Navigating the informatics moment
A preliminary research report on the CyberNavigators program at the Chicago Public Library

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Executive Summary

The focus of this report is the CyberNavigators program that was launched by the Chicago Public Library (CPL) in 1999 and operates today in 40 of the library’s 79 locations. CyberNavigators (CNs) help people in 38 branches, the 2 regional libraries, and the Harold Washington Library Center to use computers and the internet. This report puts the program in the context of the library and its history and then presents preliminary findings and key ideas from a 2009–2010 study of the CyberNavigators program. Stage one has focused on gathering data from the CyberNavigators themselves; stage two will turn to the branch libraries they work in, especially the branch managers.

History of the Chicago Public Library: The social libraries, the public library, and the public computing library

The history of the Chicago Public Library can be divided broadly into three eras since the founding of the city in 1833: the social libraries, the public libraries, and the public computing library. Prior to the 1871 Great Chicago Fire, people were served by a number of social libraries. In 1872 the Chicago Public Library as a formal institution came into being. And in 1981 the first computers were installed in a branch for use by the public, a service that has expanded ever since.

History of the CyberNavigators: An experiment, affirmed, then expanded

Likewise, the history of the CyberNavigators program has seen three stages: experimentation, affirmation, expansion. From 1999 to 2002, it was an experimental summer program funded by AT&T in roughly one-third of the branches. Then the funding ended, but demand continued, so from 2002–2007, the program operated year-round, placing part-time CyberNavigators in approximately five branches. In 2008, having secured major new funding from the Bank of America, CPL expanded it to more than half of its branches. As of 2010, the experiment has become a major system-wide effort towards digital literacy in the library and across Chicago.

A helping interaction, an informatics moment

At the core of the CyberNavigator experience is a moment of help given to a patron. That help gets the patron across whatever digital divide he or she is facing at that time. The moment might last a few seconds or an hour. CyberNavigators provide this help constantly on some days, intermittently on others, but they are always ‘on call’ and available to the patron.

We have created a technical term for this moment of help because it has to be understood in context. We call it an ‘informatics moment’ in order to contextualize the CyberNavigator program within today’s information revolution. This social process has been described as a wave moving across one sector of society after another, where what results is a transformation of the institutions we live and work in. With ebooks, public
computers, databases, and the many-to-many multimedia experience that the internet has become, the Chicago Public Library (with every other public library in the US) is experiencing and even shaping this transformation. As they inhabit the public spaces of branch libraries, sought after by Chicagoans of all types, the CyberNavigators are at the center of this transformation. This research project is aimed at understanding this and helping Chicago Public Library, and the public library world more generally, steer their libraries into the future.

Into the field: Research methods

A team of faculty, students, and volunteers went into the field to learn about the CyberNavigator program. Four methods were employed to gather data on the rich experience and knowledge in Chicago Public Library.

1. Reading: We examined the archives and files of the Chicago Public Library and the literature about the Chicago Public Library.
2. Asking: We surveyed the CyberNavigators and collected 37 completed questionnaires.
3. Observing: We arranged with Chicago Public Library staff to spend several days in six branches, shadowing CyberNavigators and taking notes on the interactions they had with patrons and others.
4. Discussing: We conducted 6 focus groups—group conversations guided by a short set of questions—with a total of 27 CyberNavigators to collect their reflections on their experience.

These four methods resulted in texts and data—narratives and numbers—that the research team then analyzed. Our analysis was guided by past research on communities using information technology, which alerted us to pay special attention to people’s social networks as they overcome digital inequality.

Key findings

There are three key findings so far:

A. The informatics moment consists of patrons overcoming four kinds of literacy challenges. They seek out the CyberNavigators for four categories of help. These are:

1. Basic literacy: Reading and writing.
2. Computer literacy: Using the mouse, the browser, the Windows operating system, free email services and other applications, even buying and maintaining a computer.
3. Library literacy: Using library-specific systems such as printing, reservations, the online catalog, and databases the library makes available to patrons.
4. Domain literacy: Functioning in specific domains of modern life—job seeking, getting government benefits, doing homework, learning about health, even
navigating life in Chicago itself—that draw on the CyberNavigator’s own knowledge, experience, and resourcefulness.

B. Community-based social capital is a critical factor that can and does contribute to the success of the CyberNavigator program and the informatics moments it facilitates.

C. We can develop and use an understanding of the informatics moment to help design the library of the future. In other words, all the shop-talking and kvetching can be used like in jujitsu to make a better branch library for the digital age we live in.

A draft preliminary report

This is a draft report because we are presenting it to the CyberNavigators and other Chicago Public Library staff in order to get their feedback and corrections and generate more ideas. It is a preliminary report because it covers only stage one of the research. Stage two, in summer 2010, will include focus groups and surveys of branch managers in Chicago Public Library, and will result in a final report. We hope that our summaries and generalizations—drawn from the library’s own front-line experiences and expertise—can help Chicago Public Library going forward.

Acknowledgments

First, we would like to thank Mary Dempsey and Amy Eshleman, who approved our research proposal and made it possible; Roberto Pang, who has generously shared his knowledge and helped us at every turn; and likewise Desiree Kettler. Second, we deeply appreciate the honesty and enthusiasm of the CyberNavigators we have talked and worked with. Other library staff members have also been very helpful. We are thankful for Charles Benton of the Benton Foundation, who helped spur the conversation that led to this research. And we acknowledge gratefully the Institute for Museum and Library Services, which has funded this research.

Contributors to this research include members of the Community Informatics Research Lab at the University of Illinois, especially Abdul Alkalimat, Aaron Fleisher, Aiko Takazawa and Hui Yan; transcriptionist Sarah Meadows; and volunteers Samantha Lester, Matt Hampel, and Aysha Marsh.
1. Introduction

At one point, public libraries had mostly books. Recently, they added computers. Computers and related digital technologies are claiming more and more of the library budget, and more and more space. The patrons of the library are facing a new situation, a digital divide within the library. Either they don’t know how to use computers, or the technology in the library is not sufficient for what they want to do. Each of these are digital divides. But within the library, people need help and they are getting it. It is important to understand what people learn and how they learn it when they are getting help crossing the digital divide.

The Chicago Public Library has a program to help patrons use the computers called the CyberNavigator program. This is a draft preliminary report about this program. The research has been carried out by the Community Informatics Lab at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The principal investigator is Kate Williams. The members of the research team included Aiko Takazawa, Hui Yan, Samantha Lester, and Aysha Marsh from the CI Lab, and Matt Hampel from the University of Michigan.

This research has been funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Science with complementary research support from the Benton Foundation and eChicago conference support from the Chicago Community Trust.

This report is divided into four sections and then into chapters. The first section is the historical background: one chapter on the history of the Chicago Public Library and one on the history of the CyberNavigator Program. The second section is focused on our research framework: one chapter on theory and one on method. The third section contains our research findings, each based on a different mode of collecting data, so one chapter each on the survey, the ethnography, and the focus group. The fourth section is a summary and discussion of next steps. This is a draft preliminary report and its purpose is to get feedback and assistance in interpreting the data and seeking more data.

How the study came about

This study emerged from a study of how Chicago ethnic communities are using information technology. We collected and geolocated URLs (websites) by and about those communities. We partnered with a small museum to digitize their collection and size up the results and effects of that work. But how to reach into Chicago communities from 140 miles away? From that distance, it can appear as though the communities are demobilized. Organizations for communities can be easy to find and work with, but Organized communities less so. We were looking for the community’s own agency, people’s activity in their own self-interest.

Because we were engaged every year in organizing eChicago, we began to find the communities. Chicago Public Library opened a door for us when they sent
CyberNavigators to eChicago. eChicago is a free and open discussion space for taking all of Chicago into the digital age, where researchers and practitioners connect. Chicago Public Library wanted to better understand the CyberNavigator program that has been so successful, so a research partnership was possible. We all want to know: What does it do? In what way does it represent the future of the branch library?

**Why is this an informatics moment?**

One argument we make here is that CyberNavigators present us with an informatics moment. This is easy to reject as academic jargon. But two things are always true about society. One, change is constant. Two, social processes involve someone relating to someone else in a physical setting. Our Informatics Moment is a social process of a patron and a worker getting and giving help in front of a library’s public access computer. ‘Informatics’ because we are examining this process in the context of a thoroughgoing social transformation from industrial society to informational society. ‘Moment’ because in any given social sector, this transformation gathers so much speed that it can seem like it happens overnight, momentarily. And also ‘moment’ because actually this transformation takes decades and we are only looking at a brief slice of time. Our data is only from 2009 and 2010. And ‘moment’ because our data focuses on the few minutes (sometimes as long as an hour) while a CyberNavigator helps a patron at the public access computer. The research reported here is a biopsy.

Our focus is on the Chicago Public Library as it is taking shape as a system of public computing libraries. The original and continuing focus of the branch of social science known as community informatics is public computing. It was apparent from the moment we encountered the CyberNavigators that they are agents of change in the social structure of the branch public library. They enable the branch to provide a new service that the other staff hasn’t the time, the skill, or the charge to provide. And they demonstrate new skills and tasks that may be needed in the branch for some time to come.
2. History of Chicago Public Library

Every social institution has a history and that history is played out in the larger history that surrounds it. This chapter contextualizes the CyberNavigators program in the larger history of Chicago Public Library and the city of Chicago itself.

