, they are not going to be able to sell their equipment in this state. So it is a pretty big stick that they got going there.

I have been working on this kind of legislation since 2001, when it was it was known back then as NESPI, National Electronic Steward Product Initiative. The manufacturers have been tenacious, let’s put it that way, in fighting this battle, but they are losing it quickly at this point. About ten years ago, 30 million PCs were sold in the United States. This year, 2008, 80 million PCs will be sold in the United States. I talk about 10 years ago, because that is currently the stream that is coming. But if you start to create a safe environment where people are actually getting rid of this equipment, you are going to start to get, in a year and a quarter, year and a half, two years, you are going to start to get some real volume of equipment. The issue obviously is the toxic chemicals, primarily the lead that is in monitors. That could or would go into landfills. Interestingly enough, and we don’t know the numbers on this, a lot of this stuff goes overseas. It gets containerized and goes overseas for reuse. For example, we are working with the World Computer Exchange, who has asked us to put together literally a container of equipment, which turns out to be 300 units. They are going to send this container to Nigeria, they are going to fly someone over to meet the container, they will open the container, and then refurbish and reuse that equipment on-site. Environmentally, there is a problem with what happens when they done with it. My analogy is that we really don’t talk to people about food aid, and worry about their sanitation conditions. We want to feed them first.

So our job in this process is to take and divert the stream of equipment that we have that is no longer useful to us, and repurpose it. We do it in three basic ways. We reuse whole systems as-is. And we can do it either with the Windows operating system, if the technology is advanced enough, or we can do it with a Linux operating system. We can also reuse the equipment as parts or as material recovery. One of the things that is actually really exciting to me about this, the new product that we launched April 1st which is called the Zombu system, is that it will be available in any retail store that wants to sell it. Right now our refurbishing efforts by Microsoft are limited to certain items but now this opens up everything. So actually, I was just thinking of Tutor/Mentor Connection, to say to the tutors, “Gee, for $100—in fact give them a $10 discount off that $100 bucks—the mentors could actually get a computer for the kids, and put it in their homes. That would be great. Or how about if you sign up for Comcast cable TV, we will set you up with a computer for free, and your Internet access. Try it and see how it works. The model that I am trying to move towards, as what I think is a very successful model of implementation, is the cell phones. Very few people actually buy a cell phone today—what they buy is a connection, and they give you the cell phone. So those are the kinds of things we are trying to do to create this environment.

What are our needs in terms of community informatics? We need to know how to talk to those people. We need to know how to get to, if you will, our customer. They need to know what we do, and that we do it really well. We have a three-year hardware
warranty that we provide on all of our equipment. So if you buy hardware from us, we
will warranty it for three years, which is obviously much longer than a manufacturer’s
warranty. And we also have 800 number technical support. Coming back to my
philosophy on training people, in this kind of environment I don’t think classroom
training is the way we need to go. I think we need to have real-time accessible support for
individuals for when they need help—and we do that on a 1-800 basis. It’s interesting to
watch, over the last 7 years, the change that has happened in our calls, from people
saying, “What do you mean, right click or left click?” to now they are starting to ask
questions like, “I got infected with a virus. I need to reimage my system—how can I do
that?” And we actually have a process so that they can do that as any user at home, and
reset all the software back to the original factory settings.
2010 Digital Literacy Collaboration Project with CTCs and CPLs—Licia Knight

Lumity is a non profit organization formerly the IT Resource Center. Lumity means “illuminate the community.” Our mission is to be a catalyst for the nonprofit community to do more good work by increasing the capacity of charitable organizations to more effectively fulfill their missions. enable nonprofits to operate more effectively and efficiently and to build capacity in philanthropic areas and organizational areas as well. Our motto is: “1 organization that enables 100s of nonprofits to brighten 1000s of lives in the community.” Today I will share a practical experience with you, a collaboration between community technology centers and the Chicago public libraries. Lahesha Williams, the project’s Coordinator has joined me today.

The project pairs CTCs and Chicago Public Libraries (CLs) to combine workforce development programs with libraries public internet access, and to incorporate the skill-based Internet Core Computing Certification (IC3) which infuses digital literacy, job readiness, and job placement. This three-year project serves several communities, West Humboldt Park, Austin, Uptown, and the Southeast Chicago community area, bringing digital literacy and workforce development services to about 3000 underserved Chicagoans. Lumity serves as the capacity builder, providing processes, tools, training, staffing and key performance indicators that help community technology centers in employment training. The participating CTCs include Alternatives (Uptown), Chicago Commons (West Humboldt Park), Hispanic Housing Development Corporation (Humboldt Park), and Southeast Chicago Development Commission (Southeast Chicago).

Today, I will illustrate the project plan and timeline to share the three year project plan. In our first year, we concentrated on planning and research as well as identifying key community technology centers and Chicago public library pairs that we were connected to providing community technology training and services. We focused on those pairs by developing a focus group, to determine the collaboration tools and services, as well as to understand the existing programs within the CTCs and CPLs. We also created a curriculum and a training model to actually infuse in Lumity instructors to teach the digital literacy curriculum in each of the four communities. We set specific goals for each of the years as well as our partners, Chicago Commons, Alternatives, Inc., HHDC (Hispanic Housing Development Corporation), and the Southeast Chicago Development Commission.

Licia Knight directs services for the Community Centers of Excellence program, which includes the Community Technology Center partners, and oversees digital literacy skill-based training, workforce development and youth services within technology centers, and digital inclusion services. Her skills include technology planning, program management, and service delivery expertise. Licia has over 20 years of experience in information technology consulting and training and applies this management experience to creating vital, mission-driven organizations throughout Chicago. One of Licia’s major initiatives is the 2010 Digital Literacy Collaboration Project. The multi-year project is designed to create collaboration between Lumity, local Community Technology Centers, and the Chicago Public Library to bring internet based learning and services to thousands of underserved people in Chicago. (lknight@lumity.org)
I’d also like to spend today illustrating the digital literacy training tiers used in the project. There are four major tiers, Computer Basics, Job Readiness, Vocational Training and finally the Certification training for IC3. Each of the tier training uses the IC3 curriculum to prepare community residents or participants to take the certification in the last tier. Each tier also requires the participant to meet a particular outcome. For example, in our computer basic training, the participant must know all the components of the computer and complete the course with a 75% accuracy in computer keyboarding.

We use the library to demonstrate the instructional learning approaches and for self study. Each participant must use the library to prepare for the IC3 exams, during independent study time. And we use our Internet and Core Computer Certification training to ensure that community libraries and community technology centers can use them in both locations. One particular tool is for e-learning and the Internet, and there are
several games associated with this as well. It walks a person through how to use the World Wide Web.

I’d also like to share the project achievements. We try to use a variety of tools to encourage digital literacy, and we are now four months ahead of schedule. Two of our community technology centers, Alternatives, Inc. and Hispanic Housing Development Corporation, have forged ahead to work within the Chicago public schools as well as within the public library. Our community technology centers are very excited to be a part of this collaboration. And our trainer instruction has proven to be very effective. What have found both staff and management at HHDC and the Humboldt Park CPL were very engaged in the program. We were able to replicate this project in Humboldt Park after starting our first pilot in West Humboldt Park with Chicago Commons and West Chicago CPL. Chicago Commons and the West Chicago public libraries have shown a 15% increase in retention rates which is great. To date our community impact has been at 760, which shows that 760 people have benefited within 3 various communities throughout the Chicago area, through our digital literacy collaboration project. Those numbers are definitely awesome. Thank you for the opportunity to share our story.
Five themes of Chicago's eGovernment: Digitizing information, making it accessible, automating transactions, streamlining operations, and boosting productivity—Douglas Hurdelbrink

I’m very happy to be here and have an opportunity to talk a little bit about what we’re doing in the city in the realm of eGovernment. It is, or can be a very vast area, so I’m going to kind of fly by at a fairly high level and touch on several themes that I think we’re going to be pursuing over the next few years, and I’ll mention, hopefully, a lot of examples that you’ll be able to relate to and understand in terms of what the city is currently doing and what we foresee doing in the near future.

So I pulled out a few facts about Chicago. I’m sure most of you already know this: third largest city in the U.S.; 2.8 million residents, a little over 1 million households; 1.4 million registered vehicles; 270 square miles in area, 31 miles of lakefront; around 700,000 buildings in the city; somewhere north of 200,000 businesses. We’re the headquarters for 20 Fortune 500 corporations. In terms of infrastructure, the statistics are pretty interesting in the city. We have 200,000 streetlights, 67,000 alley lights and over 2,700 traffic intersections that have been signalized. Five hundred thousand trees are planted in the parkways that are maintained by the Forestry Department. We’ve got 2,000 miles of paved alleys, which is the largest number of alley miles in the United States, and I’m sure most of you know Chicago is the U.S. applicant city for the Summer Olympics in 2016.

A little bit about the Chicago government: there are 53 elected officials, the mayor, the city clerk, and the city treasurer. The city’s broken up into 50 wards, so there are 50 aldermen elected from each ward—aldermen and alderwomen. The city government itself, at least the part of the government that reports up to the mayor and the executive branch, consists of 45 different city departments. They cover a wide range of areas, but they generally kind of fall into the areas of public safety, which is police, fire, and emergency management. Public service and infrastructure includes streets and sanitation, forestry, the bureau of electricity, things like that. Human wellbeing, we have senior services, childcare services. Cultural affairs and special events fit in this category as well. Business services are for the business community in Chicago. Property services are for developers and building owners. And, of course, there are a variety of Internet support functions, HR, finance, budget, etc. There are currently about 37,000 employees who work for the city, and this is the branch of the city I’m in—the department of innovation and technology. We’re the central IT organization for these 45 departments. But there are sister agencies which have different taxing powers and legal statuses, so in

Douglas Hurdelbrink is the Deputy CIO-Software Development for the City of Chicago. In this role, he is responsible for the City’s internet website (www.cityofchicago.org), and a portfolio of approximately 50 web applications which serve the needs of Chicago residents, businesses and visitors, and streamline the internal operations of the City’s municipal government. Doug has over 25 years of technology leadership experience in a variety of corporate enterprises, including: Cingular Wireless, Ameritech, Centel Corporation, the Chicago Board Options Exchange and the Chicago Board of Trade Clearing Corporation.
the scope of what I’m talking about there, this doesn’t include the public schools, the
park districts, the housing authority, or the transit authority. The mayor has a stake and an
interest in all of those things, but our part of the executive branch does not.

One of the interesting aspects of eGovernment is the variety, the wide variety of
audiences that exist for any local government or government entity, so of course we’ve
got our residents, businesses, visitors. The city council, though, since we’re the executive
branch of the government, is also a constituent and a customer of ours. The news media,
of course. Community organizations, nonprofits, and foundations. Many other
government agencies, our sister agencies, Cook County and the state of Illinois, the
federal government, policy makers. We’re also subject to some legal mandates, so some
things that we do we’re legally bound to do. And of course there are many subgroups
within those categories.

So eGovernment tried to roll it up at a high level and make it simple and clear
what our aspirations are. Basically, we want to allow our customers and our constituents
to do everything that they need to do and everything that they want to do in an online
fashion in a way that’s most convenient and most amenable to their lifestyles. This is of
course an aspirational goal, and it’s going to take us a long time to get there, but it's a
pretty clear focus. I think anything that you can do in the real world, our goal is that we’ll
find a way to make that possible in the virtual world as well. The second goal—that is
certainly our objective with our external stakeholders outside the city government, but
internally, of course, we are also doing things that fall into the eGovernment category,
and our goal there is to really streamline the operation of the city government so that
what our constituents need to do, we can make that as quick, as inexpensive, and as
hassle-free as possible.

I’m going to delve a little bit into five particular themes, and this is one way that I
think about eGovernment. I’ve been with the city for about a year and a half now, and I
came from a variety of corporate software development organizations, and though I’ve
always worked with fairly large enterprises, I’ve certainly found that in the city of
Chicago, with the variety of internal and external customers that you have, it’s a much
different and a much more complex environment than a corporate or business
environment is.

