

Community Networks

A brief overview

Technology does not solve problems.

People solve problems.

Community networks provide people with the tools to be better problem solvers. CNs build capacities in the community. Community networks are education projects, not technology projects.

CN roles in the community

- Education
- Public spaces in cyberspace
- Economic development
- Infrastructure development
- Technology resource for the underserved

Community networks give back to citizens and neighborhoods their voice—we all have a story to tell.

Community outcomes

21st century telecommunications infrastructure

Broad use of the Internet creates a trained workforce

More efficient social service and civic groups save money and provide better services

People feel more connected to each other (not to computers)

More participation in community and civic activities (the Internet does NOT make you lonely)

The Knowledge Challenge

If you have access, do you know how to:

This is not about buying stuff—and then hoping something good happens.

- Find a job online?
- Improve your life?
- Make your neighborhood and community a better place?

The Access Challenge

Community investment in infrastructure creates competition in the marketplace

Access is used to control consumer choice—a few large companies control access.

- Rural and inner city communities left out
- Access at any price?
- Affordable access?
- High bandwidth?



The Blacksburg Electronic Village (BEV) is an outreach effort of Virginia Tech, the public land grant university of Virginia.

For more information on starting a community network, visit the BEV Digital Library, at http://www.bev.net/project/digital_library/ or write to bev.info@bev.net.