Several features of this history stand out. First, Chicago was a literate city by the mid 1800s, in part due to its public school system. Second, popular activities molded the library, especially before and immediately after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. Third, moving to the 20th century, the library computerized itself before the local community did; library computing preceded community computing or public computing. And Finally, when it came to public computing, the local communities jumped in as early as 1981 and helped set the course.

While Chicago per se is not drawing the immigration that it once did, it, Chicagoland continues to surge in population and Chicago is at the heart of this. As a result, Chicago remains highly influential and one of the world’s global cities.

In Chicago we have a library system that has gone through three specific stages: the social library, the public library and the public computing library. Chicago developed into a major industrial city out of the western frontier. Founded as a city in 1833, Chicago became a rail center, with stockyards and steel mills as we know from Carl Sandberg’s poem. In many ways, the overall logic of Chicago history is from an agricultural hub to an industrial metropolis to an informational city. This general historical framework is reflected in Chicago’s public library history. We will discuss briefly the social libraries of Chicago (1833-1871), the public library (1872-present) and what we call the public computing library in Chicago Public Library (1981-present).

The social libraries (1833-1871)

The state of Illinois chartered Chicago as a city in 1833, when its population was only a few hundred individuals. Subsequent census counts are below, linked to the three periods of library history. This first period was the most explosive period of growth. To manage this growth, the city established a municipal school system in 1835 and then a succession of governmental units before the free Chicago Public Library opened its doors in 1872.

This first period reflects an enlightened commercial and (nascent) industrial elite providing itself and increasingly larger segments of the working public with the tools of lifelong learning. One half of the 48 known libraries during this period took the form of social libraries. They were established by particular social forces to provide shared access to a collection of printed matter: associations that reflected class, education, religion, nationality, and/or business. Alongside the social libraries there were a smaller number of libraries belong to an institution (9), such as a church or school, and special libraries of a more private nature (9). Twelve of these 48 libraries were open to the public. (See table below from Spencer 1943 p 121)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>US Rank</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>1850</td>
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<td>298,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
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<td>503,185</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,099,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,698,575</td>
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<td>2,701,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,376,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,396,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,620,962</td>
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<td>3,366,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,005,072</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,783,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,896,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2,725,206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The social libraries

The public library

The public computing library

sources:


The leaders of the social libraries were a rising class of processional and commercial elites. Spencer (1943) in a study of library leaders from 1833 to 1872 (who were all men) found the following:

Approximately two thirds of the leaders in the library movement were engaged in professional pursuits. All but 9 of the remaining third were occupied with commercial interests, including the railroad interests then so important. The number of lawyers among the professional men was 29; journalists, 9; ministers, 9; physicians, 7. (p 169)

Their average age was in the 20s or 30s, depending on the decade measured, and none of them were Chicago born.

(compare with Joeckel p 370 population with library cards, profiled)

These libraries were developed and grew with the city. In the 1830s and 1840s there were important scientific libraries established (the Mechanics institute, the Lyceum). By 1850s some libraries were commercial ventures, others supported language communities or the professions of medicine and theology. By the 1860s, higher educational libraries

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**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis of Chicago Libraries, 1833-72</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General types:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free public</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing agencies:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyceums</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young men's associations (varying titles)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutions or societies</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious institutions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic church</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant churches</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General organizations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial (for rental)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-speaking groups</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special interests served:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library associations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions of higher learning</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical and professional institutions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological seminaries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession of law</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession of medicine</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-speaking people</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical association</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial interests</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General public</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some libraries belong to more than one of the classifications used. For this reason no totals are given for "General types," "Establishing agencies," and "Special interests served" (see explanation on p. 169).
especially for theology, were dominant. The libraries mirrored the growth of the city, and a closer examination would show us they also facilitated its growth, by sustaining its commerce, education, and culture.

**Transition: The 1871 Chicago fire**

The Midwest experienced drought and heat in summer 1871, and a very hot, dry, and windy fall that led to a simultaneous breakout of fires across Michigan, in Ontario, and in Illinois. The city of Chicago was at the time built most of wood, with a concentration of lumber and coal manufacturing and warehouses just west of the Loop. On Saturday night, October 7, 1871 a fire broke out between Canal and Clinton Street north of Van Buren Street. Having fed off of nearby lumber mills, lumber yards, and a paper box factory, it was still smouldering on Sunday October 8. That night, a second fire broke out one half mile south, near Roosevelt and Canal. That fire burned for two days, destroying all but five public buildings and a few houses in a swath from roughly 21st Street and Halsted, across the entire Loop, across the Chicago River and north to Fullerton, as the map at right shows (map from Wikipedia). About one third of Chicago’s real estate property was gone, particularly what became known as the Loop, its industrial and commercial heart.

Also destroyed were an estimated two to three million books in private collections (cite: Roland Tweet, Miss Gale's Books: The Beginnings of the Rock Island Public Library, Rock Island, IL: Rock Island Public Library, 1997, 15). That included all the social libraries mentioned above.
The public library (1872 to present)

Having destroyed the social libraries, the fire helped the leaders of those libraries persuade the state to authorize the city to collect a library tax. This was what many of them they were aiming for before the fire. Because Chicago was already a global city, and its cultural elite connected to England, the library leaders were also able to make an appeal for books that rallied Queen Victoria and many others there. The public library movement catapulted forward, recruiting a librarian-intellectual who had started the long-running Index to Periodical Literature at age 27 and built up Cincinnati’s library to rival Boston’s. Under the leadership of William Frederick Poole The Chicago Public Library opened its doors in 1872 less than one year after the fire. The speed was remarkable, as was the location: a round water tower on top of an existing building that the new library equipped with reading tables and lined with bookshelves.

This period of Chicago Public Library history was a period of institutionalization as well as growth. Important systems were built inside and outside the library. Outside the library, two research libraries came into being, Newberry for culture and Crerar for science, which relieved Chicago Public Library of some responsibilities to the citizens as well as some of the opportunities for synergy that other cities have (New York Public Library for instance) where the research role has remained within the city’s public library. A system of funding for the library was put in place as well, perhaps permanently affected by Andrew Carnegie’s decision not to fund Chicago Public Library as he did other big city libraries; accounts decades later refer to “perennial underfunding” but also document that usage continued to climb, most notably through the depression years.

Inside the library, a complex and fluid system of different types of libraries came into being, and Chicago was known for this approach: regional libraries, branches, sub-branches, depository agencies (drop-off spots for books) and even booktrucks. The storefront library, for example, was an economical and relatively flexible solution for a city built up from strong but shifting neighborhoods.
A larger storefront library.

An event in the Czech community’s Toman Branch Library.

The public library thus became a fundamental anchor of a Chicago neighborhood, along with parks, schools and churches.

Also in this period, computerization began. A 1969 report excerpted below (text and image) suggests the vision of the time. The diagram shows the computer, with its magnetic tape memory, at the center of reengineering library processes. At bottom right, one output is a new form of the catalog, more easily accessible by the public as a book!
Terminals were much too expensive at the time to even imagine putting them everywhere for patrons.

8 New Technology and the Chicago Public Library

Computer control and electronic communication will apply to the Chicago Public Library in the near future and in time will significantly transform the institution.

However, it is an oversimplification to assume that the push-button library or the library-in-a-computer is just around the corner. No matter how far one looks down the road of new communication technology there will still be a central source, collection, or information-resource bank (i.e., a library), and somewhere an individual reader, viewer, receiver (i.e., a library user). Eventually the user may not come to the library but will have electronic access to the central resource directly from his home, office, and classroom. The present was not made in a vacuum; it is imperative to program isolated bits of information into a machine for later retrieval, but something very different to computerize the complex sequence of searching a library and then of reading a hundred or a thousand pages. For this essential library purpose the book remains a remarkable invention.

The proper course is neither to expect miracles from technology nor to reject it as somehow alien to or improper for libraries. The Chicago Public Library must start now to apply available techniques to its present operations and recordkeeping, as outlined below. It must also begin experimentation with new prospects, starting with facsimile transmission and information and bibliographic control. A
The public computing library (1981 to present)

The public computing library is the library with computers that the public can use. A main feature of this period is that it was ushered in by librarians and patrons working together. This is reasonable, because at that time the librarians were also preoccupied with harnessing computers to make pre-existing library services better. From the start, this created entirely new library services—accessing library information from home via BBS systems at first and later from the web, software provision and training, and so on. For instance, in 1980 Chicago Public Library was an early supplier of instructional material via the University of Illinois time-sharing computer system PLATO.
As we periodize the history, the period of the public computing library (1981-present) overlaps with that of the public library (1872-present).

Different sectors of society have adopted computers at different times, primarily according to cost and usefulness. So as the library itself was reorganizing its work around computers, future-minded patrons began to bring computers into the library for what became a new library service – the public access computers.

North Pulaski Branch Library appears to have been the first here, with two Apple II machines that offered business software, games, and other possibilities to staff and patrons alike. Branch manager Patrick Dewey put out at least one issue of a newsletter called Public Computing, and reported (Library Journal 1984) that while 40% of patrons first heard about the computers from a librarian, 30% heard about them from a friend. So not only was social capital at work as volunteers (local as well as the Friends of the Library) brought in the computers, it also helped spread the news. One of the services offered was a BBS, or bulletin board system—a forerunner of today’s social networking sites—where your computer could dial in and you could talk, read posts, and even retrieve software.