The first of the five themes I’d like to talk a little bit about is digitizing
information. A lot of government operations are still paper bound and paper based, and so
converting those paper processes into digital or electronic records in some form or
fashion is still a task that, in many areas, lies before us. Providing transparent access to
the public information that we have, making it available anytime and anywhere, is a
theme that’s been percolating through the city for the last two or three years, and there
are now more and more nonprofit as well as private entities that are trying to kind of
harvest this public information that’s available and present it in an accessible and a
friendly way to users through either commercial or nonprofit websites. And as the
collector and the owner of a lot of that data, we, as a city, want to—it’s not so much a
matter of maintaining control of it—we want to participate in that process of exposing it
and making it available to people. Automating customer transactions is something that’s
been going on for several years, and this is really probably what a lot of people think of
as eGovernment. It’s basically being able to do things online that you used to have to go
to a city office to do. Streamlining internal operations, I’ll talk a little bit more about, and increasing employee productivity within the city.

So on digitizing information, I just want to talk briefly about three different kinds of data or three different ways of thinking about data. So structured content is what you would traditionally consider electronic databases, it’s very formal, it’s very well-defined data. A couple of examples of databases that we have been creating in the last couple of years that didn’t exist before are—one has to do with traffic accidents that occur in the city. I think this is about three or four years’ worth of data, but we have records from the police department of about 500,000—now it’s coming up on 600,000—traffic accidents that the police has captured records for in the city. That’s captured for police reporting. We have taken that data, and we also have a mapping database of the city which includes all the streets, all the buildings, all the intersections. So we’ve enriched that data based on the address at which the traffic accident occurred by identifying the nearest intersection to where that accident took place. That’s being used now by the Traffic Management Authority and the Office of Emergency Management and Communications to help plan out the expenditures for traffic signals and other public safety strategies to try to minimize the incidence of accidents or the severity of accidents.

Lobbyist registration records are another example. Anyone who is a registered lobbyist for the city needs to file a form and register themselves and declare what their affiliations are. That also started out as a 100 percent paper process. About two years ago we put a fairly significant investment into creating an electronic data input, data capture process in place. So now those lobbyist records are being captured in the database, and at this point we have a very good electronic searchable database of lobbyists. The entities that they represent and the ownership positions that they have in different businesses can change quite a bit, so every time one of those things happened it was a new filing process for the lobbyist. Now it’s much more convenient to update those records, when the lobbyist has not changed, but maybe the lobbyist’s affiliations or the organizations that that lobbyist represents have. In the prior system or in the paper world it would have been very difficult to integrate and capture the history of that kind of transaction. Now we’ve got it electronically captured so we have it in some kind of a digital form, and our next step is to actually deploy this capability externally so that law firms and lobbying agencies can do that input themselves. And then the information will be reviewed and approved by somebody in the city’s Board of Ethics to make sure that all the information is accurate and that it’s captured properly.

Unstructured content—I’ll go into a little bit more. In our case this is basically the information that we put out on our website that is not in a database format. Forms and documents is another big area where the city has many processes that are still very paper heavy. But this happened about three years ago, I think—the city has about $3 billion a year in contracts with third parties, and all of that information is publicly available. So rather than having organizations file Freedom of Information Act requests to access that information, which would require a lot of research and document shuffling, we now have a website where you can look up who the city vendors are, what contracts have been awarded to those vendors, and the record of the payments that have been made on those contracts.

We’re also starting—this just started in March of this year, I guess this is a new ordinance—public school, elementary school students in Chicago need to have a dental
examination once a year. The dental examination happens at the school. We’ve now created, and we’re actually populating a system where those dental records are scanned into a document management system so that we’ll have an electronic image of those records that will be a searchable database. These records need to be kept until each student is 18 years of age, I think, so we’re retaining this data for quite a long time. So again, instead of having warehouses full of paper we’re going to have databases and electronic records.

Access to information: the city’s Internet portal is our main vehicle for doing this. Each city department and each ward in the city manages what is, in effect, a microsite for that department within this kind of single, holistic framework that has a common look and feel and that runs with kind of the same technology engine underneath it. But we’ve distributed out the content authorship and content management to the various departments so that they can control and publish the information that’s relevant to their audiences.

We’re currently running about one million visitors a month to the city’s website and about five million page views. That’s a traffic increase of about 40 percent from 2006 to 2007. The site is pretty actively updated; it’s updated daily with news releases—or press releases, news and events, among other things. It is really our primary online searchable repository for information about the functions of government, the services that the different departments provide, where the city facilities are located, and quite a bit more. There are also some fairly extensive databases that can be searched through the city’s website, so business licenses can be searched online, building permits can be looked up and retrieved online, there’s a city landmarks database that the Cultural Affairs Department is responsible for. Restaurant inspections are available. We use a service to find the lowest local gasoline prices that are available. You can find out where your towed vehicle is located if your vehicle was towed, and it goes on and on and on.

In the transaction space, this is one way of thinking about what people can do online today: pay your bills is one thing, so business taxes, water bills, and parking tickets are probably the three most frequently purchased or paid bills on the city’s website. We’ve seen about a 70 percent increase in our online payments from 2006 to 2007, from around 50 million dollars to about 70. I guess it’s around 40 to 72 million dollars last year, and about 350,000 transactions.

You can also buy goods online. This is primarily construction permits, building permits, business licenses, and city vehicle stickers. Last year we sold about 150,000 city vehicle stickers online. That was a little bit more than ten percent of our vehicle population in the city, and that’s a great convenience for the citizens because of course they’re able to do that whenever and wherever they like, and it reduces the lines and the amount of staff that the clerk’s office has to add during that season, which is about six weeks during the summer.

Converting paper to digital content, I’ve already talked a little bit about that, and automating workflow is another activity that we’ve gotten into. The taxi cabs that have advertising on them in the city now, there’s actually three different types of permits that you can buy, one for an overhead ad, one for a side of the vehicle ad, and one for an inside the vehicle ad. And it is $50 or $75, something like that, to purchase those permits. They’re valid for a year. Most of the Chicago cab companies are now owned by non-Chicago firms, so from an office in New York or Los Angeles, someone can order the
permits for their taxicab fleet. The application has to have some supporting documents attached to it. That whole package then is inputted online by the customer. It goes to our consumer services division, and then there’s a review and approval process where it can be rejected back for more information or correct data, or it can be approved and the permits will be issued, and the customer will know about that. So that’s one example of business licenses. We have a similar process in place now for new retail locations, where if you’re a new retailer, a small business retailer in the city, you can send in all of your application documents online, and then there’s a workflow process within the department to review and approve those applications.

Streamlining operations: I don’t think I’m going to get through all of this, but I wanted to just allude to one thing that we’ve done, really just in the past 12 months. The 311 telephone system is really the main way that constituent issues get called in to the city; there’s somewhere north of a million calls a year that come in through the 311 center. Many of those are for the Water Department or for the Buildings Department or for Human Service case managers. So we’ve created a nifty piece of middleware where when that ticket is created in the 311 system, it can be automatically routed to the department that’s actually going to be responsible for responding to and working that ticket. It goes into a work order or work management system in that department, and then as the statuses on the ticket are updated, those statuses are sent back to the 311 center so that the operators have more or less real-time information if the constituent calls back to ask about the status of their ticket. And actually, that information ticket status is available online, as well.

For employee productivity, two things that we’ve done in the past year are launch an Internet portal that’s a citywide information tool for sharing information across departments, more employee-to-employee communications, and launch Microsoft SharePoint as a collaboration tool for projects that are worked on a cross-departmental basis. In the second project we basically set up microsites for each department, and then within the department: as they kick off projects they can collaborate and share the documents related to their project online through that tool.

Just a couple of words about the challenges: governance is a big challenge because we’re a big enterprise. We have many stakeholders in different departments and many demands for technology services. Human capital is certainly a struggle because in any government situation there’s a competitive market for high-tech talent, so recruiting and retaining people is a challenge. Financial investment in the government world is a little bit different than in the corporate world. It’s a little bit more parsimonious, I guess I would say. And we do need tech-friendly business champions. Many departments are reluctant to adopt technology and are risk averse toward it. I see this changing over the next five to ten years as what are called digital immigrants—basically people my age who were born before the digital kind of transformation of society happened—retire. We’re the people who are behind the curve, whereas digital natives are more like your kids and teenagers and college students who’ve grown up in a digital world and embrace and rely on these tools as part of their everyday lives.

So our future for eGovernment is basically to grow and capitalize on our successes and try to build online communities. We’re experimenting with this now at the Department of Planning and some special service areas that are out in the communities in Chicago. We are extending the reach of our enterprise to put more tools in the hands of
people who can provide data and are in some cases obligated to provide data to the city so that we can capture this at the point of entry correctly and accurately one time and have it available instantly. And we want to find the areas where government and web 2.0 capabilities will really converge. User-generated content is the hallmark of web 2.0; it’s a rich and really unlimited source of information, but it has costs and risks, particularly to a government entity. Thank you very much.
I would like to reduce some of the Lieutenant Governor’s very wide-reaching technology-related agenda items to a couple that are in play at the moment that you might find interesting.

One of the central concerns of Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn is broadband deployment. This basically means high-speed Internet service to every corner of the state, no matter how rural, no matter how poor, no matter how afflicted with special circumstances. The lieutenant governor is chairman of the broadband deployment council in Illinois; this is a forum that started through the governor’s office. It meets once every three to four months, and people talk about what they’re doing at the local level, at the regional level, at the statewide level, and even in conjunction with people at the federal level, to position Illinois as a leading technology state in the country. The Lieutenant Governor sees it as a central goal to position Illinois as a leader nationwide when it comes to technology and telecommunications.

The question in your agenda is: what is Illinois doing to steer communities into the digital age? I’ll try to answer that question without speaking for every state agency.

Let’s start with something that is, I think, most interesting to a general audience. The Children’s Low Cost Laptop Act would equip up to 300 Illinois elementary schools with low-cost laptop computers. As it stands, there is a laptop program in Illinois that has provided 17 middle schools with laptop computers. The state spent $10 million to bring about 5000 computers to middle-school kids all over Illinois, some in Chicago, about a third in the suburbs, and then another third outside of the city and the suburbs.

So it’s a great program, but it’s very modest, and the lieutenant governor thinks it would probably be a good idea in a world of digital natives—or upcoming digital natives—to equip more young people with technology from an early age. This bill requires that the state not spend more than $400 per computer. In the back I saw some XO laptops—some of the machines that are at play here are the One Laptop Per Child XO, one is the Asus Eee, that costs about $300, and another is Intel’s Classmate PC. Any one of these, from our standpoint, would be suitable for a little kid to learn the basics of computing and to have another outlet for the fundamentals: math, science, reading. I think that a kid is more inclined to read, to write, to express him or herself creatively when he or she has a platform like this. So that’s one thing.
Second, the Broadband Deployment Council, as I said, meets once every three or four months. Anyone can come to these meetings. We hold one in Springfield, and we had one participation site in Chicago. You can dial in on the phone too and participate.

To try to make things simple for everybody here, that phone number and almost everything that I do on the staff of Lieutenant Governor Quinn, I put on this Wiki available at www.illinoisconnect.org. So I try to make sure that what I’m working on is, on the whole, publicly available. In fact, this Broadband Deployment Council addresses work in little towns, in big cities, and all across the state. Right now we have three committees. Don Samuelson’s here; he is one of the co-chairs of one of these committees. One addresses broadband policy, one addresses infrastructure, and one addresses the demand for services across the state.

Just as an example of how we’re trying to be transparent, each one of these committees is producing a report. As we’ve gone through the report-drafting process I’ve put everything online, and this is not some private portal that only a few privileged parties have access to. Anybody can go ahead and see what we’re up to. I think this is one of the changes that we ought to encourage in more government agencies across the state. So that URL, illinoisbroadbanddeployment.pbwiki.com, gives you an entryway into all of the telecommunications- and technology-related projects that I’m personally working on.

On the question of eGovernment, I thought at the state level I would highlight a few different initiatives. One is the Department of Revenue letting persons file taxes online. The city of Chicago does the same thing. They’ve saved, in just 2007, around $2.5 million by making online tax filing available. There’s a job portal that the governor’s office runs where people interested in finding jobs or people interested in advertising jobs can go. It’s called illinoisworknet.com. Comptroller Dan Hynes has a portal that’s very useful for anybody who wants to know which contributors to political campaigns in Illinois win state contracts. So you can go and look at a database on the Comptroller’s website that shows you everybody who’s made a political contribution and everybody who has received a contract in the state and then you can put two and two together. That’s another useful eGovernment tool.

