

## American Youth Policy Forum: Connecting Kids to Technology: Challenges and Opportunities- DC Hill – July 18<sup>th</sup>

- Sponsored by, The Benton Foundation, the Anne E. Casey Foundation, and the Education Technology Think Tank
  - The American Youth Policy Forum ([www.aypf.org](http://www.aypf.org)) is a non-profit, nonpartisan professional development organization that bridges youth policy, practice and research for professionals working on youth policy issues at the national, state and local levels.
- Panelists included:
  - **Representative Major Owens** (D-NY), founder and chair of the Congressional Black Caucus' Education Braintrust and a pioneering champion of Congressional efforts to accelerate digital opportunities for the underserved. He welcomed the guests and kicked off the program
    - Mentioned major Initiatives:
      - Digital Promise
      - Digital Opportunity Investment
      - Gates 5M to link Universities to schools
    - States picture painted not “real”
    - Even if wired not used
    - Even if computers- low income culture for use and up keep has not been looked at
    - Mentioned programs that work:
      - Michael Smith – Urban Technology Center in Baltimore (National link <http://www.urbantech.org/index.cfm>) and Archie Prioleau – Link and Learn in DC (<http://www.link-learn.org/index2.ivnu>)
  - Only funding that may still be around in 2003 is 15M for Technology in housing
  - **Tony Wilhelm** from the Benton Foundation and **Felipe M. Floresca**, with the Anne E. Casey Foundation, discussed the findings from a new study their respective organizations have jointly produced. “Connecting Kids to Technology: Challenges and Opportunities,” A KIDS COUNT Snapshot Report, contains state-by-state data reports showing a large, persistent gap between kids connected to technology and kids who aren't, despite the nationwide increase in computer and Internet access during the late 1990's.
    - Since 1981, the Benton Foundation ([www.benton.org](http://www.benton.org)), based in Washington DC, has worked to realize the social benefits made possible by the public interest use of digital technologies. Through its projects, the nonpartisan organization seeks to advance a public interest vision for the digital age and to demonstrate the value of communications for solving social problems.
      - Tony Wilhelm, Ph.D., Vice President for Programs, The Benton Foundation ([tony@benton.org](mailto:tony@benton.org)), joined the Benton Foundation in 1999. Previously, he was director for information technology research at the Tomas Rivera

Policy Institute, a public policy think tank located in Southern California. His book, *Democracy in the Digital Age*, was published in 2000 and has been widely hailed by scholars and Internet practitioners. In 1999 Wilhelm spearheaded the Benton Foundation's launch of the Digital Divide Network, a corporate, foundation and nonprofit collaborative to bridge the technology gap. Recently, he was named a finalist for the inaugural World Technology Award for Media & Journalism, an award given by the London-based World Technology Network. He's on the advisory board of Intel's Computer Clubhouse Project and has published numerous articles, essays and op-eds in the academic and mainstream press. He earned a doctorate from Claremont Graduate University and has a BA and MA in government from the University of Virginia.

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a Baltimore-based private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children and families in the US. In addition, to its annual national KIDS COUNT Data Book, the Casey Foundation also supports a network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that provide more detailed community-by-community data on the condition of children.
  - Recent employment projections from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics show that 8 of the 10 fastest growing occupations are computer-related
  - Federal program cuts diminish the ability of neighborhoods to address the DD
  - Summary of KIDS COUNT SNAPSHOT (resources found at end of summary)
    - The term Digital Divide entered our nations vocabulary in the mid-1990's focusing on computer and Internet access
    - Now focus on the Internet ABC's – Access, Basic Training and Content
    - Access of computers at home (as well as other educational resources) have been shown to increase academic success in math and science—also computers in home associated with higher test scores in reading, even after controlling for income and other factors
    - Project TELL, a long running demonstration research project in NY city, tracked students from 1990-1997. Students involved in an online learning community – with access to home computers and networking availability substantially outperformed a

control group on standardized reading and math tests.

- Research shows that home access to technology can improve education outcomes for at-risk children makes it even more important that policy makers ensure that these children can take advantage of these powerful tools.
- Access the most talked about – since easiest to measure
- Only 1/3 of households with children in families with less than 15,000 income had a computer 2001
- Between 1993-2001, children (3-17) having computers at home increased from 32% to 71%
- Data from 9-2001 show that 25% of school age children were able to access computers at school even if not one at home
- 7% of teens (14-17) and 16% of kids (5-9) had no access to computers at either home nor school
- Internet access is still low
- Less than 60% of children with home computer access as use Internet
- Still increasing- 2001 shows 41 % have Internet access at home verses 11% in 1997
- Demographics of Access:
  - Income:
    - 95% households with 75,000 or+ have computer at home (2001) and 63% had Internet access
    - 33% of households with 15,000 or less (2001) and 14% had Internet access
    - According to Becker (CA: Irvine) low income use home computers for games whereas higher income use it for word processing, school assignments and software other applications
      - Reasons:
        - More parental involvement needed
        - Teachers need higher PD and expectations for this group
  - Race (2001) & Family Type
    - Non Hispanic White 83% had home computer and 50% Internet access
    - Black 46% home computer and 25% Internet access