In 1985 Computer Smarts was the name of a lecture series at the Cultural Center helping the public understand the personal computer era. And Rogers Park Branch was close behind North Pulaski in the last 1980s, installing an XT personal computer. Chiu (2000) recalls learning games, math, typing, and word processing as the most popular, and a constant waiting list. It is worth noting that the library staff was learning computers.
alongside the patrons. So while the central library administration was computerizing library systems, staff were independently exploring computers.

Public computer access accelerated in the 1990s and after:

- In 1991 Harold Washington Library Center opened with space allocated for a microcomputer center
- In 1992 the city funded and opened that microcomputer center
- In 1994 a federal grant put computers in 7 locations: Harold Washington, Woodson, Sulzer, Uptown, Portage Cragin, Mount Greenwood, and Kelly
- In 1996 Mary Dempsey announced Chicago Public Library would have PCs in all branches by fall, although they would not offer email; that summer hotmail debuted as one of the first web email services.
- Also in 1996, a literacy center at Chicago Bee was the ninth location with public computers, funded by Depaul, Chicago Public Library, and MacArthur
- As of 2000, 202 internet terminals were operating in 78 locations, and library leaders laid out plans for 480 by end of year, 6 or more per branch, using both Gates and Chicago Public Library funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations with public computers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. History of the CyberNavigator program

The previous chapter reviewed the three stages of the history of the Chicago Public Library itself: the social libraries (1833–1871), the public library (1872–present), and the public computing library (1981–present). Since 1981, the public computing library has been taking shape in the library and beyond: in the library, when public access computers were first installed, and beyond, as the internet has become a mass phenomenon nationwide, and remote access to library resources began to be offered. The CyberNavigator program began in 1999, and there have been three stages to its development as well: experimentation (1999–2002), affirmation (2003–2007), and expansion (2008–present).

The lead-up to the CyberNavigator program: Project MIND

In 1981, when Chicago Public Library’s first public access computers were installed, they were accompanied by volunteers who were “helping to orient others in the use of the computer and how to run most of the major programs and work your way through the others” (Public Computing newsletter, North Pulaski Branch Library, 1981—see appendix 6). Moreover, these volunteers helped staff as well as patrons.

But it wasn’t until the mid-1990s that government and philanthropic resources were mobilized nationwide to address the digital divide. From the start, this included public libraries, and Chicago Public Library and its foundation worked together. Installing equipment and insuring effective access and use were closely linked goals. A 1998 progress report from the Chicago Public Library Foundation explains this:

The objective of Project MIND [Meeting Information Needs Democratically] is to provide all Chicagoans, regardless of their income level, equal access to information by making available to the public at no charge the same information, resources, services and technology in all locations of the Chicago Public Library. This is particularly important in neighborhoods where personal computers are still considered luxuries and where public schools cannot compete with schools in more affluent communities.

All 79 neighborhood locations of the Chicago Public Library are now linked to the internet and provide PCs for public use in accessing the internet. The challenge now is to provide training and assistance to the thousands of children and adults who lack familiarity with computers. To meet this challenge, librarians and library staff must first be trained. (Source: Chicago Public Library CyberNavigator files)

Elsewhere Project MIND is explicitly identified with electronic information provision. The first year of funding for Project MIND came from local philanthropy: the Chicago Bulls, a fund-raising gala event, and RR Donnelley. In 1996 Microsoft and other local funders joined in. But the largest investment came from the City of Chicago itself, which
spent $4 million in 1996 and 1997 for “personal computers, wiring, servers, training, and databases” (Project MIND progress report, March 1998). One Project MIND planning document mentions establishing three training centers. What is clear from the records, though, is that by 1997 public access computers were in every library location.

Three stages to the CyberNavigator program

Chicago Public Library has now operated the CyberNavigator program for eleven years, 1999–2010. We characterize the three stages to this program as experimentation, affirmation, and transformation.


Affirmation (2003–2007): When the first summer ended, Chicago Public Library retained a small number of CyberNavigators, mostly by using extra funds from the summer program. However, in the fall of 2003, no major funder was found for the next summer. Roughly five CyberNavigators became year-round part-time workers in branches, funded by the “adopt-a-branch” fundraising efforts of the Chicago Public Library Foundation.

Expansion (2008–present): By 2008, Chicago Public Library had raised additional funds from Bank of America. Year-round CyberNavigators were hired for 40 branches, around half of the total number of branches.

Experimentation (1999–2002)

In 1998 Chicago Public Library was seeking funding for a summer Computer Camp to provide computer help, and found a willing donor in AT&T. By the time the program began it had come to be called CyberNavigators. In June 1999, 27 college students began summer jobs as CyberNavigators in 23 Chicago Public Library locations. The program maintained this design and scale for four years, as the table below suggests.

The first annual report, written in fall 1999, spelled out the goals of this program:

Chicago-area college students with computer science skills were hired by the Library to provide hands-on computer assistance to children and adult library patrons and provide support to Library staff members by troubleshooting hardware and software problems. The goals of the AT&T CyberNavigator program were to address the need for additional on-site technology support and assistance for Chicago Public Library patrons and personnel and provide local college students with meaningful summer employment and training. …
The CyberNavigators program began as a pilot project to study how the Library might meet the increasing need to provide training and reference assistance using new online resources for both Library patrons and staff. … [Chicago Public Library hopes] to address the existing public service challenges of librarians who are dealing with the increasing demand to provide assistance with online resources while maintaining traditional library resources.

From the beginning, the program operated both outside and inside the existing library organization. CyberNavigators were paid as consultants by the Chicago Public Library Foundation, not the library. But they were trained by librarian staff and the library’s IT department.

The Library attempted to give the local library location as much autonomy and control over the duties of the CyberNavigator as possible, in order to meet the specific needs of that library…. [D]uties can generally be categorized into five main areas: regular ongoing support and maintenance; troubleshooting; one-on-one patron inquiries, patron training, and downtime projects (1999 annual report to AT&T on the CyberNavigator program).

The program hit its mark. As of August 1999, every branch wanted the CyberNavigators to continue into fall, and four of them did. What did the CyberNavigators accomplish that first summer?

They took on the time-consuming and contentious task of scheduling patrons into time slots on the computers (a task done with paper sign-up sheets), as well as keeping printers stocked with paper and print jobs moving. They made the branches less reliant on Chicago Public Library's IT department by resolving basic PC problems on-site and showing branch staff how to do so. Despite having less than one week’s training in reference, they also joined in the library’s reference work:
One on one assistance and training was the highlight of the program for both the CyberNavigators and library patrons. CyberNavigators received extensive training in utilizing the Library’s online resources (web site, Internet access, databases and online catalog) to assist patrons of all ages with their basic reference questions. The CyberNavigators were also trained in how to utilize the expertise of the librarians to help them guide patrons to the proper online and/or print resources.

Relations with staff: Reflecting that the library wanted to learn from the program, the CyberNavigator program manager, herself a former librarian and internet trainer, organized and summarized midsummer and final evaluations of the program. According to one branch manager, the CyberNavigator program manager wrote:

The CyberNavigator came just as they got their administrative PC. The CyberNavigator worked with staff and they became noticeably more relaxed. She was like a gift for everyone, especially staff…. There was a bit of friction with the techie in the branch as far as roles.

In one branch the techie—a regular library staff person with better computer skills, someone other staff relied on—“had a hard time relinquishing tasks to the CyberNavigator.” The challenges mentioned by the 1999 CyberNavigators at summer’s end were summarized as:

How do I fit in?
Staff as a group may have previous problems (that I get caught in).
Staff doesn’t know my role.

Some CyberNavigators were not introduced to the staff when they started. Others sat at the reference desk and worked out a way to share tasks with the librarians. Others worked at the circulation desk during downtime. Another “worked well with the techie.”

The branch managers saw the CyberNavigators as role models for the less-privileged but same-age pages (what is/was job description of page?). Oft-mentioned areas with which the CyberNavigators helped staff included email, databases, searching, and PC familiarity. During downtime when patrons weren’t seeking their help, CyberNavigators produced webliographies on relevant topics and did installs and other projects. In the evaluations, CyberNavigators asked questions and made suggestions for better PC and peripheral configurations and complained about unresponsive IT staff and inadequate equipment: “In my branch patrons are waiting 5-7 days for a one hour internet session.”

Relations with patrons: The branch managers called the CyberNavigators “a gift” and commented approvingly that the CyberNavigators were from the local neighborhood. They and the CyberNavigators told stories of bonds between CyberNavigators and patrons. One patron told his CyberNavigator, “I’ve been waiting all week for you to start, I’m having problems with internet search.” One CyberNavigator’s weekly training session “became very popular and were attended by a loyal and ‘raucous’ following of adults from the neighborhood” (1999 report).
The 27 CyberNavigators hired for summer 1999 were 59% male, 74% enrolled in Chicagoland schools, 52% at public colleges or universities, and 78% engineering/computer science students.