And finally, I’d like to just jump to standingupforillinois.org. This is Lieutenant Governor Quinn’s website. You should check it out. It’s very interactive. The one most interactive—but simple—element of the Lieutenant Governor’s website, for example, is “contact Quinn.” You can click a button that says “contact Quinn” and your message gets sent to our director of constituent services, and then it goes to whoever on staff handles whatever issue is at stake.

I’ve thrown a lot at you, and I’m sure that maybe you have questions. I’ll end it there. And I’m happy to work with everybody here. Don?

Could you describe what you’re collecting in terms of the case examples of the use of broadband? Here in the city, they could probably give you 20 cases right now. Right. Go to http://illinoisbroadbanddeployment.pbwiki.com and you will see Broadband Deployment Council Meeting Materials. You can click on Demand Committee, and this committee is tasked with describing in plain English why it’s important for every part of the state to have access to 21st-century communication networks. And the way that this committee is tackling that challenge is to say: Here are ten segments of the Illinois economy, and in each of those ten segments, what are people in Illinois doing? How are they exploiting advanced networks to make life better for people? Because we think that
if you can say, “Visit Chicago, Illinois. And in health care, here’s what’s happening with advanced communication networks, and in education, here’s what’s happening.” And if in all those categories you can say: “Advanced technology makes ‘blank’ possible in Chicago,” then Joe Doctor in another part of Illinois will say, “Well, shoot. If they’re doing ‘blank’ in Chicago, we ought to be able to do that here.” And this goes for all of these segments. The three examples listed in the education section, one is the virtual high school, two is the University of Illinois global campus where you can get a degree online from the U of I, and three is the Brookfield Zoo. Check it out.
eGov: Embracing the capabilities of technology, organizations, and people—Jon Gant

I specialize in eGovernment, so I took very close notice of both examples of what’s happening in cities, such as Chicago, and across the state and so forth. But also, it’s important to see what’s happening at the community level as well. One thing that Kate asked me to do was to make some remarks to bring some of the pieces together, especially pertaining to eGovernment. In my work I’ve evaluated a lot of eGovernment systems both here in the U.S., with a study looking at state government web portals, and also outside of the U.S. as well, too; I have spent a lot of time in Asia and also in developing countries. So one of the projects I have is to look at eGovernment in developing countries, and it’s only in that context of looking at developing countries have I really started to say, you know what? The more things look different, the more things really look the same. In thinking about eGovernment in developing countries, first I’m thinking, wait a second, there’s not much going on, there’s not much happening, and so forth, but the truth is that a lot of the challenges and problems that I see in developing countries and at the community levels are also being played out in large enterprises like, the city of Chicago, the state of Illinois, other states, and so forth, that I looked at. So there are some lessons that I’ve learned and some things that I’ve been thinking about that I just want to share today.

One of the big issues is that when we talk about information, technology, of course we know about the rapid change and going from this monster computer to the iPod, the iPhone, and that type of thing. I really appreciated Doug’s comment about the computer natives, right? I think about my kids—they’re six and eight—and the things they can do with the computer now, and I’m sitting thinking that maybe I need to pull the plug on their computer a little bit after talking to Shireen last night. You know, it’s amazing what kids can do, and these tools are just so pervasive, which we all know here in this room. So we know that when we think about technology, it offers such awesome promise, such great promise, and we’ve probably heard all the stories of thing that it’s

__Jon Gant__ is an associate professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science of the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Gant is a leading scholar of the strategic management and planning of information systems in public-sector organizations. Dr. Gant’s has extensive research and teaching experience on how to leverage information and communication technologies to improve the services, operations and performance of large complex organizations. Dr. Gant studies the adoption of e-government web portals, the performance of e-government services, and the development of IT capabilities for e-government. Dr. Gant is currently studying electronic-government internationally through a study with the International Telecommunication Union and assists developing countries through his research, consultations, and executive education training. Dr. Gant is also an expert in geographic information systems with over 20 years of experience. He developed policy support tools using GIS to assist local school districts through a grant from the Syracuse City School District. Dr. Gant has supervised over 40 information system related service-learning projects where his undergraduate and graduate students have assisted community-based organization, non-profits, and local governments and federal government agencies. Dr. Gant’s research is supported through the National Science Foundation and IBM Endowment for the Business of Government. Dr. Gant earned MS (1992) and PhD (1998) degrees from the Heinz School of Public Policy of Carnegie Mellon University in Public Policy and Information Systems. (jongant@illinois.edu)
going to do. It’s going to slice, dice, and bake, all for $19.99, right? And I really appreciate the enthusiasm of both of our speakers who are saying that we should look at all the things that are happening here in the state and the city and to really try and embrace and ingrain information technology into our organizations and into the lives of people, which is the ultimate, most important goal—that I believe.

But as you know, the results really are not out there to say: “Hey, this is really working well.” Yes, we have a lot of things that we can point to. We can see that we’re starting to make steps forward, but to really ask ourselves: “Is this really, truly making a difference in our lives?” “Is it really helping me find educational opportunities that I need? Is it helping me do better in school? Is it helping me to be a greater steward of my community?” And things like that. We see that we’re making steps, but are we really getting the results that we need?

And I argue that the big issue is that we’ve got this big gap between what’s promised and what’s being realized, and a big part of it is that we’re so enamored with the new technologies, the iPhones and iPods and the laptops and all that stuff—I think it’s cool that everybody here’s got a laptop and so on—but we’re also carrying along this dinosaur from our past that we can’t shake. Right? We’re carrying along these old legacy systems and the back office systems, and so forth.

So when both of our earlier speakers were talking, I was thinking that I’d love to get inside their organizations and really see how they are dealing with the legacy systems, the patchwork of systems that have been sort of band-aided and put together, the wide range of databases and applications that are out there. You hear those stories in the trenches like: “Hey, we started doing this work for this agency, and we get in there, and sure enough, nothing’s documented very well. We don’t know what’s going on.” And all of a sudden, the length of a contract has to be extended and you start this plan and say, “Hey, you know, when we design this thing we’re doing to figure out everything we need all up front. We’ve got a new way of doing it. We’ll go to a nice retreat center, we’ll have the Kum Ba Yah moment, we’ll sit down and figure out everything ahead of time.” But then you get in there and you realize, wait a second. We had a slide earlier that showed just the diversity of users that are out there, right? And there’s also subgroups of all these different groups that you’ve got to try and design for, right? I heard in another session that the user will wear multiple hats at the very same time as well, too, so how do we really do this?

And so we’ve got a big mess on our hands, and this is where my research comes in; it looks at these issues and tries to answer the question of how we develop the right types of capabilities to do this. Because as we know, when we think about these eGovernment projects, they’re costly, oftentimes we come up with a plan and we end up cementing an organization into one way of doing things, where we realize: wait a second, we’ve got these new tools coming on, these new web 2.0 tools that are making rich content. How do we bring that into what we want to do? I want people to tag maps of the city of Chicago and put that on the city of Chicago website. How do we do that? Yes, we can do it but as a government organization we need to really think about it, because all of a sudden we put tags in the hands of people. People can post things on our website. What kinds of things are they going to post? Is this like putting graffiti on a building? From my viewpoint at U of I, I think: “Oh, this is cool stuff! Let it go, let it go, but let’s just see how it all plays out.” But I’m not being re-elected, and my paycheck doesn’t depend on
that. So there’s a lot to think about because we do get locked into our systems, and we’re all trying to deal with that.

So the thing I’ve been trying to understand is why this is happening, how we can overcome it, and how we really get eGovernment to be that accelerator with the ideas and so forth that we’ve heard today. And so the part that I look at is really the organization itself. What is it about the structures and processes? Because people are going to put this together. eGovernment is not easy because you’ve got the technology but you also have the underlying changes to the processes happening at the same time. And so you’ve got two targets you’re trying to hit at once, and we’re trying to figure out why some organizations are better or more strategic at doing this than others. This is what I call, in this book and research that I’m doing, the digital mismatch, right? It’s not the divide—the haves versus the have-nots—but it’s really getting the right kinds of resources, capabilities, into organizations, really hitting the target that you’re after. Right now we’ve got this mismatch where we don’t have the right technological and managerial knowledge in place. It’s growing, it’s emerging, but what can we do so that it can be more effective?

So what makes it tough? The technology is obscure. It’s like clay, which is exciting from a technologist viewpoint. You can mold it and bend it and shape it however you want, but with that molding and shaping come biases, come values of the organization the technical people are putting in place. If our ultimate goal is to figure out how to design systems that really help in terms of improving the strength of our community, the strength of our state, the strength of our economy, or if we have a secondary goal of helping with human development—helping with the educational opportunities and the health opportunities and employment opportunities—I can’t sit here and design a system and take everybody’s input. I just wouldn’t do it. And I was a system analyst, and there are all kinds of methods to do it, but it’s very, very difficult to do. But instead, I am asking how I can design a tool so it’s flexible and it grows and changes and evolves as the needs of our community, the needs of our people, change as well, too. What’s exciting is there are a lot of new tools out there that offer the promise of making it happen.

And the other important thing is what happens when we increase the complexity of our systems by just 25 percent. It’s like saying, “Hey, I like what we’re doing to cut taxes, but let’s add these other features to it.” There’s a study that showed a 25 percent increase in complexity of task, a fairly modest increase in complexity, will increase the complexity of design in software by 100 percent. This becomes a real burden for our organizations, in terms of working with the system and also getting those people who are involved with it—our elective officials, along with the other key stakeholders. When you as technology leaders say, “Hey, you know, I’ve got to make these changes,” people are going to scratch their heads and say, “I don’t really understand. What’s the big deal? Just get the programmers to work a little bit harder.” Right? And it doesn’t always work like that. There are, as I mentioned, all the impediments, including the data quality, the issue of going from a project or pilot and then trying to scale it to a much larger thing. It’s also true that much of our early development, especially in eGovernment, really had an IT department focus, and there’s a big shift to try and figure out ways of forging relationships with the rest of the organization—between the IT department and the rest of the organization.
So there’s a lot to think about, and it really is very difficult, I think, to do because of the moving targets of what you’re trying to do, you’re trying to figure out user behavior, and the interdependence. eGovernment is also about linking together all different departments and agencies so they’re working seamlessly, in an enterprise fashion. So how do you get that interdependence to happen in the software as well? You think about the technology challenges; it’s an awesome idea, the studying of web portals. It’s a big struggle because you’re trying to redesign processes and software applications and then layer in features with a calendaring system, which is straightforward, or a search tool, but then there are all the content management tools, that adds a great deal of complexity. It’s tough trying to bring all this together in one interface. And then there’s always the question of how do you build it? Do you do it in-house or do you outsource it? Do you do it with a big bang approach? Do you say, “Hey, let’s just start over?” Or do you think more incrementally: “Let’s just move forward kind of a small piece at a time?”

Then there’s also the sociotechnical challenges that we talk about, right? You know, it’s not always the technology that’s the problem, it’s also the bigger issues of our laws that we might have, the pre-existing architecture, which I mentioned, the political environment—I could tell you a lot of funny stories about that—and of course, the organization strategy.

So there’s a lot to think about. The question that I’ve always been asked, and I think about, is how do we move forward, and where are we going? In terms of moving forward, there’s an emerging sense, from the many lessons learned from both research and practice, that the more effective organizations are ones that are able to design systems that can be developed over time. They have this sort of continuous improvement ingrained into the culture and ingrained into the design of the system. As new needs come up, they’ve got ways of getting input from people in the community or from different departments and so forth, and they’ve got a process for bringing those things in, the ideas, and evaluating them, testing them, and then launching them if they seem to make sense.

Secondly, it’s important to forge a tighter alliance with the IT department and all its key stakeholders. Not only with the department that it’s trying to serve, but we also need to open the doors so that the IT department is better connected with the user of the system as well, using much richer tools than would have been used before. I’ve seen lots of IT departments go out and do user studies and that kind of thing, but we’re looking at richer ways of interacting and getting the information and understanding the needs of constituents much better. Strive for software. And we also need to figure out ways to empower the employees.