- Asian 81% home computer and 52% Internet access
    - Hispanic 47% home computer and 20% Internet access
    - 79% w/ computer at home with married parents (overall) and 47% Internet and 49% with single mother and 27% w/ Internet
  - Location:
    - 2000 – 53% had home computer (24% Internet) if lived in city compared to 61% (29% Internet) in rural area and 73% (35% Internet) in suburbs
    - All states in Northeast have high access also Minn and Colorado at 58% Internet access and Utah 56% --south least access
    - [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org) percentage of houses with computers and Internet map
    - Teacher training is a critical element of effective classroom technology use and must be supported at all levels—also high level appropriate content
    - In 1999, states had passed technology standards for students and 26 had introduces standards for teacher certification and re-certification
- Felipe M. Floresca ([fmfloresca@earthlink.net](mailto:fmfloresca@earthlink.net))- is presently serving as a private consultant specializing in public policy and government affairs. Among his clients are the Anne Casey Foundation, National Economic Development & Law Center (NNSP Ford Foundation Project), and Chief of Staff for Policy at the United States Department of Labor and also as a Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary, Employment & Training. He was a member of several White House Domestic Policy Council working groups. He received his formal education at brown University, The Harvard/Antioch Policy Center and Fordham University. He received past fellowships from the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation.
- **Ron Skinner, (one of our own-current EDPL doctoral students!)** from the publication Education Week, presented the findings that were compiled in their special report “*Technology Counts 2002: E-defining Education.*” The fifth edition of Education Week’s annual 50-state report on educational technology focuses on how state and district e-learning initiatives-such as online teaching and testing , virtual schools, and Web-

based curricula-are changing the education landscape. The report also includes the latest state-by-state data on access, capacity, and use of technology in America's public schools.

- One study looked at Florida Virtual School
  - Grades 9-12
  - 44 teachers
  - 5000 students
  - 79% white/non Hispanic
  - 14% Hispanic or AA
  - 37% home schools
  - 8% private
  - 55% public
  - can take at three paces:
    - standard
    - accelerated
    - extended
- Ron Skinner ([rskinner@epe.org](mailto:rskinner@epe.org)) is a Research Associate at Editorial Projects in Education, publisher of Education Week. His research efforts focus primarily on state-level education policy for the annual reports Quality Counts and Technology Counts. Ron has a master's degree in political science/public policy from the University of Central Florida and is **currently pursuing a PhD in Education Policy from the University of Maryland.**
- **Dr. Ronnie Lowenstein**, President of the Education Technology Think Tank (ET3), shared the vision, action strategies and successful program efforts of the TEC Watch Alliance, a Digital Opportunity Initiative being piloted in the NY City borough of Brooklyn.
  - The Education Technology Think Tank (ET3), established in June 1997 as an affiliate organization of the nonprofit Minority Legislative Education Program, Inc. (MLEP), has worked to 'close the digital divide' by promoting forums stakeholders of education and technology and by catalyzing private public technology partnerships as the strategy for education and economic empowerment.
    - ET Think Tank
    - On going information exchange
    - Access needed in homes
    - Technology used as a tool important
    - Formed nonprofit with MLEP
    - AYPF [www.aypf.org](http://www.aypf.org)
  - Ronnie B. Lowenstein, Ed.D., is Staff Advisor, Education and Technology, Office of Representative Major R. Owens ([RBL50@aol.com](mailto:RBL50@aol.com)) 703 448 6022. She is a consultant who has pioneered interactive technologies as tools of societal

transformation, and championed technology partnerships as the strategy of change. Her thirty-five year career has spanned the realms of research, policy and practice at local, state and national levels. Since 1996, she has co-authored three books on Technology Partnerships and conducted a variety of workshops on partnership development process around the country. Currently, Ronnie serves both as an Advisor to a variety of clients, including U.S. Congressman Major Owens (Brooklyn-NY), and as the president of the non-profit collaborative, the Education Technology Think Tank (ET3) that promotes Technology to Empower Communities both nationally and locally. Various appointments to editorial boards, national task forces and executive boards, such as SECME Alliance and the Southern Initiative of the Algebra Project, further confirm her commitments to equity initiatives. Ronnie earned her doctorate from Virginia Tech (Go Hokies), and has a BA and MA from Brooklyn College and Patterson College respectively.

