Letter to the community

A community benefit fund for Champaign-Urbana

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UC2B, the Urbana Champaign Big Broadband project, plans to help our community more than just putting pipes in the ground or to our houses. We passed a community benefit fund resolution. Here are excerpts:

A POLICY TO ACHIEVE DIGITAL EQUALITY

The Policy Board hereby establishes a goal to achieved digital equality for all people in the UC2B service area, and adopts the following objectives to achieve the goal....

The Policy Board will convene an annual meeting of anchor social institutions to discuss the above report and set general goals for overcoming the digital divide. This meeting will be open to the public and scheduled as a regular meeting of all UC2B committees.

The Policy Board sets a goal to allocate 5% of its annual revenue and no less than 2% to a community benefit fund as a line item in the budget. Money from this fund will be dedicated to overcoming the digital divide...

High speed internet is rolling out across the country and UC2B is the $30 million dollar project here in Champaign-Urbana. UC2B calls for connecting all "community anchor institutions" and is the only project nationwide that includes many diverse organizations as anchors—shelters, senior housing, churches, and many other agencies. The first research report on UC2B includes case studies of 80 local anchors and is now available from the Community Informatics Research Lab, along with our other work: http://go.illinois.edu/katewilliams
Bridging the digital divide

Can you use computers and be part of how society is changing, or are you being left behind? To apply for a job you need to go online to get an application. There are four aspects to the digital divide. These apply to individuals and communities:

1. **Access**: Do we have machines: computers, tablets, laptops, smart phones, etc. Do we have the software we need? Do we have fast internet?

2. **Skills**: Do we know how to use digital tools? Do we just use what others have put online and share email, or can we make our own documents, video, web sites, and blogs?

3. **Motivation**: Does what’s online matter to us? Do we use digital tools for learning, working and playing? Do we have help?

4. **Use**: Do we do just a few things, or can we take advantage of all that’s out there? Do we go online once in a while, or do we stay up to date?

**Social capital and cyberpower.** We can use digital technology for solving community problems and promoting social justice for a more healthy and democratic community.

1. Our **families** can be more informed, more secure, and more sustainable across the generations
2. Our **institutions** can be better able to serve us on a local state, regional and national levels
3. Our **movements** can be better organized, better informed, and linked up on a national and international level

The UC2B Community Benefit Fund is an opportunity to rebuild community and make democracy more real than ever before.

Comix at http://etchicago.illinois.edu/stories.html
We dedicate ourselves to become difference makers!
An information revolution is underway, leading
global transformation in health, education, business,
culture and in the diverse activities of our daily
lives.

This revolution cannot and will not bypass any
underserved or low income community. Every
person and every neighborhood is impacted and
therefore challenged to act.

We rely on: cyberdemocracy, collective intelligence,
and information freedom.

- **Cyberdemocracy** means universal access:
every person and every community organization
able to make full use of new technologies.
- **Collective Intelligence** means hearing all
voices: all of us uploading as well as
downloading.
- **Information Freedom** means online
information is findable, easy to use, and requires
no special permission to access.

With these values, we will work together so all our
communities and community organizations can
communicate, represent themselves online, and use
digital technology to create cyber-power for social
change!

This manifesto originated in Toledo, Ohio, and has
supporters across Chicago and Champaign-Urbana.

Let’s do it.

Find this manifesto at:
http://eblackcu.net/portal/manifesto
Partnerships we can build on: Join us!

- CUwiki.net
- eBlackCU.net
- alkalimat.org/eBlackstudies
- Brothernmalcolm.net
- eChicago.illinois.edu

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