The goal really is ultimately to build stronger capabilities within the organization, what we call information technology capabilities. These are tools and capabilities that help the organization do a better job of knowing and controlling the cost. I was working this week with the Department of the Navy and I was with an admiral in charge of IT, and he throws this slide up on the screen, he looks, and he says—it’s a slide of his budget—he says: “You know what? This is my budget, but I can’t tell you, I can’t tell anybody in the room how much anything costs except for the pencil I just bought for 30 cents.” He says that in terms of technology, “It is so confusing, especially in the public sector, to figure out the cost of these systems.” And we’ve got to develop smarter, more effective ways of managing those costs in organizations.
And so these capabilities fall in three areas, which I'll just summarize as I'm running out of time. There’s a human component, making the employees of the organization smarter and better trained about using the technology; there’s a technology aspect, building infrastructure that you can build on and grow, you can scale, you can keep secure; and then, of course, the relationship because organizations are not working on their own. They need to work with the private sector, for example, to develop applications. And so you need to have good capabilities to manage those types of relationships.

It’s the same thing with community-based organizations. They also need to have those good management skills from managing the relationships with their vendors. One of the courses I teach is on information technology strategy. I focus on nonprofits, and we always get into this discussion about how we manage—when we outsource or we collaborate—about who’s going to do what, about how we govern that responsibility, about who owns it. One question I always get—it seems like a simple question—who owns the data? Right? I went to grad school in Pittsburgh, and I was working with the Meals On Wheels providers there. We had 20 different nonprofits and human services agencies all working together. We built the GIS system so that they could share data, there was a decision-support tool to figure out market areas and that kind of thing. Then I asked one small question, I asked my team: “Who’s going to own the data?” And how many people do you think raised their hand? Nobody did, because of the issues around security and the hidden costs and all that sort of stuff. So these are all capabilities I think are important.

The other thing I want to talk about is some of the new tools we’re developing, and of course there’s new knowledge-management tools to help build these kinds of capabilities. It’s what we’re calling knowledge management 2.0, using Wikis and blogs and things like that to get better information sharing and that type of thing.
Skokie teens and technology @ the library: Building community—Frances Roehm

I started working with teens in the library because they showed up at the door to volunteer. I am not the teen librarian, and had not thought about having a teen volunteer program. Here are some of the teens I have worked with over the years.

Before I tell you about the teens, let me tell you what I do with the community. Almost half of the residents in our community are foreign born. Ninety-five languages are spoken in Skokie homes, in addition to English. Twenty per cent of the residents are

Frances Roehm is the SkokieNet librarian at the Skokie Public Library where she works with octogenarians, teens and tweens, and others in one of the state's most diverse communities to make connections and build community online at www.skokienet.org. She manages the statewide Illinois CLICKS! Portal Project. She is also a reference librarian. Fran is co-author of the Guide to Internet Job Searching, now in its seventh edition. She is also the webmaster for www.ChicagoJobs.org, a regional resource for Chicagoland job hunters and career changers, and assists individuals in using the Internet to find a job. (FRoehm@skokieliibrary.info)
senior citizens, and almost that many are in their teens. Teens and seniors are the two largest age groups in our community.

My job is to build community. Part of my title is Community Liaison. I am also the SkokieNet Librarian. And most of that translates into getting good content online but I think we were talking in the previous session about how much energy it takes to build relationships. People are at the core of it, so it is working with people to build community and then translating it to the Internet. We keep up several community spaces, ChicagoJobTalk.org, YouTube.com/skokietalk, and the SkokieNet community information network that’s been in place since 1995.

And these beautiful teens started walking up to my door in late spring, thinking about summer and what they were going to do for the summer. Some of them had their parents in tow, negotiating the conversation. But the point is that they came to me. Hello, what can we do? So since then we have trained them in some of the processes and software we use to create content on the web.

How Do Teens Help?

- Take & edit pictures
- Keep us informed
- Get us connected
- Plan events
- Train other teens and adults
- Volunteer at community events
- Record community events
- Interview community residents
- Create websites
- Submit stories, poems, and pictures to SkokieTalk & TeenTalk

Our volunteers and community partners have taken this resource, SkokieNet, and truly done a great job—it is everything you could want to know about Skokie, Illinois. And now the community is getting involved in conversations online too, so making the website a lot more interactive. The tweens and teens are among many volunteers. We also have an octogenarian and a nonagenarian who work on some projects, and we have
partners in local organizations, agencies, and businesses who continue to play an important role in the development of SkokieNet.

Back to our beautiful teens. We give them a camera, and they go out in the community, take pictures, and then edit the pictures and post them online. They also keep us informed about community events. They help plan events and field trips to visit and interview Skokie organizations, businesses, and people. They do all these things, and I’m going to go into some more detail about each of these. I understand I have only 20 minutes, so I don’t want to get too involved here. But the important thing is that the teens are a remarkable resource. And some of them have been with me for two or three years so we have developed a really special relationship. They in turn tell other teens about the library and get them connected and so forth.

I mentioned working with graphics. One of the kids took pictures at our annual Festival of Cultures. He hadn’t been there before and it was quite an eye opening experience—the cultures, the languages, the sights and sounds. This big two-day celebration of Skokie’s diversity occurs every May. The free nonstop entertainment is from all over the world! There are booths representing and manned by individuals from different ethnic communities, and piled high with their history and culture. There are also good things to eat from area restaurants. Of course, you have to pay for your food. The
Festival presents an excellent lineup of all kinds of interesting cultural items and programming: music, dancing, items to purchase, food, clothing, etc.

So the teens go with me. We have attended the last two years and have plans to attend in future. The teens interview members of participating cultures and other attendees. They record it on videotape, and with cameras and an MP3 recorder. They take pictures and they come back and edit and organize all of it for us. And the library staff also takes pictures. All of this translates into more great stuff on the web. I liken it to giving folks an official guide to Skokie. Let the world know what we do, because we have a remarkable community--there is a lot of good happening here in Skokie. There’s lots going on and I tell people, “Why not tell the rest of the world?” So that is what we are doing, getting it online and building community.
The kids have a whole section on the TeenTalk page, where they put information about their activities or pictures they have taken. For example, one of the teens was going to be in a theatrical production that I attended a couple weeks ago. So, he invited us through Facebook, and then posted it on SkookieNet for all the community to see. The teens do the work—we just say, publish! and make it visible online. In addition to the Teen Pix, we have many other photo galleries on the site. We are focused on getting what is going on in Skokie online, on the world’s stage that is the Web.
As you can imagine, all kinds of things are going on in Skokie: meetings, performances, exhibits, etc. So we try to be there and take pictures when we can. We also get the teens involved in planning and executing our photo shoots and interviews at community events. So it is not my event. I am there but I’m just part of their entourage. The teens are really putting it all together. They are discussing what they are going to say, what questions they are going to ask, and so forth.
I’d like to mention a program that they gave for other teens. It was really interesting just developing the handout because apparently I was not “with it.” And my grammar didn’t quite meet their standards. The teens were involved at every stage, including telling me what they thought the flyer should say -- it didn’t go out until every teen approved it. During the *Say Whaaa?!?* program itself, they showed how to work with images, how to use online resources for those kids that don’t have the skills. I have met many teens who aren’t tech savvy. Every teen has a different skill set, and a different inclination. Some are into drama, some are into writing, they are into all kinds of things, and they all don’t have a knack for the technical. So this is a great program for those teens who need a bit more help to learn. Teens learning from other teens.
They also connect and stay informed, and by that I mean stay in touch with other teens through email and their social networks. I finally put up a Facebook page, and they were all laughing: Fran on Facebook! I’m finally there. So they invited me to the theatre productions. In finding me, they are also putting it out to the rest of our community— it is not just something that just goes out for two nights on a website. It is something the community is invited to. One of the teens hooked me up with the Indian community too. We got involved and ended up being a part of the local Gandhi Memorial Foundation events in celebration of Republic Day. It was a wonderful celebration. That teen’s action connected us with another community group that is now a strong community partner, to find out what their needs were and how the library could help.
During our forays to the Skokie Festival of Cultures, we set-up an mp3 recorder and a camera at a table near the Welcome sign at the park entrance. We also had a roving ambassador with a video camera, and the kids planned what questions they wanted to ask. This year I think we are going to get more into real issues. Last year, it was about what are you learning today, that kind of thing. We will see what the teens want to talk about. It is a great event for the family. This past festival we talked to an owner of one of our Thai restaurants. And so the teens learn how to use the digital equipment, they learn how to edit—this is a great experience for them. And they are doing community stuff. It is not in isolation. They are not making things just for themselves, they are doing it in conjunction with community events and other people. They are learning about the community as they go. The first year, they created a web page about their experience. The next year they added podcasting. They have since evolved to video! Their videos are on http://youtube.com/skokietalk.
We also take them on field trips. And the teens vote on where they want to go and they plan them. A local sculptor, a curmudgeonly type, had created his own sculpture park. We went on a field trip there because the kids wanted to see the sculpture park that was in his yard and around his immediate neighborhood. He talked to them about his technique, down in his basement where he did all this wonderful stuff. And they were just in awe of this. It was a great trip for us. The kids put together the questions, did the interview, and created a web page about the visit. They also posted a story about how I got on the wrong bus initially so the world knows about that too. And we later made a short video about it. We also made a connection with this guy.
It is interesting, it is sad—before the next summer, Mr. Balter passed away. But our kids had this wonderful rich experience with this gentleman who had really not been acknowledged as he should have been. He will be missed. But they got that experience and they will never forget it.

After reading Night by Elie Wiesel, they asked if they could interview a Holocaust survivor who is a friend of mine. They also wanted to visit the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center in Skokie, so we went with our digital equipment to interview the director. We have a couple of pictures online about it, and their video about the museum won first place in the Skokie Cable Commission video contest.
We have a lot of great community information and stories we would like to get online. Part of what has been missing is information about our ethnic groups: Where does somebody new from India go to worship or shop for groceries? Where are the organizations they would interested in? It is about trying to make our community web a reflection of each of these individual communities as well as creating resources that would be helpful to everyone. We work with individuals from each community. Long-time members say, “What is important for somebody new to the neighborhood to know about?” The teens do the work of organizing and creating the web space.
It was a great experience for the teen who worked on the Korean page—he is from the Ukraine and was excited about meeting individuals from another community. He also got to practice his welcome in Korean—he learned it in ju-jitsu, the martial art. Our Indian community also has a page. One of our girls made a page with the Gandhi Memorial Foundation. We also shine the light on local government and organizations, making it so that information is accessible because people need it 24/7.
The newest thing that the teens are working on is video production and podcasting. That is part of the experience of the festival, and they’ve used both in their field trips, at community events, and in interviews. One interview was with local Holocaust survivor, Regina Samelson. She’s now 85, and the teens were so intrigued by her that they wanted to interview her. They interviewed her in the garden between the children’s department and adult services. They made several videos from the footage, and submitted their videos to the cable commission contest. In addition to getting experience, they also received some recognition from the village as well.
The teens create content for SkokieNet and Teen Talk that is more interactive. We encourage people to join the conversation in Skokie, Illinois. People post events, pictures, stories, videos, and audio files via our content management system. The teens have their separate area, which they are not quite satisfied with yet. So once we roll out some enhancements, and add feeds of interest to them, it will be more to their liking. Any teen can have his or her own blog. Some are into pictures, others like to share their stories. One girl, Erica, has changed her picture (a funny monkey) several times as she has gotten older. The monkey appears on all of her work. One boy, Derek likes to pontificate. He is just a really bright kid, with a lot of ideas! Marylin shares everything from her recipes to pictures of her little brother. She just likes sharing.
So what is next? I don’t know. We just launched a Facebook page. We’re on Twitter. We ask the teens what they would like to do and try to fit it in the context of the community. Community is always central to what we are working on. I know we are going to be working on Teen Talk with a lot of energy, and the teens have also asked for an anime forum. Unfortunately, it takes more time for us to develop these ideas than it takes for the teens to come up with them! We’re looking forward to summer, working with the teens, and making new friends in the community.
Developing free tools for modeling elementary mathematics—George Reese

I am George Reese and I am the director of the Office for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (MSTE) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I have what is basically a paperless presentation, but I do hope that there are some things that you will be able to remember about it, and if you are so inclined to contact me, my email is reese@illinois.edu. I will be focusing on the MSTE website, www.mste.uiuc.edu, and on the website for the Squeak CMI project, www.squeakcmi.org. The Squeak CMI project is experimenting with these XO machines, and developing some Squeak/etoys applications. If you want to learn about the XO machines in general, there are Wiki sites.