1999 Cybernavigators majors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer-oriented</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering or computer science</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic communications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premed/Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeclared</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1999 Cybernavigators schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago and metropolitan area</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public colleges/universities</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private colleges/universities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Illinois</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public colleges/universities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private colleges/universities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1999 Cybernavigators gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Affirmation (2003–2007)

When AT&T declined to continue its funding, the CyberNavigator program was scaled back. It became a year-round program, though with half-time employees, and was managed by a senior administrator and/or the branch manager rather than a program director. The Chicago Public Library Foundation turned to a strategy called “Adopt-A Branch” whereby they recruited donors with a connection to a particular neighborhood or branch, and some of these funds paid the CyberNavigators. There was no manager dedicated solely to the program, and very little data is available on this stage of the program. The fact of its continuation through these years indicates local demand in the branches and local support through the foundation.

Expansion (2008–present)

In 2007 Chicago Public Library and the Foundation recruited Bank of America, which had become somewhat of a Chicago bank on account of its takeover of the then-federally-owned Continental Illinois Bank, to fund an expansion of the CyberNavigators program. A new multilingual program manager was hired who is not (yet) a librarian but has a technical background as well as extensive experience working with information technology and Chicago non-profits, including running a public computer center in Chicago’s Latino community. A four-class curriculum covering the mouse and keyboard, email, the internet, and word processing (check this) was developed for the CyberNavigators by Harold Washington Library Center staff. Roughly 40 CyberNavigators were hired. This funding, supplemented by Adopt-A-Branch donors, continues today.

In December 2009, the CyberNavigators were converted from independent contractors to employees of a staffing agency hired by the Chicago Public Library Foundation. This put them in alignment with stricter IRS rules and made them eligible for benefits. As of March 2010 the CyberNavigators work for $14 an hour, 20 hours a week, for the full year. This era of the CyberNavigators program is the focus of the current study.

From the beginning, almost all of the CyberNavigators have been posted to the 76 branches, and only a few to the two regional libraries or to the main library (Harold Washington Library Center). Because of this, and because they are constantly at the front lines of library service, listening to patrons, the CyberNavigator story is one of the history and the future of the library from below, from the people rather than the institutions. It’s more typical to read about technological revolution as something imposed by elites, for indeed it is they who were the first to use computers. But in the library, from the North Pulaski Branch in 1981 and forward to the 100%-wired branch library network of today, the grassroots are in the lead. This is suitable for an institution that is the setting for literacy and democracy.

An early Ph.D. dissertation on the branch library in Chicago (Schlipf 1969) found a pattern to branch usage: in higher-income communities, patrons would travel farther from
home to a branch to borrow books. So if branches reflect their locality, then
cybernavigating also reflects the localities. This is part of what the current study is
aiming to understand.
This is empirical research, in other words, it collects and analyzes new data. It is guided by a theoretical conception that is both historical and sociological. As a result we use the term ‘informatics moment’ for the process of a patron getting computer or internet help from a CyberNavigator. This chapter explains this term and the theory behind it.

To start: On one level, the informatics moment is when a CyberNavigator is helping a patron with computer literacy. Prior research leads us to investigate how social capital may support this process, and this is very meaningful when other forms of capital that might support digital literacy are scarce: money, human capital, and so on.

On a more abstract level, the informatics moment is something that each society, each sector, has passed through or is passing through. Industrial society is giving way to an information society. To take as an example a social sector we are all familiar with: the US mail system has been transformed by new developments such as Fedex and email that rode into existence on networked computing. The word informatics signifies the digital revolution and the network society: reorganizing and reengineering social and economic processes around digital information flows. This is a computer enabled transformation, but is social as well as technical. The tools change and so do the people, the social arrangements, the division of labor in workplaces and the social relations between people. The postman may still carry us our monthly bills, but Fedex or DHL delivers documents to business, and, even more likely, email and its attachments ping us all day long with what used to be notes, letters, and memos.

To understand the informatics moment in the branch public library—when the patron is making a leap as the broader society did when we shifted away from snail mail and phone calls towards emails and IM—we looked back at reference service.

Under various labels, reference work is one of the most examined processes in the library. This began in the 1870s as librarianship became professionalized and then the dominant library form morphed from the private lyceum to the public library. Industrialization was on the rise and the library shifted from handicraft to serve a narrow elite to a factory system to serve the broad population, with interchangeable parts (catalog cards) and a search for the “one best way.” (Taylor 1911)

In sum, over 130 years, as the U.S. public library was institutionalized and standardized, public adult library service delivery was codified in the framework of the reference interview. At one point the literature debated, What in fact was reference success? One scholar provided an answer that regardless of the source that was provided or not provided, the criteria was simply “willingness to return” (Durrance 1995) to the same librarian again. Social relations had come to the fore.
The very most recent breakthroughs in research on reference make a leap to a phenomenon they call social reference, that is, people volunteering to help each other via their social networks. (Shachaf 2010) Thus, through examining an earlier library service, we reinforce our understanding of the role of social capital.

But the CyberNavigator is not hired as a reference librarian. She does not sit across a desk interviewing someone in order to convey resources or facts or information leads to a patron. Her knowledge base does not include 130 years of library practice. She sits next to the patron providing just in time training (or sometimes an organized lesson) as the patron tackles a task he has in mind.

Conceptually the historical shift is from “the reference interview” to “the informatics moment.” The reference interaction was paradigmatic for the first century of the public library, and continues today. The informatics moment—cybernavigating—may be paradigmatic for the present and the future, now that public computing is available in the library.

When the library placed computers in a common space as a lab the digital divide became a serious library issue: How to help? Who would help? What help should be available? These were questions that were outside of the skill set of even the professional library staff. What emerged as a paradigmatic library service is helping people with the computers, and this we call the informatics moment.
Our model for the informatics moment includes the community moving through the library as a way of crossing over the digital divide. Inside the library the necessary ingredients are the computers and internet along with staff—the agents who help people learn. Perhaps they are the spark plugs of the library as an engine of the information society.

The next stage of research will tell us more about the library staff per se, but so far, the primary staff in this study are the cyber navigators. They are our point of entry into the informatics moment, so we can understand the process whereby people are crossing over the digital divide, help figure out how it works. This is critical for a democratic transformation of people’s everyday skill set, but also for the 21st century transformation of the library.
5. Research methods

The last three chapters presented historical context and a conceptual framework: 1) Chicago Public Library from 1833-present; 2) within the last stage of that, the history of CyberNavigator program from 1999-present, and 3) the new riddle of the informatics moment as compared to the clarity of 130 years of practicing and thinking about reference work. This helps us formulate specific questions to investigate.

1. Who are the agents of change in the public computing library?
2. What do they do? How do they fit into the library?
3. What factors, social capital, lead to their success?

Data collection

We used four basic approaches to data collection about the cyber navigator program in the Chicago Public Library: we read, we asked, we observed, and we discussed.

1. We read: This included being granted access to the archive that had been developed on the program, the research literature on the Chicago Public Library, the mass media, and dissertations and other research.

2. We asked: We carried out a survey (see appendix) that was answered by 37 cyber navigators. The questionnaire was focused on answering the following general questions: Who are the cyber navigators and to what extent are they involved with computer technology and working with other people? What do they do? What help do they give people at the library’s public computers? How do they fit into the library?

3. We observed: We used a method called ethnography, researchers going into the branch to join the cyber navigator, both to observe and to emulate, indirect and direct experience. We used the innovation of being engaged in the situation, continuing the tradition of Malinowski and Kenneth Clarke that much can be learned by belonging and participating in real life. Our reading of Michael Burawoy’s studies on the ethnographic method was very important for our work. We sent research team members into six library branches for one week each to observe, interact as naturally as strangers with a notebook can, and take notes. Their work was guided by a field handbook. (See appendix). Each researcher wrote daily summations of their experience. They later typed them up. Then we analyzed the electronic texts.

4. We discussed: Thus far we have had two forms of discussion about the CyberNavigator program. Through our work organizing three (soon four) annual eChicago gatherings, we met the CyberNavigators and their manager, and heard from them as a panel presentation about what they do. That session, and all of eChicago in fact, was our background text. (See appendix for each year’s program) Each year we have discussions that bring together officials and staff from all levels of the library
system and other city organizations for an open and democratic discussion of the digital transformation society is going through and what we have learned about it so far. Staff is joined by community patrons, and academics who study the library or the community. Everybody is at the table.

Besides this initial discussion, once the research started, discussion was still central. We organized three days of focus groups that enables 27 CyberNavigators to talk in small groups about their work. These discussions were audiorecorded and transcribed, and that electronic text was also studied.

This resulted in a diverse set of data: Chicago Public Library’s texts, published texts, ethnographic field notes, quantitative and textual data from the survey questions, and discussion transcripts from the eChicago conferences and the focus groups.

**Analysis**

The questionnaires enabled us to count answers and find patterns in them. To find patterns in the text, we identified specific chunks of text and sorted them by content. In the case of the ethnographic descriptions we concentrated on each instance of helping that we recorded in our notes. In the case of the focus groups, we chunked the text into 598 separate observations made by CyberNavigators. What follows here is an analysis of each type of data: the surveys, the ethnographies, and the focus groups.

Even with analysis, we are now returning to the experts in the field for their ideas. This draft and preliminary report is aimed at an audience of CyberNavigators and Chicago Public Library managers, as a tool to help everyone discover what the data has to say. Discussions at eChicago 2010 and soon after, and then another round of field work this summer, will lead to a final report.
6. Asking: Results from the survey

As of last fall, 40 CyberNavigators were working in Chicago Public Library locations. Of these, 37 completed an extensive survey. Additional demographic information was provided by Chicago Public Library. The goal with the survey was to collect trend data regarding four questions:

Who are the CyberNavigators?
What help do they provide to patrons?
What is the social context for that help?
How is social capital involved?

