



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES

2015 Digital Adoption Report

An NTEN Report
AUGUST 2015

Digital Adoption Survey: Putting Results into Action

Did you know that more than 60 million Americans do not have Internet access in their homes?

That statistic is alarming, and is precisely what drove NTEN and Mobile Citizen to launch the first Digital Adoption Report, which provides benchmarks and qualitative data about online technology and digital inclusion efforts among nonprofits and the communities they serve. We've compiled key takeaways and other important considerations to help nonprofits put these results into action.

Key Takeaways

ONE: Nonprofit Adoption

A digital divide exists not only with nonprofit constituents, but also with nonprofit staff themselves. More than 50% of nonprofits reported having a mixture of fixed and mobile Internet, which they reported as necessary to access email, the Internet, and a variety of hosted services. More than 60% need Internet access to deliver services to their constituents. For the other half of the respondents with fixed Internet, how do they bring their web-based services to the community they serve?

TWO: Cost of Doing Business

In many ways, Internet access is a cost of doing business, just like electricity. Yet it is still an obstacle for some organizations. Cost, for many organizations and community members, is a leading barrier to reliable in-office or in-home Internet access. In most areas, public

libraries, coffee shops, and other retail locations offer wireless Internet, but those access points often come with additional barriers including requirements for purchases, necessary travel, and limited hours. As organizations, it is necessary to research the barriers faced by your staff and community members; assuming access levels, digital literacy skills, or ownership of specific devices will lead to decision-making and strategies that aren't connected to real needs.

THREE: The Whole is Greater than the Parts

Digital adoption, whether for organizations or individuals, includes three requirements. One without the others isn't a complete solution.

1. Access to the Internet where and when we want or need to go online;
2. Affordable equipment to use; and,
3. Training, or digital literacy skills, that enables us to use the Internet in our work and lives.

In this report, respondents noted obstacles around access, training, and devices used by their staff and community members alike. Recognizing where barriers exist is critical for creating the most successful solutions.

FOUR: Adoption Rates, Assumptions vs. Reality

Nearly 60% of respondents indicate that constituents need Internet access to participate in their services, yet only 20% note an adoption rate of 50% or more. In fact, more than 40% of respondents said they don't know or don't track the adoption rates of their online services. If a large percentage of the services nonprofits deliver in the community is dependent on online access, and we don't have or don't know digital adoption rates, we have necessary work to do to ensure we are meeting our missions.

FIVE: Thought Leaders, Best Practices

Those that recognize the benefit of digital adoption are also thought leaders. These numbers were consistent, which tells us that identifying the problem, and being a part of the solution go hand in hand. Tap into those that are already making a difference. NTEN and Mobile Citizen will continue offering access to practitioners through case studies and webinars, which you can find on the NTEN website.

Recommendations for Action

Addressing the digital divide requires all organizations. We will truly reach all members of our communities only when all organizations recognize the opportunities and needs for digital adoption both inside the organization and with the communities they serve. There are many ways to make progress depending on where your organization may already be on these topics. Below are our suggestions for where you can take action now.

Internal Practice

Create policies for device use that are accessible and supportive of all staff, regardless of their personal technology ownership or current skill level.

Incorporate technology training (both for devices and online systems) into staff onboarding as well as regular ongoing development.

Include data about staff and community digital adoption levels, and access in strategic planning and decision-making processes.

Be Data-Informed

Capture community access and adoption data regularly through a diversity of mechanisms

including in-person events, surveys, and service in-takes.

Track and monitor data on usage, adoption rates, and access points for your digital programs and services, including sign-up, payment, and/or participation data.

Create Community Connections

Provide Internet access points when possible at your offices, facilities, or events.

Incorporate digital literacy when possible in community outreach and engagement opportunities.

Engage community members in planning and evaluation of all digital content, including the website, digital communications, and online program delivery.

Collaborate with community partners and other resources dedicated to closing the digital divide.

Resources

Digital Learn

If you are new to computers, haven't used them for a while, are a little unsure and uncomfortable, or just need a bit of a refresher, we have the tools to help you tackle technology at your own pace and gain the confidence you need to succeed.

<http://digitallearn.org/learn>

DigitalLiteracy.gov

The Digital Literacy portal is an initiative of the Obama Administration to serve as a valuable resource to practitioners who are delivering digital literacy training and services in their communities. As more and more jobs and educational offerings are available online, the ability to navigate the Internet is critical to participate more fully in the economy.

Jumpstarted by a federal interagency working group dedicated to spurring the advancement of digital literacy across all age groups and stages of learning, the Digital Literacy portal organizes content conveniently, enables valuable discussion and collaboration among users and elevates best practices to improve the quality of digital literacy offerings. We invite users to share their content and their ideas to make the portal more robust and to fulfill its role as a destination for practitioners devoted to enhancing digital opportunity for all Americans.

<http://www.digitalliteracy.gov/>

EveryoneOn

EveryoneOn is a national nonprofit working to eliminate the digital divide by making high-speed, low-cost Internet service and computers, and free digital literacy courses accessible to all unconnected Americans. We aim to leverage the democratizing power of the Internet to provide opportunity to all Americans – regardless of age, race, geography, income, or education level.

<http://everyoneon.org/>

National Digital Inclusion Alliance

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance is a unified voice for local technology training, home broadband access and public broadband access programs. We work collaboratively to craft, identify and disseminate financial and operational resources for digital inclusion programs while serving as a bridge to policymakers and the general public.

<http://www.digitalinclusionalliance.org/>

Next Century Cities

Next Century Cities supports community leaders across the country as they seek to ensure that all have access to fast, affordable, and reliable Internet. Across the country, innovative municipalities are already recognizing the importance of leveraging gigabit level Internet to attract new businesses and create jobs, improve health care and education, and connect residents to new opportunities. Next Century Cities is committed to celebrating these successes, demonstrating their value, and helping other cities to realize the full power of truly high-speed, affordable, and accessible broadband.

<http://nextcenturycities.org/>

Mobile Citizen

Mobile Citizen, a Voqal initiative, aims to help bridge the digital divide by reducing the costs associated with Internet access for nonprofits, social welfare agencies and schools, allowing organizations to invest more in their mission and the people they serve. Mobile Citizen was created via a unique, 30-year partnership with CLEAR – now a part of Sprint.

<http://mobilecitizen.org/>

Technology Literacy Collaborative

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

<http://www.tlc-mn.org/>