I will be showing you some Squeak Applets, or “squeaklets”. To be able to view those, you need to install Squeak on your computer. Squeak is completely free. You can get it at http://squeakland.org/.

George Reese is Director, Office for Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2002. Research interests include the following: Uses of new, digital technologies to enhance the learning of mathematics and science at the high school level, responses to intervention in mathematics in high school mathematics, and applications of action research and lesson study to high school mathematics and science. He is currently the project manager for the 4-year, $1,000,000, Achievement-Improving Mathematics and Science (AIMS) grant: a mathematics and science partnership grant funded through the Department of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education. (reese@illinois.edu)
Now, I have brought with me OLPCs, if anybody wants to look at them. The office has ten of these, and we got them to experiment and learn what they’re like. We became interested in them because we’re interested in Squeak. Squeak is a programming language, and there’s an interface to it called eToys that our little group was particularly curious about. Our little group, by the way, includes Kathleen Harness, an elementary school teacher, Barbara Hug, assistant professor in science education, Abigail Snir, who’s part of our office, myself, and Kathleen Smith, who is a high school teacher.

Small groups of people put the Squeak CMI website together. We have a set of the sources. If you want to learn Squeak, there are tutorials in Word format. The K-5 Technology Passport is a set of elementary school activities written by Kathleen Harness. There are also Squeak cards. The Squeak cards turned into an idea that the One Laptop per Child people really liked. When you pull up Squeak on the XO machines, all of the help files are the Squeak cards that Kathleen Harness and our group wrote. We are very proud that all of these millions of OLPCs are going out with help files on them for Squeak that were created within our group. Kathleen Harness started this.

Next, let me tell you about MSTE. MSTE (See www.mste.uiuc.edu) has been around for 15 years now. We are interested in the uses of digital technology to enhance teaching and learning, particularly in math and science, and we have a lot of online activities. A random one comes up whenever you click our website. When you open our website you see one of the random activities that we have created and one of the projects that we’re working on.
One example is a parabola activity that is high school oriented. By clicking buttons to show attributes, you carve out a parabola. Draw a line with a point on it and another point off the line. Connect the points. Then, construct a bisector. You show a trace line. There’s a button that animates them. As you move this point along this line, it does an amazing thing. It carves out a parabola. There are geometric reasons for why this happens, but you can illustrate this, and if you are at the high school level you talk about what the equation is and generate a more rigorous approach to it. This is the kind of thing that we create on our site.

Again, it is done in Geometer’s Sketchpad. I am really surprised at how few teachers actually use it. And Key Curriculum, that produces Sketchpad, is a wonderful company. They’re relatively small, and I like their products, such as Sketchpad, and their books are very good. But there are now free versions of this type of thing coming out—Geogebra (see www.geogebra.org) does this sort of thing with algebra connected to it.
Getting back to Squeak, there are a number of resources on the SqueakCMI website. Kathleen’s students have made over a thousand of these little Squeaklets—these are kindergarten through third-grade kids who do these things in school. So one student started with five pencils and put them in animation. Then the student added ten cats and put them in animation. One joined the group. There’s a story behind each. The student added 20 dots and 30 lines—and then 40 eyes. To make the eyes the student drew a little eye, and then the user has this stamping button that lets him or her stamp all around. There are the 40 eyes, and then the student made them all go in different directions. Squeak is object oriented, so each of these is an object that can move on its own. There’s another elementary school one, an alphabet book.

This program does that kind of PowerPoint display, except you have the power to create pictures and animate them. And the more I have learned about it, the more power I have seen, and the more strange it has seemed that there are two constituencies who seem to be really excited about Squeak, second graders and computer scientists, and nobody in between. Now, Lenny Pitt and other computer scientists at U of I are very interested in the object-oriented program. And elementary school kids are really interesting in playing. But when we do these workshops teachers will say—this is one of the frustrating
things—they’ll say, “This is really cool. I want my kid to sign up.” But we ask them, “Can you use it in your classroom?” “Oh, no,” they say, “We don’t have time. Don’t have time. Got to get the kids ready for the tests.” So we’re waiting for a post-NCLB world in which we can expand learning opportunities a bit.

A probability problem illustrated with Squeak. Squeaklet is available at http://www.squeakcmi.org/library.php?sl=162. Here’s a high school level mathematics problem. P is a random point placed inside a square, ABCD. What is the probability that the triangle, ABP, is an acute triangle? This was an NCTM calendar problem and can certainly be solved using pencil and paper, but we’ve used this Squeaklet and other dynamic geometry tools with students and teachers in a variety of settings, and it is fun to watch their problem-solving processes.

The Squeaklet shows a square ABCD and a point P inside that forms triangle ABP. Point P can be moved to change the shape of the triangle. When P is close to DC, the triangle is definitely acute and when P is near AB the triangle is obtuse. By viewing P at different locations inside the square we can begin to make conjectures about which make the triangle acute and which make it obtuse. The Squeaklet allows us to look at these locations randomly or in an organized fashion.

And this sort of experimentation, conjecture, and discussion represents the potential for Squeak to be able to bridge those different goals of object-oriented programming and small talk and the things that computer scientists are interested in, on the one hand, and the things a math teacher is interested in. It’s an immense power.
Jenny Levine is the Internet Development Specialist and Strategy Guide at the American Library Association, where she splits her time between the Information Technology and Publishing units. As part of her job, she blogs, creates wikis, bugs her colleagues to instant message, tests podcasting and vodcasting, teaches RSS, posts pictures on Flickr, explores library services in Second Life, and does similar work with other emerging technologies and tools in general. She organized the 2007 ALA TechSource Gaming, Learning, and Libraries Symposium which took place in July 2007 in Chicago, IL, and she is putting together one for 2008. She is also revamping ALA’s Online Communities service and implementing a social network for ALA members. In addition, Levine is the author of The Shifted Librarian blog, a site that helps librarians understand the coming impact of ubiquitous, always-on internet (and hence ubiquitous, always-on information) on our profession. She wrote the September/October 2006 issue of "Library Technology Reports," titled "Gaming in Libraries: Intersection of Services" and is an avid proponent of gaming services in libraries. LTR will publish her follow-up issue on the subject in April 2009. (jlevine@ala.org)
Numbers

- Define “gaming”
- Define “gamer”
- Teenage boys in the basement alone? No!
WHO PLAYS WHAT?

GENDER
OF GAME PLAYERS

38.0%
female

62.0%
males

WOMEN age 18 or older represent a significantly greater portion of the game-playing population (31%) than boys age 17 or younger (20%).

Numbers

- Define “gaming”
- Define “gamer”
  - Teenage boys in the basement alone? No!
  - There sure are a lot of young gamers
    - 90 million up to age 35
    - Boomers = 77 million
    - 2003 Pew Internet study of college students
      - 70% once in a while, 65% regularly
    - 10,000 hours playing
    - 33
Gaming and Kids Isn’t New in Libraries
Research Quest

斡旋: 玩家和信息素养: 映射到ACRL标准

随着数以百万计的视频游戏玩家为收集他们的新游戏而奔波，我开始思考关于...的顾客。我想，我可以适当地改变我的问题，让玩家回到...他们绝对...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。说...我想...的时候...啊...不...。
The Numbers Game

How Many Libraries Offer Gaming?

- Survey of public libraries
  - 400 randomly selected (all but 18)
  - 302 libraries in NCES data
- Basic questions
- Support gaming?
- Gaming?
- What?
- Policy

Jenny Levine
jlevine@ala.org
April 4, 2008
How Many Libraries Offer Gaming?

- About 75% of libraries support gaming
- About 80% allow patrons to play games on library computers
- About 40% run gaming programs
  - About 13% run video gaming programs
- About 20% circulate games

What Were Some Outcomes?

- About 78% said “the reputation of the library improved with participants.”
- About 76% said users “attended the gaming program and returned to the library another time for non-gaming services.”
- About 73% said “users attended the event with friends and improved their social connections with those friends.”

http://tinyurl.com/2bft3q
Gaming Is a Good Fit for Libraries Because...
Good Fits

1. Content, narrative, storytelling

2. Knitting clubs, romance novels, large print books, movies, book discussion groups

3. Storytime – Eli Neiburger
Chapter 1
This is a Library, Not an Arcade, and Other Entirely Artificial Distinctions

“WHY? For the love of dear old Melvil Dewey, why would we take our hallowed houses of learning and sully them with these vile, prurient, mind-rotting entertainments? Well, it’s a fair question, so long as you remember that they were saying exactly the same thing about Pride and Prejudice not that long ago. Minus the Dewey part, of course.”

-- Eli Neiburger, Gamers...in the Library?

Good Fits

1. Content, narrative, storytelling
2. Knitting clubs, romance novels, large print books, movies, book discussion groups
3. Storytime – Eli Neiburger
4. Connections and [safe] community
Good Fits

1. Content, narrative, storytelling
2. Knitting clubs, romance novels, large print books, movies, book discussion groups
3. Storytime – Eli Neiburger
4. Connections and [safe] community
5. Learning & Literacies
   A. Information
   B. Media
Carvers Bay (SC) Branch Library: Gaming the Way to Literacy (August 2006)

Description: If you thought gaming in libraries is only for the geeks, think again. Take a look at this library's new venture.

A new library for a new century

Innovation happens in the most surprising places. If asked which library is the one introducing innovative programs in public libraries, few would think to point to a rural, coastal, and remote county in South Carolina. Carvers Bay Library, located in Colleton County, a historically rural area, has redefined the role of the library in the 21st century. This innovative library has a 15% literacy rate, a 10% unemployment rate, and a median income of $15,000. Yet, the library has managed to attract a diverse community, including children and families, by offering programs that address their needs.

Although the county is far from urban, the library has managed to attract a diverse community, including children and families, by offering programs that address their needs.

More info:
http://gaming.technoorders.ala.org/index.php/Trends_Gaming_their_Way_to_Success_at_the_Carvers_Bay_Branch_Library

Jenny Levine  jlevine@ala.org  April 4, 2008
Good Fits

1. Content, narrative
2. Knitting clubs, romance novels, large print books, movies, book discussion groups
3. Storytime – Eli Neiburger
4. Connections and [safe] community
5. Learning & Literacies
   A. Information
   B. Media
6. Social experience / Socialization
"It introduces them to a public sphere other than school; and it's a good introduction to what the public expects of them."
Other Ways Libraries Use Gaming

Gaming in Libraries Offers...

- Recreational, safe gaming environment
Games engage students with authentic learning experiences while maximizing a variety of social, cognitive, and metacognitive skills. When an educational scenario is introduced and understood during a game, it is internalized as part of an enjoyable performance and often a social as well as a cognitive experience. Games also carry other benefits. They help students connect to intellectual skills, making the process of learning exciting and meaningful for students. They provide opportunities for students to develop a broad range of skills in the workforce. An important role that these educational games play is teaching strategic thinking and improving real-world skills, such as planning, problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking.

Here is a list of NYS social studies standards for a well established school game library:

New York Social Studies Standards:

- Standard 1: Geography: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to understand the character of the region, with an emphasis on the cultural, social, and economic aspects of the region, and the impact of the region on the local and national economy.
- Standard 2: Economics: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to understand the role of markets, prices, and economic indicators in the region.

April 4, 2008
Gaming in Libraries Offers...

- Recreational, safe gaming environment
- Support materials/services
Gaming in Libraries Offers...

- Recreational, safe gaming environment
- Support materials/services
- Learn how to use the library
Arizona State University, West Campus
http://www.west.asu.edu/libcontrib/game/internet-librarian/InternetLibrarian.ppt

"Much better than just a lecture"

"It was fun! I didn't fall asleep or anything"

"I like the game!! Does Milton Bradley make that one?"
Gaming in Libraries Offers...