Who are the CyberNavigators?

Half of the 40 CyberNavigators are men, half are women. Their average age is RR, with the youngest being SS and oldest TT. On the job they speak English (100% of 37 reporting), Spanish (32% of 37), and the Chinese languages Mandarin and/or Cantonese Chinese (8% of 37). The 40 CyberNavigators are ethnically diverse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European-American</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What else do we know about them? First, they are Chicago locals. A majority of them (68%) were born in Chicagoland; an even higher percent (84%) attended local grade schools; and a similarly high percent (81%) attended local high schools. Most of the 72 schools mentioned (82%) were public schools.

Percent born in metropolitan Chicago 68%
Percent attended K-8 schools in metropolitan Chicago 84%
Percent attended high school in metropolitan Chicago 81%
Public schools as percent of all schools mentioned 82%

Second, they are well educated. Close to half of them have already completed college or university studies, at a wide range of institutions, primarily in Chicago or elsewhere in...
Illinois. The rest are enrolled in either associate’s, bachelor’s, or master’s degree programs at area universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last or current degrees</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABD (PhD coursework completed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently attending, or place of last degree

- University of Illinois at Chicago: 8
- Columbia College Chicago: 3
- DePaul University: 3
- Loyola University: 3
- University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign: 3
- Western Illinois University: 2
- Wright College: 2
- A. T. Still University (OK): 1
- Calvin College (MI): 1
- Chicago State University: 1
- Illinois Institute of Technology: 1
- North Park University: 1
- Northeastern Illinois University: 1
- Northern Illinois University: 1
- Northwestern Business College: 1
- Not given: 1
- Oakton Community College: 1
- Olive Harvey Community College: 1
- Roosevelt University: 1
- School of the Art Institute: 1
- Southern Illinois University: 1
- Temple University (PA): 1
- Truman College: 1
- Total: 40
Unlike the CyberNavigators hired in 1999, 81% of whom were in engineering or computer science, the current CyberNavigators are educated or getting an education in highly diverse fields.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Studies</th>
<th>20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and Information Science</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their jobs as CyberNavigators are by and large their first jobs with Chicago Public Library. Seven of them had already worked elsewhere in the library: six as pages, one as a summer reading intern. Two had worked in other libraries and two others had worked in tech support. Slightly more than half are working no other job. Only a small minority of CyberNavigators have children.

| First time at Chicago Public Library  | 81% |
| No other job                          | 59% |
| Have children                         | 16% |

They have at least one computer at home, and often two.

| Have a home computer                  | 36 |
| Both desktop and laptop               | 14 |
| Laptop                                | 13 |
| Desktop                               | 7  |
| Not specified                         | 2  |
| No computer at home                   | 1  |
| All                                   | 37 |
At home, they also generally have a fast internet connection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broadband</th>
<th>33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialup</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No home internet access</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They have a wide variety of digital tools at home:

- blackberry
- camcorder
- cellphone
- computer microphone
- desktop computer
- digital cable with on demand
- digital camera
- digital turntable
- dish cable
- DJ equipment
- DVD
- DVD/VCR player
- game device
- HDTV
- iphone
- laptop computer
- minicam
- mp3 player
- nintendo
- nintendo wii
- playstation 2
- playstation 3
- printer
- remote control airplane
- scanner
- self-made go-cart
- smart phone
- telescope
- TV
- video camera
- vivi S5 (handheld ultramobile PC)
- webcam
- wii
- xbox
- xbox 360

And, they are highly active digitally. Below are their answers to the question: What have you used a computer for in the past week?

- airline check in
- all of google
- apply for jobs
- back up files
- banking
- basic google searches
- basic spreadsheets
- basic web research
- bill pay
- bills
- blogging
- books
- bowling research
- build resumes
- buy software
- catalog personal library
- chat
- check international news
- check weather
- check/read info from school website
- checked emails
- communicate with friends
- create facebook
- data entry
- did some research for an assignment
- different cell phone
- companies webpages
- donorperfect
- downloading
- downloading music
- email
- everything
- excel
- facebook
- facebook (games)
- filled out my time sheet
- fix friends blackberry pearl
- flights
- games
- help on managing email
- helping with email
- helping with social networking
- homework
- importing contacts to different email
- index
- instant messaging
- internet browsing
- internet research
- internet resources
- job search
- letters
- listen to music
A total of 34 CyberNavigators also answered the following questions about specific computer uses. The questions are ranked in order from most typical use to least.
 Altogether, the CyberNavigators are upwardly mobile, plugged-in young people, the very netizens that have been identified as the leading force in the information revolution.

**What are the informatics moments, or in other words, what help do the CyberNavigators provide to patrons?**

In order to develop a profile of the informatics moments that take place in Chicago Public Library branches, the survey asked a number of questions about the help given to patrons.
The informatics moments can be broken down into four categories of literacy, or put another way, social practices involving recorded information. These four categories build on each other:

- Basic literacy: Reading and writing
- Computer literacy: Using computers and the internet
- Library literacy: Using the library’s tools and systems, and
- Domain literacy: Combining the above literacies to accomplish a task within a certain domain of life or work.

Two questions involved basic literacy. Most CyberNavigators reported helping people with reading or writing either daily or weekly. So in almost all locations, patrons using the public access computers are seeking help with basic literacy. In most branches these types of informatics moments happen every day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you...</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Less than monthly or never</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...help people write something?</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...help people read something?</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six questions involved computer literacy: using the mouse, the browser, email, an office application, social networking sites, online games, or a computer class taught in the library. All CyberNavigators reported helping patrons use the mouse, the browser, and email either daily or weekly. Nearly all (95%) of CyberNavigators reported helping patrons produce or update documents (besides resumes, see below). Patrons are obtaining help using social networking sites, but less often. And 68% of CyberNavigators reported helping patrons with an online game.

A particular approach to computer literacy is scheduling a class and teaching people who have signed up for that class; 70% of CyberNavigators reported that mode of help giving (48% daily or weekly, 22% monthly).
A third type of informatics moment involved helping with computer uses that are particular to the branch library. These are forms of library literacy: printing and making reservations via the library’s own technology and procedures; using the library’s online catalog; and searching its databases. Printing and reservations help were by far the most frequent for all CyberNavigators. To print a document or to make, change, or extend a reservation at one of the public access computers involves interacting with multiple computers and staff members. The configuration of people and tools for these interactions is unique to Chicago Public Library and reflects an engineered solution to the problem of scarce resources: paper and toner on the one hand, and computers on the other.

Less often, but still almost universally (92%), CyberNavigators report helping patrons with the library’s online catalog and databases. These informatics moments are somewhat less unique, being rather common across all U.S. libraries. They are more usually considered “information literacies” that MLS-degreed library staff are taught, and expected to teach others.
The fourth and final set of informatics moments involved literacies concerning particular content areas. In other words, they involve using computers to do work in a specific domain. As a result, they require some domain knowledge on the part of the CyberNavigator. The three most frequent involve job seeking: applying online, searching for jobs, and working with resumes. Various types of domain literacy help are listed below, according to how many CyberNavigators provide this help daily. Help with job seeking, research, homework, benefits, and government information more generally are provided most frequently. Help related to current events and culture, e-commerce, health, and homeless issues is provided less frequently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you...</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Less than monthly or never</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... help people apply for a job online?</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people search for jobs?</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people produce or update a resume?</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people do other research?</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people do homework?</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people get or check on benefits?</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people use other government websites [besides benefits]?</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people look into current events or cultural information?</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people bank, buy, sell, or do other e-commerce?</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people get health information?</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help people seek resources relating to being homeless?</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the social context for the informatics moments in the library?

The context for the CyberNavigators’ providing of help includes the library itself and the broader community. The survey asked briefly about two aspects of the library: staff and space.

CyberNavigators in the branch libraries reported that on average 3.4 non-librarian staff and 2.3 librarian staff were onsite at any given time.
The library space can be divided into two zones: space accessible only to staff, and space for the public. Hired by the Chicago Public Library Foundation, but in the library 20 hours a week year round, CyberNavigators are not quite library staff. The computers and the patrons are in the public space. About-one third of the CyberNavigators report that they usually sit in the public space.

Their patrons inhabit a neighborhood that may have other places to get online. CyberNavigators mentioned three kinds of places they knew of where their patrons were accessing computers: other public places run by nonprofits, government organizations, or businesses (32 mentions). Personal spaces or making use of portable personal devices was also mentioned. Workplaces were mentioned, but least frequently.

### Library staff on site, on average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branches</th>
<th>average</th>
<th>minimum</th>
<th>maximum</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessionals (33 CNs reporting)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarians (35 CNs reporting)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where do you usually sit at work? (37 CNs responding)</th>
<th>In staff-only space</th>
<th>In public space</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public computing</th>
<th>32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non profit: community center, job help center, senior center, places of workshop</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government: schools, colleges, libraries, unemployment office</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial: internet café, computer store</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal computing: one’s own home, family’s house, friend’s house, apartment complex, senior housing, mobile devices, gaming systems</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private computing: at work</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** | **61**
How is social capital involved in the informatics moments in the library?

Resources that come to you on account of your social contacts are called social capital. Social capital can be expressed as familiarity with others; help given freely, people choosing to cooperate or spend time together, and so on. The survey asked about three kinds of social capital that might be involved in the informatics moments: the CyberNavigator’s own social capital; the community’s or the patron’s social capital; and staff social capital.

