Building Digital Communities Worksheet

Structure of the Framework

Access Principles

Access principles address the infrastructure a community needs to have in place in order to provide opportunities to benefit from digital life.

- **Availability**: A reliable communications infrastructure is the raw material for innovation, growth, and competitive engagement in today's information-based world.

- **Affordability**: Access to the Internet needs to be affordable for communities and their members to benefit from the expanded opportunities of digital life.

- **Design for Inclusion**: People with disabilities, physical or cognitive differences, and differences in age-related capabilities, language, literacy or culture may face challenges using technology and participating in digital life.

- **Public Access**: Public access to technology is necessary for community members who have little or no communication technology available in the home, need to supplement connectivity at home or in schools, or need assistance to use technology effectively.

> Helpful TIPS:
>
> The "Structure of the Framework" is quoted directly from the IMLS Framework for Building Digital Communities. The Principles and Strategic Areas listed on page one and page two are key to implementing the ideas we'll discuss as part of this exercise toward a comprehensive, community-wide increase in digital inclusion.

Adoption Principles

Adoption principles look to overcome individual barriers that make use of broadband technology less likely, even when access is available.

- **Relevance**: Beyond having access to technologies, individuals, businesses, and institutions need to understand the relevance and benefits of using technology to achieve educational, economic, and social goals.

- **Digital Literacy**: Digital literacy skills, including the ability to find, evaluate, and use information to achieve goals, are a necessary pathway to digital inclusion.

- **Consumer Safety**: Consumers — both individual and institutional — need accurate, unbiased information on how to safely navigate the digital world.

Strategic Areas

The thoughtful deployment of broadband technologies in six specific strategic areas can strengthen communities and can improve the lives of their residents.

- **Economic and Workforce Development**: Communities need to develop the knowledge and skills of future workers and entrepreneurs, as well as help the current workforce update its competencies to meet the needs of employers.

- **Education**: Educational institutions should ensure that students have the digital skills to reach their full potential by connecting them to a diverse range of electronic resources.

- **Health Care**: Efficiencies and cost-savings in health care delivery, improvement to patient care, and support for independent living and management of health concerns are all enabled by access to broadband and digital technology.

- **Public Safety and Emergency Services**: Residents and first responders need integrated communications systems for emergency and disaster preparation, response, and recovery.

- **Civic Engagement**: Electronic interaction between community institutions, government agencies, and individuals creates enhanced opportunities for active participation in community affairs.

- **Social Connections**: Individual members of a community should have access to technologies that promote social engagement and the pursuit of independent learning and creative interests.

Defining the vision

In the Framework, IMLS offers this definition of a digitally connected nation:

> "*All people, businesses, and institutions will have access to digital content and technologies that enable them to create and support healthy, prosperous, and cohesive 21st century communities.*"

Helpful TIPS:

Imagine a news headline three or more years from now that celebrates the success of your digital inclusion efforts. Think of the impact on your community as a whole, rather than on your individual organization. Dream big; imagine what success will look like.

What is your vision for a thriving digital community *where you live and work*?

HEADLINE

NOTES
Use the notes area to collect gems from others community headlines.

Current Digital Inclusion Activities

Your *organization's* activities and projects
When planning your next actions to increase digital inclusion, it helps to have a baseline of where you are starting from. Connecting your current activities, projects and/or strategies with the categories in the Building Digital Communities Framework will reveal where your efforts are concentrated.

Current activities & projects	Access Principles				Adoption Principles			Strategic Areas						Who does this work serve?
	Availability	Affordability	Design for Inclusion	Public Access	Relevance	Digital Literacy	Consumer Safety	Economic & Workforce	Education	Health Care	Public Safety & Emergency	Civic Engagement	Social Connections	

Next Steps: your *community's* activities and projects
Compare strategy charts with the other sectors of your community.

1. Working with your community team, note the areas of strength and the gaps.
   Areas of strength:_____

   _____

   Gaps:_____

   _____

2. Collectively, are your organizations covering all of the principles and strategic areas? How well?

3. Who is not being served in your community?

Collaborative Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Management

NOTES

What obstacles do you anticipate?

What do you need from the collaboration?

What can you offer to the collaboration?

How will you measure goals and set targets?

Shared Community Priorities

In an effort as complex as digital inclusion, it is critical to develop a shared community vision and to engage stakeholders from many sectors in the community to develop the comprehensive solutions necessary to make real progress.

Based on your current activities, what you discovered from others, and the insights from representatives of your community, what does your team consider most important to work on in your community?

Community Priority	Access Principles				Adoption Principles			Strategic Areas						Strategies
	Availability	Affordability	Design for Inclusion	Public Access	Relevance	Digital Literacy	Consumer Safety	Economic & Workforce	Education	Health Care	Public Safety & Emergency	Civic Engagement	Social Connections	

Champions and Stakeholders

Remember that champions can be involved in a variety of ways, from informing to consulting, leading to supporting. Anticipate the role they may take on later in implementation, if they are not part of it now.

> Helpful TIPS:
>
> Consider the external stakeholders and leaders who should be added to your community team. Enter their names and roles here.

- What strengths do they or their organization bring to digital inclusion efforts?
- Who do they connect you to?

Champions and Stakeholders	
Person/Organization	**Role / Purpose**

Commitment to Action

Now that the shared priorities, planning strategies and stakeholders are identified, it is important to connect these with specific next steps in order to stay focused on the goals. How will you support each other's efforts to reach the shared goals?

Milestones will help to measure the progress and success of your actions. At each milestone, be prepared to consider any changes in circumstance that may require the implementation plans to change.

Helpful TIPS:

Identify tasks for your community priorities, assign lead responsibility, and list achievable milestones to be used in measuring and reporting progress.

Action Plan to Move Forward: Task Assignments

Task	Lead responsibility	Goal / Milestone / Product

Making the Case for Digital Inclusion

You have a vision for a digitally connected community but how will you make a compelling case to the other stakeholders in your community?

These steps will help to articulate the talking points and anticipate the responses of your most challenging audiences.

1. Revisit the headline vision from page 3. Is there anything you want to change? Change it here.

HEADLINE

2. Based on the vision and your plan of action, draft some talking points to take back to your community. Think first of your organization.

- How will you sell the idea?
- Who is the most challenging audience you will need to convince?
- What kind of messages will be most effective for this audience—case studies, data, stories, a personal connection, etc.?

Talking Points

3. Armed with your vision and talking points, work with your community team to articulate a broad, cohesive message that will be the foundation of your advocacy for community digital inclusion.

- Empower each other to talk convincingly about the actions you plan to take.
- Find a common language to talk across sectors about your shared vision, one that emphasizes the importance of community-wide collaboration to address a complex situation.

Our compelling case for community digital inclusion

4. The common message will need to be tailored to specific audiences. Starting with the list below, note how you would emphasize or add to reach various stakeholders, while staying true to the core message.

- Your own organization (internal)

- Collaborators, partners, community champions

- Business/Private sector

- Community members

- Other

For additional tools and resources, visit the Digital Inclusion community of practice on WebJunction: www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/digital-inclusion.html

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