- Recreational, safe gaming environment
- Support materials/services
- Learn how to use the library
- Game creation / Participatory culture
Old Bridge Library unites generations

By TOM CAIAZZA
11/20/07

OLD BRIDGE — You're never too old to rock out.

Just ask the Old Bridge seniors who took part in a workshop as part of the Old Bridge Library's "Seniors Spring" program on Nov. 9.

Seniors, plugging foreign vocabulary, touched into the elaborate

guitar bass and drum sets and other instruments available for the Nintendo Wii gaming program as the first area for the library to make available more technology-styled programs to include them in a whole McCartney mold, according to the old playing their guitars, called it a "remarkablerangle of NASCARs."

"It was as a set to let them feel their one part of the 21st century library and not just a

residents said.

Resident said Nintendo Wii's local engineering seemed to be the key social change in the past decades, citing Nintendo Wii's more electronic media access and its visual, audio game abilities.

Resident said playing in libraries is becoming more and more common including the use of game to study and retain modern technology to seniors as a relatively new idea.

"This is a lot more frightening to play with than learning to use a computer," he said.

Edward Fell, left, and Jennifer Hely, right, take part in the library with assistance from William Thrush.
Further Reading

- “Meet the Gamers” – http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA516033.html
- What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy – James Paul Gee
- Gamers...in the Library?! – Eli Neiburger

Further Resources

- LibGaming Google group - http://groups.google.com/group/LibGaming/
- ALA Gaming Community – http://gaming.ala.org/
Gaming at ALA in 2008

- Games and Gaming MIG
- Verizon Gaming, Literacy, and Libraries grant
- *Gaming and Libraries: Broadening the Intersections* (LTR - April)
- Gaming @ your library (April 18)
- GT System from Ann Arbor District Library (summer)
- “Big Game” at ALA Annual 2008 (Anaheim)
- 2nd Annual ALA TechSource Gaming, Learning, and Libraries Symposium (November 2-4, Chicago)
- National Gaming in Libraries Day (November)

http://theshiftedlibrarian.pbwiki.com/

Questions?

Jenny Levine
American Library Association
jlevine@ala.org
The Shifted Librarian
AIM: cybrarygal
Second Life: Cielo Paris
Chicago leading a digital nation

How might we encourage Chicago to lead a digital nation? As a gathering of researchers and practitioners, this final session took this question up in two aspects: What do we need to know? What do we need to do? Each panelist was asked to speak for about five minutes and give their answers using their reflections on the day.

Don Samuelson

I’m a self-confessed library junkie, so I largely was educated in junior high school by the school library, and then by the public school. I had an interesting librarian who would give me four books a week and ask me to read them and write reports on them, and I did. And so I had sort of a self-guided educational experience.

As I talked more about this conference, people were asking me what it was going to be about. I said: “It’s community informatics,” and they said, “Well, what is that?” And I said, “As best I understand it, it’s really the collection, classification, organization, dissemination, and use of information using technology”—which is a pretty broad subject matter.

I think it would be useful, in terms of raising the discussion—because this is one of the really least understood topics in our society these days—it’s more than a digital divide, it’s an information conceptual divide of enormous proportions. It would seem to me that one of the things we all might think about is if Barack Obama was to say to you, “I would like to give a speech equal in importance and clarification to my speech on race, and I’d like to deal with the issue of the importance of a broadband strategy for the United States,” what you would begin to talk to him about, and how he might organize his thinking on that topic so it brings the same, I think, clarification to race discussions that we need in much greater degree, in my estimation, for the long term, and understand the importance of broadband’s infrastructure, policy implications, and use?

The committees that the lieutenant governor had collected has some very interesting information, and I was thinking as I remarked here before that if this fellow from the city of Chicago was just to describe the 15 examples of the way in which the Internet was being used to advance various sorts of governmental programs in Chicago, that would be very useful. Now, I would suggest you go to the website that Ryan suggested because you can edit whatever you like on that. The problem is, I tried to do it, Ryan, and my edits vanished into cyberspace, so I wasn’t able to do it. I was able to do them but not to save them or to send them to you. That’s my problem, not yours.

Don Samuelson is born in Chicago. Local schools. Poor. Scholarship student at Dartmouth. Peace Corps in Nigeria. Fuller Brush salesman. U of Chicago Law School. Kirkland & Ellis law firm. U of Chicago Law School again—missed Hyde Park, wife didn’t—as Assistant Dean. Then Assistant Director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority. Then 30 years in affordable housing development, redevelopment and management. Morphed into resident services, onsite computer learning centers, and now Internet-Enabled Cities and Neighborhoods. Along the way, I read, wrote, talked and learned. Now my interest is in figuring out ways to make practical use of the TOP archives. (dssa310@aol.com)
But one of the things they do is there’s ten different categories, and the objective is to try to outline, in each of those categories, whether it’s education, workforce development, government, agriculture, and so forth, what the problem is, what the solution is, what the practical Internet benefit is that’s been developed—and what applications drove the benefit, what devices are needed, and what connectivity is needed. Level of connectivity, like an electronic medical record might have three different levels of speed, whether it’s just text or a video image or interactive diagnosis. But if we were to gather together groups in Illinois and start populating Ryan’s website with examples, we would be tremendously better off as a city because as he said, some places and small towns might take advantage of the enormous investments made by the city of Chicago and the use of practical Internet benefits.

So what does that mean? It seems to me that you go back to the idea of knowledge management 2.0, which is a librarian science problem and opportunity to gather this information of practical applications, not just in Illinois, but in Kentucky, and how are people using a gigabyte of speed in Singapore, and largely it’s a matter of pornography and gaming and other sorts of elements like that that don’t seem to me to be of much societal use. But surely there are thousands and thousands and thousands of really practical benefits that people can generate from something greater than 1.5 megabytes of speed. And if you go from 1.5 to 100, there’s virtually everything that needs to be done, except in those very significant research and high data-requirement applications. Now this is going to change over time as more and more fiber replaces legacy copper, and there is almost no limits on the speed, but for the time being I think the real gap is between the capacities of the technology and the infrastructure and the understanding of the practical benefits that people could derive from them so that they commit to spending some money, spending some time, spending some frustration. For me personally, learning how to use the Wiki of Ryan is certainly worth it. But those are things that the case has to be made for, and I don’t think we’ve made the case yet to the general public in Illinois, in particular the legislators, where I keep talking to aldermen and they really ask, “What is this all for, really?” That’s just an example of how far we have to go when our politicians really have not very much understanding of the potential benefits that this could bring to the quality of life and the economy of the state of Illinois.

Roberta Webb

Currently, I am in charge of administering the day-to-day services of the South District of branches at the Chicago Public Library. That would include the 24 branches on the South Side of Chicago that are south of 59th street. I too am urban America.

I have learned so much in this one-day symposium about technology centers and training centers, in the Chicago land area than I ever thought were available. I commend Chris and Kate and of course, Tracy Hall for putting together such a wonderful symposium. It’s certainly been enlightening to me, I hope enlightening to you all.

Roberta Webb is District Chief for the South District of the Chicago Public Library, administering and coordinating services for 24 neighborhood branch libraries. She is a member of the American Library Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the Public Library Association and the Illinois Library Association. (rwebb@chipublib.org)
I’ve already shared with my district, the 24 branches that there are many CTCs—we had a meeting yesterday, a reference discussion group, called LIFERS, which is Librarians For Excellence in Reference Service—and we were really challenged by a couple of training issues during our discussion. Out of our discussion, one consensus need is us to have more word processing applications available to patrons. And the reason why CPL does not have Word available, is that there are manpower issues. We are busy trying to bring new technology to the public, making sure that we consistently have connectivity throughout the system, and so teaching people how to use Word on a day-to-day basis is something we just don’t have quite enough staff to do. So, to be here and hear about the CTCs and the other training opportunities for public is wonderful.

I was very surprised by Miss Mitchell’s presentation this morning to learn that there are twenty-nine million people who do not have access to technology. I’m equally surprised to learn that there are so many efforts out here to get these 29 million people connected at some level, from the CTCs to refurbishing computers to placing inexpensive PCs in the laps of the underserved to Computer Clubhouse, to Tutor-Mentor connection, All of these were training opportunities presented today that I was not aware of.

Administering library services in urban America—and of course there are some obvious challenges to that—but it is also the purpose and the joy of my work, what I see as the major technology needs in branch libraries in the Chicagoland area are pretty consistent throughout the system. People are coming to libraries to find, to engage in life-sustaining activities. They are coming to libraries to find jobs. They are coming to libraries to seek housing. They are coming to libraries for legal assistance. Those are among the many life-sustaining activities that they’re coming for. That shows the obvious importance of what we’re doing here today. They come for communication. They want to connect with their families, they want to connect with their friends, by way of email. And many of them, as Karen pointed out last night, don’t even know how to maneuver the mouse. They come for recreational activities, from Pokemon to those things that make us uncomfortable—but we deal with it, we’re librarians. Not that we condone those things, but we do protect everyone’s right to access information in libraries.

What do we need to know in order to give people the skills, the technological skills, that they need to do these things? To be able to go online and submit a job application, to be able to go online and find that job, the dream job of their life, to find housing?

We’re challenged today, just today—I mentioned this in one of the sessions this morning. I was late this morning because we are having a situation in the city of Chicago. The Chicago Housing Authority somehow, somewhere, some way, announced that the applications for housing vouchers, the old Section 8 program, are available at libraries. And we have been challenged all week long with trying to get these applications. I’m going to assume that at some point the applications will only be available online. Maybe when they do come to us they will be available online. But just to show you how important it is that people are able to connect, lines have been forming and wrapping around branch libraries throughout the city of Chicago all this week. A hundred people were lined up on King Drive—35th and King Drive—this morning, seeking these applications. And they were quite upset that the libraries did not have them. So if these applications are available to us online, imagine what it’s going to be like inside our doors in the next few weeks. I’m sure at some point we will be involved in one way or another,
even if it’s to give people hardcopy applications. If not this go-around of housing applications, then maybe the next time they will be, I’m sure, available only online. This is a life-sustaining activity that requires training for the public that we’re discussing today.

We need to know, I think, where all the technology training centers are in Chicago and the Chicagoland area. Not just the CTCs, but all of them. I mean, there were many discussed today that are not CTCs. We need to know which ones have the highest success rates. Where are the CTCs in my library district? I don’t really know. I mean, I did use the CTC website listing the centers—there is a zip code link there, but it wasn’t pulling up those CTCs in my district for some reason, and that may be something you want to check out, Shireen. The zip code link didn’t seem to work.

Where do we need to go in developing these relationships? We need partnerships. The libraries might need to partner with the CTCs, and with other technology training centers that are out there so that we can best inform, best refer, the patrons who are coming in and lining up for the recreational activities and the life-sustaining activities requiring the use of technology.

One possible venue, speaking of politics—I’m not one to engage very much in politics, but I went to my first budget hearings, public budget hearings, as a library representative last year, and was utterly amazed to see so many community organizations involved in the political process seeking funding. This is probably another venue, another way, another forum for locating all those who are doing work in the community, connecting with those in need of technology training. Not just through the venues we’ve mentioned today, but I think there are many, many more training centers out there that need to be identified. I look forward to helping with that in any way I can.

**Ann Peterson Bishop**

Today after Shireen’s keynote I went to the session on helping Chicago use technology and then the session on youth as techno wiz kids. So the thoughts that are circulating in my mind come from those, and in terms of stating these thoughts as a research and policy agenda, I would like to see how we might move from organizations called “community technology centers” to those that might be called “community technology studios” or “community technology laboratories.” I see this as something that brings together the CTCs with the skills that librarians and academics have in various investigative processes. And what I mean by a community technology studio or laboratory, and what does that have to do with youth, I guess I’ll go through the points from the presentations that struck me so much and brought me to this idea.