The CyberNavigators report a high level of familiarity with their patrons—every day they help someone they recognize or know by name. A smaller number of CyberNavigators choose to bring their own laptop to work as an additional tool for helping patrons, with some of them even letting patrons use their personal laptop. Fifty-one percent of the CyberNavigators help someone they know in another setting. Very few CyberNavigators get together with patrons outside the library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social capital indicators: How often do you...</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Less than monthly or never</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... help someone you recognize but don’t know their name?</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help someone you know by name?</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... bring your own laptop to work?</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... help someone you know from an activity or organization you are part of outside work?</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... do you have your patrons use your laptop as part of your helping them?</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... see, run into or get together with library patrons outside of work?</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The community itself is formed of social networks that may be robust or weak, densely knit or sparse, and the patrons reflect this. Patrons frequently (73% daily) know the CyberNavigator by name. They often indicate that they were referred by someone they know (28% daily, 50% weekly). And they often come in pairs or groups for help (14% daily, 41% weekly).
A workplace is also a social network, and social capital may be in evidence as staff work together. The library staff frequently refer patrons to the CyberNavigator for help, particularly the librarians. But they also help the patrons themselves (41% daily, 35% weekly), even beyond the most common requests for printing or reservations help. A small number of cybernavigators get together or even run into staff outside of work.

One additional measure of social capital is computer/internet help that the CyberNavigator gives to people outside of their job. All the CyberNavigators reported helping someone. Most often were family members, friends, or coworkers (which primarily means other library staff), and one CyberNavigator each mentioned neighbors, strangers, patrons, job-seekers, and fellow church members.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousins</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older relatives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-workers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrons</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults returning to employment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one of the above</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Observing: Results from ethnographies

In the surveys, CyberNavigators told about four different types of literacy that their patrons sought help with. But the research team also witnessed informatics moments themselves by observing for several days in six branches. To do this, we developed and used a field handbook that spelled out what to look for (Appendix 2). While in the field, researchers wrote notes that included what they saw and what they thought of what they saw: observations and individual reflections. This helped to begin the synthesis of raw data into findings.

The result of the field work was handwritten notes, so the next step was to type them up. This made them easily searchable. All the informatics moments, any specific instances of CyberNavigators helping patrons, were marked. We had recorded information about 156 informatics moments across all the branches.

Each person’s notes were somewhat different, but patterns were visible. We coded the 156 informatics moments according to the four categories of literacy reported in the surveys and a pattern emerged. Three of the four types appeared in the field notes. Library literacy was most frequent; then computer literacy; then domain literacy. We did not see any moments of help with basic literacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding the helping interactions reported in field ethnographies</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>basic literacy (as in the survey data)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer literacy (as in the survey data)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library literacy (as in the survey data)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>domain literacy (as in the survey data)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These three types of literacy can be thought of as three concentric circles, each providing wider and wider access to information. First comes computer literacy. That enables a patron to gain library literacy. These two forms of literacy then enable a patron to gain domain literacy, that is, to participate in specific online aspect of community or social life—looking for work, doing homework, and so on.
Computer literacy

We observed 46 instances of helping with computer literacy, or 26% of all the informatics moments observed. Eight stories, told in the original language of the observer, illustrate how CyberNavigators help with computer literacy.

Passwords and security questions are recurring problems for patrons who may not use accounts often enough to remember them, though people do persevere and learn.

(1) Patron couldn’t sign in Yahoo, so came to CN. Gave instruction to answer security questions, but the patron couldn’t remember so that ended up creating a new account. Then asked suggestions for his new account name at yahoo. Again, they communicated in Spanish. The patron gave CN eye contact (no voice heard, no hand raised). CN recalled this patron asking him a lot of questions at the beginning. Now that the patron got used to the Internet, there are much less questions he asks CN.

Big computer questions often have to be broken down into smaller questions. As this story also shows, there is camaraderie and mutual help between patrons and with CN, even when they are meeting for the first time.
(2) A Chinese male senior. Language in which they talked with CN: Mandarin; What does he ask for help from CN? “What to select on Internet?”
(在网上可以选择一些什么?) What do they do? CN presents a list of useful websites to the patron, shows how to close and open a computer in library. How to search and find places and get information on how to take public transportation to the destination. Does the patron know the CN before? No, they know each other just when they reserved the one-on-one training.

Other issues: (1) an another male senior came to say hello to the CN “Teacher, how are you doing?”, and then sat in front of the computer next to the CN; (2) later the man later interrupted the one-on-one training suddenly, and asked the CN that how to use the yahoo email. But the CN refused the patron’s request because she’s so busy with the hands-on training. Then the second patron began to browse news in Chinese instead of using email. (3) shortly before class ended the three began to discuss with each other about geography information of Chicago such as where’s some places or bus stops.

CNs become a neighborhood “go-to person” for computers, as one librarian put it and these three stories of informatics moments show.

(3) People ask for advice on buying computers. Price ranges, operating systems are common questions. The CN will take people to the websites of various retailers —Best Buy, Target—to give them an overview. That opens up a host of questions, like “What is 4GB of RAM?” The Chicago Public Library doesn’t offer a “how to buy a computer” class.

(4) A fifth-grade boy student who has just immigrated to Chicago with his parents; his mother takes him to the library to learn how to use library. They told me they have no TV and computer at home; so they come to learn and use computer in library. Language in use. Mandarin (with strong Southern China dialect); What does he ask for help from CN? To learn English and computer at the same time. What do they do? Teach the little boy to access to free WIFI in the library on a library’s laptop and use the search engine to find assistance for homework. The little boy wants to learn email, but CN says there is some restriction on kids to learn email. Only those who are above 12 can be taught how to apply email account and use it. CN also helps them to find suitable laptop prices on Best Buy to assist their purchasing wish. Whether does the patron know CN before? His mom ever heard of neighbors’ talking on the free computer training course in library.

(5) I noticed regular patrons coming to CN and asked about their personal computers. The major purpose of the computer use at the library is the Internet, which is the only thing they can do. If the computer has more to offer, what could happen?!

The reservation system is tricky at many levels. This is just one example.
First-time patron needs help figuring out reservations system, logging into computer. (“Is the 0 on the library card a zero or an oh?”)

Here is an example of a basic computer lesson offered by one CN. As she said about her work, “It takes patience, not computer skills.” Her inside knowledge of the patron’s recent layoff helped orient her to helping him.

Patron asked about one on one and about class on Friday. Patron wants to get better at his laptop which he brought. He had an appointment with CN so asked for her by name. She did not know him before. Did he want to use his laptop or the library computer, CN asked. The library computer. “My nephew showed me a few things” but I want to learn more. I don’t like the mouse on the laptop, would rather use the mouse like the library PC. She began by explaining, the keyboard and the mouse is how you tell the computer what to do. You control it, it follows your commands. The screen is what it tells you back. The real computer is the box here that the screen is sitting on. Then she explained and moused around the items on the browser window already open. Then the address box. She explained the parts of the URL. Including .gov, .edu, .org, .com, saying you can’t believe everything on the internet, especially the .com, so look at that to know where the information is coming from. Then she had him type www.pdclibrary.org/mousing which was a tutorial introducing the mouse and read through the screens and moused herself, and then passed the mouse to him and he worked through each page. The right side of the mouse is disabled on the library PCs she explained. She read out loud for the first part, following the words on the lesson screens closely. First part she had the mouse, then she gave to him and he followed instructions on the screen. He made it through the lesson which took close to an hour. She explained you could get a mouse and plug it into a laptop if you don’t like the trackpad. Patron mentioned the local pawn shop as a source. When she introduced the text box for typing in she said, this is for when you fill in a job application. A practical personally-tailored explanation of the importance of this form for someone who is unemployed. CN later explained that he was recently laid off and wants to do something, not sit home.

**Library literacy**

We observed 76 instances of helping with library literacy, or 44% of all the informatics moments observed. These moments were extremely repetitive and often brief, to get a patron unstuck in a complex and unfamiliar process. Or they were difficult because technology or policy prevents the library from helping, and the patrons aren’t aware of this. Printing a document brought into the library is only permitted at a few locations, elsewhere it can be done via a workaround, but viruses can be a risk.

Man came in asking CN at front circ desk if she would print something that he had on a flash drive he held up. CN didn’t know him. She said no, had to
insist that she could not help him as he asked more than once, clearly

disappointed. She told him to go to Woodson Regional where they would put his
file on a floppy and then he could print it. Woodson’s Word computers don’t take
flash drives, only floppies. There is no place in the neighborhood CN knows of
where people can drop in and get something printed. The two places that teach
Microsoft Office do not allow people to drop in.

(9) Circ desk staff shows another patron how to access the print machine.

10 The reservation system is confusing to many patrons.

(10) Patron returns to complain that another patron somehow has 30 minutes
on the 15 minute Quick Access computer. Library staff looks exasperated and
checks the time on the computer—it actually says 30 seconds. Patron apologizes.
He had two reservations but missed his first one so CN makes a new reservation
for him.

(11) CN helps a patron with a reservation sign on.

(12) A male patron in a bicycle helmet needed help reserving a computer.

22 File management, printing, and reservation processes are frustrating enough for everyone
involved that rules are bent in order to satisfy patrons and make life easier for all.