- Benton Foundation’s ([www.benton.org](http://www.benton.org)) mission (regarding digital technology) is to advance a public interest vision for the digital age and to demonstrate the value of communications for solving social problems.
  - OneWorld US, ([www.oneworld.net/us](http://www.oneworld.net/us)) an initiative in partnership with OneWorld International, a global portal on human rights and sustainable development, creates daily Web sites on global trends in development and human rights.-joined *The New York Times* and *Associated Press* – on Yahoo!’s “*World News*” section, bridging nonprofit perspectives on global issues to a mass audience.
  - The Independent Sector reports that 86% of nonprofits utilize some form of IT. There is a growing consensus that IT can increase efficiencies and enhance communications when used appropriately.
    - In 2001 the Benton Foundation launched its **Strategic Communications in the Digital Age** Web site as a resource for nonprofit technology leaders to guide appropriate and effective technology use.
    - The **DD Network** ([www.digitaldividenetwork.org](http://www.digitaldividenetwork.org)) is an outlet for nonprofits and policymakers to share experiences about “best practices” through its “*Voices of the Net*” section.
    - The **Teens and Technology Roundtable** (TTR)- looks at issues of underserved teens and technology
    - Two reports of interest: *Charting the Digital Broadcasting Future* (2001) and *Partners in Public Service* (*link to or download—need to get*)
  - In the era of new federal priorities and a weak economy, the massive technology investments of the 1990’s are threatened. Our aim is to help preserve these funding streams to sustain fragile new initiatives.
    - The Benton Foundation in collaboration with the Center for Children and Technology (CCT) in NY, continued to support a

multi-billion-dollar federal E-Rate that provides digital access to underserved students.

- In November 2001 Benton and CCT released a research study, funded by the Joyce Foundation evaluating the use of technology in classrooms. Their results caused them to focus on:
  - Bridging the gap in PD for teachers
  - Address the need for new curricula and materials to efficiently leverage the huge influx of hardware into schools.
  - Maintain a quality educational program with significantly reduced public and private funding.
  - Our DD Network, in partnership with OneWorld International's New Delhi-based South Asia center, will launch the Digital Opportunity Channel in spring 2002 to help bridge the DD in the developing "world".
  - The foundation with CCT will explore issues related to the sustainability of educational technology in K-12 schools through a new 1-year grant from the Joyce Foundation.
  - Other websites mentioned: Connect for Kids ([www.connectforkids.org](http://www.connectforkids.org)) and Sound Partners for Community Health ([www.soundpartners.org](http://www.soundpartners.org))
- Their 3 interrelated P's are:
  - Communication Policy analysis and engagement in the public interest
  - Best Practices in the use of communication tools and resources for nonprofit organizations
  - The Production of new media models, especially knowledge networks for education and solving social problems

Benton Foundation continued:

- Federal Retrenchment on the Digital Divide: Potential National Impact, overall from Policy Brief No. 1 April 2002
- *"Few policy issues today provide such enormous potential for improving the quality of life as access to and effective use of digital media. Indeed, empowering all people with the ability to use digital media may help to address longstanding educational, economic and civic challenges. Whether in school, the community or the workplace, a baseline familiarity with IT is necessary for success."* Charles Benton, Chairman of the Board and Andrea Taylor, President
- National IT funding reached an all time high in 2001 (from 1995-2001)
- New administrator's budget proposal in 2003 calls for eliminating 2 critical digital opportunity programs:
  - The U.S. Department of Educator's Community Technology Centers Program (CTC)- provides matching grants that leverage state, local and other resources to create and improve technology access facilities in low income and rural communications.

- FY 2001 Funding rises to an all time high of 65 M
    - FY 2002 Administration requests elimination as part of technology program consolidation in the No Child Left Behind Act; Congress continues to fund CTC programs (32.5M)
    - FY 2003 slated for elimination; possible rescission of FY 2002 funds
    - Of people using the Internet outside of the home in 2000—for example, I community centers and libraries—32.2 % were using it to take courses and 4.3 M people used the Web to search for jobs. The public is using the Internet in beneficial ways. Low-income job seekers, in particular, are striving to improve their skills and fill vacant positions in a time of massive layoffs and economic uncertainty.
  - U.S. Department of Commerce’s Technology Opportunities Program (TOP)—provides grants to programs that demonstrate innovative uses of technology in underserved communities.
    - This grant provides matching funds for projects that use technology in innovative ways to solve social problems and improve access to telecommunication tools and networks to underserved communities. Since 1994 program has awarded ~530 grants = 192.5 M
    - FY 2001- funding for TOP increases to an all time high of 42.5 M
    - FY 2002 the administration requests and Congress appropriates only 15M for TOP, a 65% drop
    - FY 2003 the administration proposes TOP be eliminated
- Reason for cuts—administration feels Americans are gaining access already to computers and the Internet—therefore, government role can be cut
  - CTC programs are seen as unnecessary since such activities can be carried out by larger state block grants. Benton feels blocks grants, such as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers Programs do not allow funds to be used to support fully dedicated community technology centers serving a wide range of clients, including preschoolers, senior citizens, immigrants and the unemployed, with extended hours and a broad range of services. Additionally, the federal funds dedicated to ED Tech in general are being cut with 17 % less requested in FY 2003 than available in 2001.
- Benton’s brief—reaction—impact of budget cuts to federal investments to bridge the DD
  - The DD is wider than ever
  - Community technology centers are paying off
  - Funding for technology activities under state block grants is insufficient and excludes many groups
  - Effective social use of rapidly emerging technologies requires continual demonstration, particularly in underserved communities.
  - Federal cuts is very likely to dampen economic and community development