---

**Ann Peterson Bishop** is an Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her work focuses on participatory and community-based approaches to the development of information systems and services, especially those serving marginalized groups in society. Ann’s principal partners in this work include SisterNet and B.T. Washington Elementary School in Champaign-Urbana and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago. Ann is the Co-Director of the Community Informatics Initiative (http://www.cii.illinois.edu) and she is the co-founder of Prairienet (http://www.prairienet.org). She is Associate Editor of the international Journal of Community Informatics (http://www.ci-journal.net), and an organizer of the Community as Intellectual Space Symposium, held annually in Paseo Boricua, Chicago, US. (abishop@illinois.edu)
It started with Shireen and her talking first about the plight of a lot of our urban and our rural youth as well, and on the other hand, all the things that they don’t have, and jobs is one of them, but then Shireen also told us about youth who were very capably acting as scientists in their community. I think the process that they went through, I think you said “explore,” was extremely interesting. They went out and interviewed people and tried to understand what they were hearing from people in the community in regard to local issues. To analyze community issues, they also conducted background research on those issues, and then connected it with what they heard in the interviews. Then they thought about how to present their data—and act—and work with policy makers. Finally, they tried to effect some change based on what they had investigated and learned.

Then in the helping Chicago use technology session, we heard first about a university class in community informatics where students are expected to understand concepts, useful frameworks, and theories; and then to collect data on and analyze community technology projects. And then we heard about community technology centers and about some very exciting and challenging learning activities with youth. These activities focused on learning to use the technology and do something with it, as opposed to using these community technology centers as places where the youth could also be brought into the research and the policy process, could use the very strong skills and talents that they have.

So I guess I see this very structural divide between those of us who see ourselves as academics—people in academia—and the youth in our community technology centers. And I think that the session on youth showed a little bit how these could be brought together. But I think that with the larger organizations that we now have involved in these conversations about a community technology system, like the Chicago Public Library, I would like to see a community technology center—and even corporations might be interested in this—where urban youth would, in fact, be the researchers. They would be identifying the issues in community technology, so using Shireen’s framework they would be exploring and understanding how technology is helping and hindering their community. What did it mean in their community? What was the potential? What were the threats? They would explore community issues, produce and analyze data, and formulate appropriate actions and solutions for their community. In this way, youth would be brought into the arena of critical thinking and into our research process to help us build a nation of community technology centers that are truly producing—as Jenny said in the last session—good digital citizens. And if you’re not participating in those processes, you can’t really be a good digital citizen.
Shireen Mitchell

Wow. Actually, this day was pretty interesting. I didn’t go to the two sessions you went to, so I’m really glad to know that there is a connection there. But I think I agree with you on calling them studios or labs, because that’s where the place will be where we can converge the whole aspect of what is being called social media right now. And the words are always a challenging piece. Is it community technology, is it social networking, is it digital inclusion, is it broadband initiatives? And that’s where we get stuck, I think, with the conversation, with coming up with the area and terminology that we can all identify with, and having everyone be a part of that is a great idea. So I just wanted to piggyback on that first.

The second part is that it’s pretty clear that, although some people think that the literacy issue is just a choice issue, when we talk about this from different perspectives and different backgrounds, it’s not really about choice. It’s about the way that things are either created or culturally expected in those spaces. I always find it very interesting when I have conversations from people from different groups and sometimes people say, “Well, I just assumed everybody was doing it.” And the reason why I can identify with it is because growing up in the projects in New York, I just assumed everybody was doing it too. You know, it wasn’t until adulthood that I realized that that wasn’t the case. I didn’t look around my neighborhood to say, “Oh, you’re not connected and I am.” It never hit me. My friends didn’t show me that they were or weren’t connected. So I really do think sometimes that it’s really close, it’s much closer than we realize. Just getting on the Internet—we don’t need to do that to be global, to understand the issue. You can go a couple of doors down and find it, I promise you.

So the challenges are now, how do we make sure that people are able to participate in that conversation and participate in that discourse? Not just from the perspective of this is the new thing and everyone needs to get here, but we really need to

Shireen Mitchell is the president of Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet), a national affiliation of initiatives and organizations around the country which collectively promote effective technology integration for the social, civic, and economic security of low-income communities. She also founded and directs Digital Sisters/Sistas, Inc. a non-profit organization focused on using digital media and technology to access self-sufficiency tools for women and children who are traditionally underserved. She is a graduate of the University of the District of Columbia.
Ms. Mitchell has twenty years of technology, human services, and non profit experience. She has combined information and communication technologies with policy, advocacy, and education to support women, seniors, youth, and individuals with disabilities. She works to promote equity and access for women as the Chair of the Media and Technology Taskforce of the National Council of Women's Organizations. She is also the Vice Chair and the youngest Executive Committee member in the history of the organization. She has served as the Younger Women's Taskforce Co-Chair. Addressing issues from Imus to Thomas, she is a member of the Women's Coalition for Dignity and Diversity in the Media. She is the author of “Gaining Daily Access to Science and Technology” in the book 50 Ways to Improve Women’s Lives, “Access to Technology: Race, Gender, Class Bias” in The Scholar and Feminist Online, and “What Does Tech Have to Do with Women's Rights?” and continues to blog about women, tech, policy, and media issues.
Ms. Mitchell also speaks on topics about the impact of technology on communities across the country, appearing on radio shows such as NPR's Tavis Smiley (“Digital Gap Among Minority Children”). She has been a Heroine in Technology, a Community Technology Leader and a Young Woman of Achievement. She was born and raised in the projects of New York City, playing video games before they could be played on television and designing BBS boards prior to the Web going world wide. She and her family currently reside in Washington, DC. (director@digital-sistas.org)
be going to reach people where they are, where their issues are, and bringing them along. Because the difference is, of course, that what’s important to you really won’t be important to me. It’s not because I don’t think your issue is important, it’s just that right now my house, my, you know, you talked about basic issues. Section 8? I’m going to wait eight hours outside the library to get my Section 8 application. I will do that. I will spend eight hours to do that. Why? Because that’s about taking care of my kids and my family. They need a place to stay. And if I don’t stand out there for those eight hours, you know, I’m not going to have it.

And that’s where we need to figure out how to make sure that people understand the connection. You’re right. What if they put section 8 applications online? I can’t even think about how overwhelmed the library systems will be. And we really need to talk about collaboration from a government level to community level to center level to studio levels or however you want to call this. Because I promise you, that discourse will be a very different one. And tell people that they can’t get housing or can’t get food for their children? Yeah. We’re going to have some problems. And tell them that the only reason that they can or cannot get that is because they don’t have the technical skills to fill out an application. It just doesn’t compute. It really doesn’t compute.

And that’s the conversation that we need to have about how we take these government initiatives, this streamlining idea, which I think is not a bad idea. It’s not that it’s a bad idea. But as Jon talked about, we have to fix the mismatch between that idea and where the people are who actually need those services. We’re not connecting the dots; we’re not doing forums, we’re not having the conversation, and we’re really not in those communities as much because we still do think we’re a nation online. We really do assume it. We assume that so many of these kids are coming up with the knowledge as if they were breathing it. And I’m sorry to say, it’s certain groups. It’s only certain groups, certain cultures.

We talk about identity and people’s comfort with identity. There’s a multitier level about that involving issues about the privacy and protection. Going to public spaces where someone can look over their shoulder and see their information? That’s a big deal. That’s not a little deal, I promise you. I still have families that will never set foot in the library even though they want those services because they’re afraid of how much of their personal information will be displaced through the digital library system. They don’t understand the disconnect or connect about that. The safety, for them, is really important, and they will work from that framework, and if they have to unplug—and I said this earlier in the keynote address—if a mother feels like the only way to protect her child is to turn her phone off, we really need to understand what that means. We really do need to understand how that translates. Because the reality is, if that’s how they feel about these issues, we’ll never bridge it, and we really will have a bigger problem than we think we have.

But just as we talk about how we do this, we still have to think about a community, we still need to think about convergence, not from technology, but from a community structure. Government, nonprofits, libraries, community centers, churches—we need to think about universities—we need to think about that as a broader framework and a better way to connect those dots so that we don’t have the mismatch.
First I want to proclaim my applause for the symposium. There are two questions: What do we need to know? What do we need to do? I have two points on each. What do we need to know? I think the first thing we need to know is that we are living in the context of a revolution. And by that, what I mean is it’s a motion thing. It’s not yesterday to today; it’s the overall motion of where we might be next year, five years from now, ten years from now. As we know, the technology changes, and our social connection to that technology changes. We’re not in an incremental moment; we’re in a paradigm shift, a structural transformation, not only of society, but the world. Now, this can go one way or another. It can be the expansion of democracy or it can be the centralization of power and the hope for benevolence.

Now, we’ve got some issues here. So I think the second point on that, what we need to know, is we need to know who we are. We are the revolutionaries as part of this. We are the technicians and the social activists that are transforming society. And so the first thing I would say is—coming from eChicago—is we need to know who we are. Who are the scholars? Who are the activists in the community? Who are the IT specialists in the government and in the corporations who are affecting our lives? What knowledge do we have? What research is going on? Now, I know from the standpoint of UIUC, we don’t necessarily even know what’s going on on that campus, and so the university has an initiative, the Illinois Informatics Initiative, to try to round everybody up to see what’s happening, from urban and regional planning, the Institute for Communications Research, Sociology, Library and Information Science, Geology, Geography, etc. Same thing is true with eChicago. We need to know who we are, from Northwestern, DePaul, Dominican, the junior colleges, community colleges. There are specialists everywhere. Think about the communities. Not only libraries but community activists. So we need to know who we are; that’s the main thing we need to know. And I think that will be empowering because there are many of us who are trying to make this revolution in the interest of democracy.

Now, what do we need to do? The key word, I think, is digitization. Because the reality in the information revolution is if it’s not digital it doesn’t exist. I’m at a conference somewhere and the guy told this story. He’s from the Congo. His daughter did a project, and she did a project on African leaders. And she wrote the report, and there was nobody mentioned from the Congo. And he said, “What is this? Give a little rhythm, give a little love to the Congo.” And she said, “But Daddy, I didn’t find anything on the Internet. It doesn’t exist.”

So that’s the reality. Therefore, what I’m saying is digitization is not an outsourced activity, it’s the lifestyle of information revolutionists. So at Urbana in the Community Informatics Lab, we’ve developed what we call a community digitization kit. It’s very simple: a laptop, a scanner, and other devices that expand the capacity. Now, what that means is every librarian, every activist, every student should be transferring things to the digital. And this is in effect what will be revolutionary about the people

Abdul Alkalimat, Professor of African American Studies and Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Main focus of research is on the digital transformation of Black Studies, the study of the African American Experience. He is currently the director of a national initiative in eBlack Studies. (www.eblackstudies.org)
digitizing material that reflects our own interest and needs. We now have the machines that are cheap enough so that we can do it. We don’t have to ask anybody. And that aggregate of information that we create will shift the power and the focus and the concern—because obviously there are a lot of us, right? OK.

Now, there’s been a lot of talk about this at the conference. For example, when Kathleen Bethel mentioned the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, that’s exactly a wonderful model for all the ethnic groups that were part of mapping ethnic Chicago, and you can then expand that to any community of people who need to know what their resources are. How do we make them digital? How do we aggregate these things? Also, the eGovernment discussion helped us understand that the current state of eGovernment is how to digitize current government services and bureaucratic activities. This is not an attempt to make government more transparent in terms of access and discourse and dialogue with officials and with legislators.

So what we have to do is understand that the community has to do exactly what eGovernment is doing. Digitize all of our information. So it’s not only the police department that needs to digitize information, it’s the community that has to digitize information, like in a poker game, if you get my drift. In other words, we’ve got to come with a hand full of cards as well.

That’s the first point under this: what do we need to do? Digitization. The second thing, I think, is we need to find the energy that can be aggregated to create something that we might call a movement. If you think about the election, the election is an induced set of activities where money is pumped into society, people act like it’s a movement the day of the election, and afterwards everybody goes home and are passive. That’s exactly what all politicians, whether you like them or you don’t, want—that you then go home. You know, “vote for me and I’ll set you free” is the logic of that. And what we got to do is to figure out where our energy is. Not every four years or whenever the election is, but every week, every month.