(13) CN helps a man in the adult computer room. He wanted to attach a resume
to an email, but he couldn’t since they can’t download on the computers. She
circumvented this by saving to the Temp folder and attaching the resume for him
she said that you have to pick your battles. It would have taken him an hour to do
it, and it took her 5 minutes to get around it.

(14) Man in his 70s was standing in front of computer with other patrons. ->
CN asked what help he needed. Found out that the patron’s reservation was
cancelled because he didn’t log in within 10 minutes of his reserved time. CN
went to the reserve machine and made him a second reservation

36 Some tasks are easy enough, and the CN busy enough, that the researcher observing
could step in to expedite matters.

(15) I help a patron with a Mac laptop access the wifi.

(16) Boy wanted to print. I taught him to use printer station and assisted him to
send a printer job.

44 The catalog is not transparent to all patrons.
(17) CN helps a kid find a book, search the catalog, points out the reference librarian for more help.

4 Domain literacy

We observed 34 instances of helping with domain literacy, or 20% of all the informatics moments observed. Far and away the most instances of domain literacy involved the domain of job seeking. The CyberNavigator is juggling unique and lengthy online application forms, computer time limits, job advice, established relationships with patrons, and other patrons waiting. One of the other domains is apartment seeking, and Craigslist is an example of a resource people have heard of, but don’t know how to use.

(18) Immediately after CN offered help, she asked “Can I check craigslist?” -> CN told her the computer she was pointing to was catalog machine. CN told her she would need a library card and reserve computer. She asked “Does it cost money?” CN answers “only if you want to print something.” CN set up a computer (opening a browser, opening the craigslist page for Chicago apartment.) CN explained her here are apartment for rent postings and scroll down for more information.

(19) Same person as one hour ago. CN approached her as seeing her screen that said “complete.” Asked what to do next and also showed him a little bit of anxiety if she really did complete the process by saying “is it really done? Do I need confirmation or anything like that?” to CN. -> CN suggested either go to the shop directly and tell them you applied online or call them you completed online application. I asked CN how could you give her such a practical suggestion. As like the above (previous session with her and following questions/insights) he learned about it from experiences helping and his own experiences. He said it would be great if they called you, but usually they don’t. So it’s good to call or go to them telling that you did it. => it sounds to me very life-experience advice. He is just 21 years old!

(20) A race against the clock: we help the patron publishing his resume to Career Builder find the submit button. The formatting of his document has been parsed poorly by the website, so we have to scroll several screen lengths over to find it. We find the button, but with only five seconds to go. The page doesn’t submit fast enough; the patron goes to make a reservation for another day.

(21) A woman wants help writing a resume, but CN doesn’t help with the writing part. She helps her find books on writing resumes and directs her to some places that can help with that. She makes an appointment with her to come in for help uploading and typing it after she writes it out by hand. CN made an appointment for her to help her upload a resume and find job information pertaining to nursing. CN also went to find books on resumes for nurses and people in the medical field because this woman was an RN. CN couldn’t find any
books specific to jobs in that field at first, but later she found a book called something like “Jobs in Health and Science” which had a lot of useful information in it. She identified some of the best sections of the book and set it aside so that she could use it in their meeting on Friday.

6

(22) A confident young woman came to the desk and quietly asked about uploading a resume. She already had a Gmail account so CN assumed she was computer savvy, but the woman said that she had only had the account for a week. She made an appointment for Friday for help with creating her resume and attaching it to an email. She seemed young and tech-savvy and confident. This moment helped me realize that all types of people have different problems with technology.

14

(23) A person whom CN had helped before came by to tell her that she got a job at Au Bon Pain.

16

(24) Female looked for a website for the job application. -> CN saw her with someone else at her computer desk, so he went to her an offer for help. Needed what to do with the application. -> He asked which McDonald shop she want to work at, its zip code. Did not know the address or zip -> He navigated her to locate the shop by asking which neighborhood and city name using MapQuest. Did not know (or forgot…) how to access to the website. -> He asked her if she wanted him to do it. She said yes. He began reading loud what the site asks to fill out one step at a time. (the website requires to fill out online resume type of information as well as 60 questions maybe about her past experiences and etc.) She has handwritten information of her past work experiences such as address and name of the company she has worked, year, and length of the employment. Joan helped her quite long time reading it loud and teaching her how to use a mouse and how to click. In the middle, when it asks social security number, he told her “You need to fill the all the blanks, there are 60 questions you have to answer. The application for the management you have to answer a lot of questions.” He also offered her an extension of time to use the computer. Set-up time for reserved computer use is 60 minutes.

34

Other observations

36

In several branches we learned about “regulars” who come often enough to be known among staff, just like in the neighborhood bar.

40

(25) A regular who is sometimes difficult to help needs help because the paper is out in the receipt printer on the computer reservation machine.

42

One CN and librarian mentor each other.
Chat between the CN and a librarian. (1) The librarian told us that she’s getting old and becoming less clever, and couldn’t learn computer skills the same fast as youth. The CN comforted her with a story of a seventy-year-old lady. The senior attended the CN’s course, and she practiced typing by keyboards for three hours in three weeks. Finally she’s so good at typing. The librarian said: “So many seniors knew the computer training course from their friends and came in the library to learn from the CN.” (2) CN told us that she wandered on the street some other day. A young lady stopped her and shouted excitedly that “you’re the teacher who ever taught my mom to use computer!” (3) The librarian complained that it’s so expensive to use computers and access to internet in cybercafe around the neighborhood. The CN and the librarian hold a solid relationship in culture, working and lunch time.

Who’s the STAFF needing technical support? A librarian in branch. Language in use: English. What help from CN? How to attach the scanned documents to email; What they do? Scan the documents and send email in the form of attachment. Whether they know the CN before? Yes, they know each other for some years because of the job relations. The CN keeps a close relationship with the librarian.

The CN decides to go print extra flyers. “Patrons sense you’re gone and need help,” she says about going into the staff area for any amount of time. Internet job search flyers go the fastest. CN makes 10 copies. Also makes copies of her schedule, some other documents. All of these she has made herself. She says Chicago Public Library docs must go through some sort of process—or at least have the logo at the top and bottom [I’m the one who’s unclear about this, not her—have to check]. She just does hers because it’s faster, not too much of a worry. She has a flash drive in a drawer in the staff area with forms and flyers and etc. CN has built a business-card sized template for GMAIL addresses. It has a space to write the address. She gives them to patrons when they sign up for emails, because they tend to forget them and ask why the CN hasn’t remembered for them. Self-made bookmark with the various parts of a browser window explained in Spanish.

Security guard came to CN, telling a girl at the kid’s station is too small or old to be in the kid’s station. -> CN went to her and asked every kid his or her age. And he specifically asked that girl, and she was actually 14 years old with her little brother and sister. Eventually CN explained the difference between adult and kid area for computer use. He instructed her for next time she would need to check in for adult section. CN brought up an issue of role being not only CN but also monitor. When two people were allowed to share one pc, there were more interaction and sometime disturbing. But now that only one person can use one computer, and CN is present as well as security guard, the atmosphere and environment of the library become much quieter and distilled from those disturbance.
(30) CN says, Lots of mothers looking for jobs at the branch. They want hand-holding, want the CN to tell them when it’s o.k. to click. Jewish, Arabic, Spanish population there. Could use someone fluent in Arabic (she knows none).

(31) People in the neighborhood call the CN “The circuit breaker lady” [Circuit Breaker is state assistance for low income/senior/disabled.] Most people come in by word of mouth—CN grew up locally, goes to church down the street. People often think I am working outside my job but this (helping with computers) is my job I tell them—one woman got help with an insurance problem and brought her fruit, was so appreciative and I really didn’t do that much. The elderly people are the ones that request one on one most often. And my work is more about having patience than knowing about computers. All this while behind the desk she is doing as she jokes “50 million things at once” getting people reservations and checking out books and answering all kinds of questions. CN comments how it was great at this branch she could do all these things, when she had been a page at the start elsewhere she couldn’t, just had to direct patrons to the other staff, but here her former branch manager wanted everyone to be able to do everything. A good thing and a bad thing, she laughed, because now she did a lot.

(32) In class patrons talk with each other, help each other. Kids help each other all the time, CN learns things from them, they don’t come to her for help unless there’s a breakdown or malfunction.

(33) The CN’s first student was a man with a learning disability. His wife is the one who contacted her about computer classes and actually made an appointment with her first to see how she would be teaching. This demonstrated to me that there are strong social ties among the patrons of the library and that the people who come to her aren’t isolated individuals.

(34) Public libraries are unpredictable in their patrons and their level of activity. Especially in smaller libraries, the staff has to multitask to keep things afloat. There seems to be less job differentiation here.

(35) The majority of questions I observed were simple to the point of triviality. There seems to be little difference between the ability of nonprofessional staff and professional librarians to handle these. The security guard seemed as competent as any of the staff at helping patrons register for a computer session or search for a book.