- The Benton Foundation's independent analysis of the commerce report reveals that the DD is not narrowing.
  - 1 in 4 of America's poorest households were online in late 2001- compared to 8 in 10 homes earning over \$75,000 per year.
  - Hispanics (31.8%) and AA (39.8%) lag behind whites (59.9) in Internet access at home, suggesting serious ethnic and racial divides.
  
- Other resources:
  - Litan, Robert E., and Alice M. Rivlin. Beyond the Dot.Coms: The Economic Promise of the Internet. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2001.
  - Executive Office of the President of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. The Budget of the U.S. – FY 2003. Washington DC: GPO, February 2002. Available at <http://w3.access.gpo.gov/usbudget/>.
  - U.S. Department of Commerce. A Nation Online. Washington DC: US Dept of Commerce, 2002. Available at: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome.dn/anationonline2.pdf>
  - U.S. Department of Commerce. Falling Through the Net: Toward Digital Inclusion, Washington DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000. Available at: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/digitaldivide/>.
  - Chow, Clifton, Jan Ellis, June Mark, and Bart Wise. Impact of CTCNetAffiliates: Findings from a National Survey of Users of Community Technology Centers. Newton, MA: Educational Department Center, Inc., 1998. Also available at <http://www.ctcnet.org/impact98.htm>. Results show that 65% of respondents took classes at a technology center to improve their job skills. Of the job-seekers surveyed, 43% surveyed, 43 % said they had either gotten a job or were a lot closer to it as a result of using the technology center.
  - Macias, Elsa, Sara Jones, Mary Buck, Carlos Solis and Richard Cutler. Network Technologies in Hispanic-Serving Organizations: A Case Study Approach. Claremont, CA: Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, 2001. Available at <http://www.trpi.org/top2.html>
  - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Centers (CCLC's) may be found at <http://www.ed.gov/21stcclc>
  - TOP's Web Site at [http://www.ntia.doc.gov/otiahome/top/grants/briefhistory\\_gf.htm](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/otiahome/top/grants/briefhistory_gf.htm)
  - Crandell, Robert W., and Charles L. Jackson. The \$500 Billion Opportunity: The Potential Economic Benefit of Widespread Diffusion of Broadband Internet Access. Washington D.C. Criterion Economics, L.L.C, 2001. Available at <http://www.criterioneconomics.com>
  - T.O.R.C.H. Program – NSBE Technical Outreach Community Help [www.nsbe.org](http://www.nsbe.org)

Miscellaneous cyberschool resources:

- [www.figurethis.org](http://www.figurethis.org) – Looking for a way to have fun while testing your knowledge? This site provides mathematics challenges, and tests your knowledge in algebra, geometry, measurements, statistics and probability. Funded by NSF and US DED
- [www.muohio.edu/Dragonfly/](http://www.muohio.edu/Dragonfly/) - learn how to make models (sun or genetic code etc...) –collaborative effort at Miami University (Oxford, Ohio) started with NSF funds
- [www.number2.com](http://www.number2.com) – free SAT/ACT preparation- includes tutorials and vocabulary builder
- [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org) & [www.zoom.org](http://www.zoom.org) – PBS kids are ready to learn and kids fun pages
- [www.madsci.org/](http://www.madsci.org/) - 3 parts- 1. Ask A Scientist: online archive of questions and answers; 2. MAD Labs: fun labs; and 3. MadSci Library: Locate science sites and WWW resources.
- [www.InnerBody.com/htm/body.html](http://www.InnerBody.com/htm/body.html) - Human Anatomy online. Fun and interactive. Animations and descriptive links. Java enhanced
- <http://www.thetech.org/robotics/> - Robots! History ethics and innovations- videos and interactive games
- <http://www.cotf.edu/ete/modules/mse/explorer.html> - Explorasuas- time when dinos were real. Virtual earth science museum