And what that means is, for us, we had a little project in Toledo, Ohio, and this is what we came up with. The three elements are first, the community technology center and the library. In other words, the main places for the democratization of information. Secondly, open source. That is, the revolutionaries of writing code. We learned this from Lawrence Lessig’s book and his activities. And there was a whole movement around free software and around young people who are digitizing material. They are progressive archivists who are digitizing material for community groups. So there’s a whole movement there that we need to aggregate. And then the third: represent community and cultural activists. In our project it was hip hop: “Information technology, it’s the gateway to the future. Get linked or they mute you.”
One of the things we at the Community Media Workshop were doing a year ago was getting ready for a community media summit, and one of the big things of many different things on that agenda was what we thought was the reality of Wifi coming to Chicago. I was actually one of the people in the group who thought that the utility wasn’t as important as what might be flowing through the utility and who controlled either end. And I still think that’s the issue today, even with Wifi or WiMAX or iPhones or whatever else the new technology next year might be. When 50 percent of our high school kids don’t graduate, what pipeline they’re using may not be as important. Again, it’s what they’re putting in the pipeline or getting out of that pipeline. I think the libraries in Chicago and elsewhere have done a tremendous job in closing what we were considered ten years ago to be the digital divide, but I think digital literacy is probably the more important thing that we ought to be looking at. And indeed, there will be a meeting of university IT and other folks at DePaul April 22nd looking at digital excellence and what role universities might play. This is actually something that came out of last year’s community media summit, but as with community technology centers lacking funding, it takes a while for us to be able to continue to move a ball along.

Thom Clark is co-founder and president of the Community Media Workshop. Since 1989 the non-profit Workshop has trained thousands of organizations in communications strategy and how to use media more effectively. The Workshop operates an extensive website for journalists and community activists www.newstips.org, and annually hosts the Midwest’s premiere Making Media Connections conference. It publishes a comprehensive media guide, Getting On The Air, Online & Into Print: A Citizen’s Guide to Chicago-Area Media & Beyond; a Newstips sheet for Chicago-area reporters, editors and producers; and news blog aggregator for www.npcommunicator.org. Clark teaches in the graduate journalism program at Columbia College Chicago, where the Workshop is housed. Clark is producer and host of the weekly Community, Media & You on Chicago’s CAN TV cable channel 21 and for fifteen years has been a rotating host on WNUA-FM’s weekly City Voices. He has also served as chair of WTTW public television’s Community Advisory Board, the Progressive Communicators Network leadership committee, NPO Assists executive directors group, and as a consultant to the Benton Foundation. Clark has worked for over 30 years in Chicago’s nonprofit sector. He was development director for Voice of the People in the Uptown neighborhood during its 1970s transition from a tenant advocacy group to a housing development and management corporation. He was a co-founder and the first executive director of the Chicago Rehab Network and served for six years as the editor of an award-winning monthly, The Neighborhood Works, published by the Center for Neighborhood Technology. For six years, he operated a free-lance photography and newsletter business that served over two-dozen nonprofit clients. He is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists/Chicago Headline Club, the Publicity Club of Chicago, the Black Public Relations Society, the Illinois Education Association, United for Peace, and the St. Nicholas Church Peace & Justice Committee.

Clark has designed and conducted communications workshops for the Enterprise Foundation and brought that work to Portland, Denver, San Antonio, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. As the Workshop’s lead trainer, he is a popular conference presenter and communications coach. Recent communications consults include Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Michigan Land Use Network, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, Women’s Action Resource Center, North Suburban Library System, Axelson Center @ North Park College, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, South West Organizing Project, LISC-Chicago, Arts & Business Council of Chicago, Campaign for Human Development, Call to Action, Lake County Community Foundation, Chicago Bicycle Federation, Hispanics in Philanthropy, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Chicago Foundation for Women, Dominican University, Metropolitan Planning Council, Illinois Violence Prevention Authority, YWCA and Metro Seniors in Action. He and his wife Jean Bryan have raised three children in their Rogers Park home. (thom@newstips.org)
I want to tell a story, however, from my work with the Community Media Workshop from 20 years ago. We got set up to help Macarthur grantees deal with the media better because they’d figured in some stories in a certain major metropolitan daily newspaper that were not that favorable. Not that that ever happens to communities today, but… So we were set up to help train groups on what journalists need and to teach media relations skills so that they could tell their story better. One of the biggest questions we would get was: “Should we get a fax machine?” Today the biggest question we get is: “Can you teach me how to shoot video from my website?” It may not be the biggest one, but it’s a common one. Or: “How do we get an eMarketing program going?” “Should we be switching from paper newsletters to eNewsletters?” And what not.

And I see a theme emerging, which is that people want to know how the tools are, but we’re still going to be teaching ‘what’s your story,’ ‘what audience do you want to hear that story,’ ‘what do you want them to do to join this movement after they hear the story?’ Because we’re not interested in PR for the boss. We are interested in helping community groups move agendas. To change things. To engage power and do better for their neighborhoods. And to me, that’s the power of the Internet because we’re breaking down some of the traditional power blocs that used to be there. I’m picking up on some of your language here because I think it’s important that we understand just what kind of a revolutionary moment we’re at.

While I still read three newsprint papers a day, showing my age—because I got used to that utility to get my information—I also know that those utilities aren’t producing as much news content as they used to because they lay people off. Because they haven’t figured out how, in many respects, to digitize, and they have not figured out open source, and when they link stuff they’re linking stuff internally. Most daily newspapers and most broadcast network outlets don’t get what many of us are doing day in and day out as we share stuff.

What’s missing is the town square, the broadcast. That I think we’re going need to figure out a way to do digitally, and I’m not quite sure we have found it yet. Part of the discussion a year ago, in looking at the potential of Wifi coming to Chicago, was: what kind of community portals can we create so that when the Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation gets its community connected, it’s not going to Amazon first, it’s going to the book store GAGDC finally got on 79th street after trying to rehab the community for ten years. And theoretically that’s something you could do with the right kind of community portal. But we are not really investing in that right now. What I see happening in many communities through the nonprofits that we primarily work with, and to a certain extent, the public institutions like libraries, schools, and universities, is an interest in trying to not only make sure that people have bridged that digital divide and know how to use these tools, but to focus on how the stuff that we used to get from somebody else, we can be producing ourselves. Or we may be sharing much more amongst peers. I don’t know what’s going to happen to experts in time, although my guess is within my field of journalism, we’re going to go back to looking for journalists and editors for no other reason than to figure out which blog we ought to go to today.

I don’t know if this came up somewhere else, but you know there’s something like 32 internet users for every blog, and 99 percent of blogs have no visitors. So I'm not sure that that's going to be the future forum, either. It’s a very exciting time because there’s so much more of this stuff available. I’m also very concerned about the folks who are being
left behind, though they might be very much the same folks who were left behind before. They’re just being left behind in a speedier way.

**Chris Hagar**

Hi, Chris Hagar from Dominican University. I’m going to keep mine short; a lot of people have said what I was going to say, already. And I’m sure that you’ve got lots of questions and you’re looking forward to having a glass of wine. I would just like to agree with what Roberta was saying about how we need to know what CTCs, facilities and services are out there and the different models of community technology centers. I think that’s something that would be a really useful resource. The President of Dominican University started off this morning by saying as an academic institution, part of the mission of Dominican is looking at theory, practice, and service, and I think this is an area, as academics, where we can pull this together. The session that I was part of this morning, Helping Chicago Use Technology, gave me lots of ideas, and I had a couple of discussions with people afterwards about how we can get our students at Dominican involved in practice and doing field work and research in different institutions. So that was really my main point.

**Héctor R. Hernández**

First of all, I’d like to thank my employer, the Chicago Public Library, Dominican University, U of I GSLIS, and all the people responsible for putting this workshop together. I agree with Roberta that the speakers are quite knowledgeable, and we have learned a lot.

In the session on ethnicity, on mapping the ethnicity of Chicago, I was hoping to see something on the Spanish-speaking population. I’m glad you will include it in the proceedings book. Nonetheless, I was able to relate to what they all said. The moderator mentioned that Spanish is spoken pretty much everywhere, and I agree. I think that Chicago is a microcosm of what’s happening in the U.S. And a brief anecdote summarizes that. I once read that a Chinese businessman went to Miami and ended up in

---

**Chris Hagar** is an Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Library & Information Science, Dominican University in River Forest where she teaches classes in community informatics and research methods. She holds a PhD in Library & Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Chris has also taught at the School of Library & Information Science, San Jose State University, the University of Northumbria, UK, and the International Centre for Information Management Services & Systems, University of Nicholas Copernicus, Torun, Poland. Chris’s research explores how communities manage, organize and disseminate information in crisis and emergency situations. Prior to taking up her position at Dominican University, Chris was Director of Library Development for INASP, an international non-governmental organization where she managed a UNESCO information literacy project in the South Caucasus and facilitated a library and information science curriculum review project at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. Chris has also worked in the USA and UK as an academic librarian. She has been a consultant with the British Council and the UK Department for International Development. (chagar@dom.edu)

**Hector R. Hernández**, a University of Illinois GSLIS graduate, is a former Hispanic Services Coordinator for the Chicago Public Library. He is currently Branch Manager of CPL’s Rudy Lozano Branch. (hernande@chipublib.org)
the Cuban district, and said, “Nobody talks English.” And the guys there said, “You’re in America now. You’ve got to talk Spanish.”

And as far as Bridgeport goes, I grew up in Bridgeport. In 1965 my family moved to Chicago, many years later I ended up in the Pilsen community which was 95 percent Mexican. When people there found out I was from Bridgeport they associated me with the Democratic Machine which is something that they were always trying to discredit at election time. During elections they would say that Mexicans would get beat up in Bridgeport. I never experienced that, I never witnessed that. But I did hear of incidents like at Christmas Eve, Midnight Mass, a black family was going to a Catholic church for communion, and they were safe in church, but when mass was over, they were chased out of the neighborhood.

I did get thrown under an open fire hydrant during the summertime, you know, a traditional pastime in Bridgeport. I didn’t see that as discrimination, that was something that happened to all the children. As far as what the Arabic gentleman had to say, a Puerto Rican fellow was working at a branch library during the Persian Gulf War, and he had to be transferred out of there because he was being harassed. People thought he was Arab.
Now, fast-forwarding to last week, we had Mexico’s Secretary of Public Education at our library—they’re working on a national conference to be held in Chicago in May. They have 380 community centers that they’re working with. They are promoting adult education in Hispanic communities, primarily Mexican communities, but they also help Central Americans and others. They brought in 40 directors of community centers and adult education centers to work on the final touches of their agenda, and they’re pretty much talking about the same issues as these panelists today were talking about, such as broadband. They have a television station, at Latino institute. So there’s a lot of stuff happening, and we are somehow part of it. A couple blocks away from our library at one of the elementary schools, the Monterrey Institute of Technology—Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey—has been doing computer education classes for quite some time now. Thank you.
Rudy Lozano Branch Library, interior.
Rudy Lozano Branch Library, interior.
About the Dominican University Graduate School of Library and Information Science

As the only American Library Association-accredited institution in northern Illinois, Dominican University Graduate School of Library and Information Science educates leaders in the library and information science professions who make a positive difference in their communities. This service-oriented education takes place within the larger context of the university’s commitment to values-centered student development and is guided by relevant professional standards and core competencies. The school provides students with an excellent graduate education leading to a meaningful work life. Celebrating its 79th year of Dominican University’s commitment to education in this field, the school currently enrolls over 500 students at three Chicagoland locations and is one of the largest LIS programs in the nation.

Our Mission

As a Sinsinawa Dominican-sponsored institution, Dominican University prepares students to pursue truth, to give compassionate service and to participate in the creation of a more just and humane world.

About the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science

Consistently named the top library and information science program in the nation, the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science, founded in 1893 at the Armour Institute in Chicago, maintains a reputation of excellence and innovation. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was founded in 1867, and is regularly cited among leading universities in the United States.

Our Mission

The mission of the School is to provide:
Graduate education for leaders in research and practice in the fields of library and information science;
Groundbreaking research to advance reservation of and access to information in both traditional and digital libraries and in the many settings outside of libraries where large amounts of critical information are collected;
Useful service to librarians and other information service providers, as well as to the citizens of Illinois.