(36) In the library, teaching “technology” or “computers” doesn’t seem to help the patrons as much as we’d hope. What does help is inside knowledge of the tools, procedures, and skills necessary for accessing the resources patrons need. People who have access to the Internet and the skills to use it usually don’t need the library’s help to get information—at least, not anymore. The people who do bring their deep questions to the library need service from someone who is a CyberNavigator and more.
The CyberNavigators are expected to walk a line between teaching people how to use computers and relating to their personal problems. It doesn’t seem that they are trained or expected to triage social service problems. That creates a tension: the CyberNavigator can show patrons how to write a resume, but should they give advice on activities that might improve their chances for a job later? I think so. Social service programs have developed a large system of services. Libraries should at least have a formal pipeline into that network and be expected to use it.
8. Discussing: Results from focus groups

The CyberNavigators are a workforce that simultaneously isolated and immersed. Their closest peers are other CyberNavigators spread out across the city. Their closest co-workers are library workers who inhabit their own occupational hierarchy. Their closest contacts are members of the public seeking to carry out tasks that require more digital literacy than they have. So the CNs had not had face to face time with each other, and they wanted it. As a result, the focus groups turned out to have an interventionist impact.

Over a three day period, we conducted six focus groups including 27 CyberNavigators. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed. We identified 598 meaningful segments of the discussion, and we looked for patterns. In these segments the CNs affirm each other, almost complete each others sentences, and enjoy talking to each other.

1. The helping experience. First, 104 segments (17% OF 598) told stories about the informatics moment. What happens when a CN helps someone with computers or the internet?

2. The broader environment:
   a. … outside the library. A total of 79 segments (13% of total) talked about the social conditions outside the library and how they enter into the library. The most sensational (and rare) were about people having sex in the library, which is perhaps just an expression of a level of mayhem due to poverty, substance abuse, homelessness, and a breakdown of the social contract or mutual respect between people and the public library.
   b. … and inside the library. Forty-one segments (7%) discussed different approaches to space and staff computer access, with the CNs generally having uncertain claims to space or to systems.
   c. … especially the public access computers. These segued into complaints (and a few suggestions) about the public access technology in the library (65 segments, 11%).

3. The CyberNavigators. In 97 segments (16%) CyberNavigators talked about themselves: their attributes, training, and skills; their isolation and how useful it would be to overcome this isolation.

4. System to system. Finally, the largest number of segments (212, or 35%) compared what they do with the library itself. A picture emerged of two systems that collaborate, conflict, co-exist, and are a bit confused by each other.

What follows are the most salient segments of each type, organized to walk the reader though a summation of the 150+ page transcript that was the raw focus group data.
**Best and worst stories**

Each focus group began with telling stories. Each CyberNavigator was asked to bring two stories—the best that they’d experienced on the job, and the worst. One set of stories were about people gaining computer literacy. Here is one victory story that is typical in that the patron returned with a small thank you gift. (Researchers comments are here in *italics*.)

(1) My best experience was helping this old lady to learn how to use a computer. Afterwards she was so thankful for me because maybe it was her culture or something to thank the people who helps her and she made me a box of homemade chicken legs. I didn’t go hungry that day.

*Researcher: What were you teaching her to do?*

Just basic computer usage like going on the internet. She came to me for about five weeks, maybe one or twice days a week. Eventually I started teaching her about the mouse, the keyboard, and then we went on about teaching her about the internet. She eventually got, know how to use the email and browsing the web.

*What language were you helping her in?*

Mandarin.

They are teaching people who are just beginning to understand the digital world, for whom (research has shown) emotional support in learning is at least as important as skills development: (Line breaks signal one person answering another within one segment.)

(2) The elderly I have fun with too and the children. The elderly because they come in as such eager learners. I mean you really just have no problem with them. You can see them light up about what they’ve been missing and all that when they get used to computers and everything. And I’ve told a story, I say, “You know when computers first came about and all this, I was kind of put off by it. I said I’ll never catch on. But I ain’t going to worry about it. And look at me now, I’m helping people make the transition, that bridge to technology as it were.” Once they get used to pushing them buttons and typing and all that, it’s no big deal. And then when they get that email address? Oh, that’s a real biggie—

Opens the door.

They’re like “I have it now?” And you’re like “Yes! You just did it.” And they’re like “How do they know I’m here?”

CyberNavigators have success even when they have to improvise to teach people who might have special needs.
(3) Just recently these two, a handicapped couple, came into the library. They just recently got married about a year ago and they came in and wanted to use the internet to learn how to do email. At first I thought it was going to be really hard for me ’cause I don’t really have any training dealing with people with disabilities and things like that. I went into it thinking that I was going to try my best and whatever and so when we did it, it went really well and I actually, it’s amazing how going into things you think one way and coming out of it you think completely different because it was one of the best experiences I’ve had in my two years of doing this. He completely caught on to everything. It took a couple of times. We didn’t really sit down and have, he just dropped in whenever he had the time and he [said] “—, I want to check  my email.” “OK, let’s do it.” The best part of the story is when I was making his account for him he sat down and I said “Think of a password that you’ll remember.” And he said “—.” So that was just really cool and that’s what caught my eye. They’re mentally handicapped. I actually look forward to him coming in now. Cause it’s just one of those things. Cause when he comes in he’s like “Hi, —. How are you?” And other people who don’t have that issue tend to be sometimes rude. So it’s interesting to think how people go into it thinking “Oh, this is going to be really hard. This is going to be a challenge.” And it turns out to be a really good experience.

One more story of computer literacy illustrates the community building that goes on in the lifelong learning setting of the library, when a patron and CyberNavigator end up teaching each other.

(4) There is one experience that sticks out more than the rest for a positive experience, and that’s with Miss —— . She started out being afraid of, like, breaking the internet. Wouldn’t even touch the computer. Like, she came, she’s looking at it, I’m like, “It’s OK, you can touch it. It won’t break.”And it took a little over two weeks before she was able to get the hang of, like, the whole thing. She could go make a reservation, she could go to the computer, get it started, go, like, look up things, like, here in Chicago, and she’s so excited, she’d come back: “Oh, you’re such a good teacher.” And I think the best part of it was that she actually started schooling me on little things. I’m like: “Oh, how do you know about that?” I told her, I’m like: “I think you’re spending a little too much time on the internet!” {laughs}

The dominant narrative of cybernavigating work is helping people find jobs. Many CyberNavigators told success stories that ended with a patron expressing deep gratitude.

(5) One of my best success stories was a young lady I was assisting with job searching. We originally started out with just the internet basics and, you know, she just wanted to learn how to use the computer. And it went from learning how to use the computer, then she wanted to do a resume, and then—she seen me helping someone else do a resume prior to her session, and then she was interested in wanting to make a resume. We went from resumes to applying for jobs online. And she was coming out of a [battered] relationship, and it went
from—she wanted to have her own identity, her own income, and she went from, like, not really having a job or having a lot of experience, but I was able to utilize just her volunteer experience and some of—you know, just some of the life experiences that she had, to be able to articulate it into a resume format. And we applied for a job at —— as a — specialist, and she actually got the interview and went in and got the job and everything. And I was just so, so happy for her because she was like: “This is, like, the most money I ever made in my life,” and she’s like: “I would never have made it if it wasn’t for you,” and everything, and I just—I felt good because she was looking for something and she got it, you know what I’m saying? And then it went from her being able to go from [a certain point in] life and not thinking that she can actually get to that point.

These victories happen even though online job forms combined with time limits on the computers put excruciating demands on new computer users.

(6) I had these three guys come into the library, and they were all trying to apply for jobs. Like, two were brothers, and one was their cousin, and they were all trying to apply for a job at a job fair or, you know, something or other. And so the recruiter told them to hurry up and fill out the application; they were a shoe-in. The only thing they had to do was the application. And they got to the library, they had been there before, but they couldn’t get the application done because they couldn’t, like, get the an example of how to enter it in, like, either use dashes or slashes or something. And they had to keep coming to the library because they kept running out of time because they weren’t filling the forms out correctly because it kept saying: “Please, do this again. Please, do this again.” So they eventually had to keep coming back and keep coming back, so they could finally, you know, get it done, and so I was there through the whole application with them, and one of them came back and said, you know, we got the job. Well, I haven’t seen him in the library since, and they just kept coming back. So that was the good thing. I enjoyed that.

Applying for a job in the current online formats usually means starting at the very beginning, working closely together on a very personal matter, and the successes become icons for the CyberNavigator and the community.

(7) It was an older gentleman who came into see me. He needed help, a lot of help. He needed very basic computer help, setting up an email but ultimately he wanted to find a job. His main issue was that he had just been in prison for seven years and for a non-violent crime as far as I know. Because when you help people with job stuff you end up finding out about their records just cause it’s part of the questions on most applications. And then people have been pretty open with telling me how long they were there and why and not cause I’m asking just cause they just usually tell me in one sentence like “Oh, well I was you know…”

So. And he was really sweet but it took a very long time working with him and I had to use a lot of patience with him and he was really nice when he came in. He always called me Miss —. He was always very respectful and so we took some
pretty long sessions and he’s actually one of the reasons why I had to sort of decide that I needed to cap my sessions at five because you know he basically kept coming in for several, several sessions and they would stretch. And just because he was so nice I would kind of make an exception for him and then you know once he sort of graduated from learning with me I gave him some resources, some connections to other organizations around — where he could go and learn even more skills than just internet and basic computer.

And he did that and he would come back and report and say “Oh, Miss —, I’m taking this class” and you know, I was like “Oh, I’m so proud of you and that’s really great” and he would just come and see me and say hi. And then one weekend I was at my grocery store shopping and he was working there! And he’s like “Hey, you helped me get this job” and he’s like “I’m working full time” and he was really happy and you know he was just, and to me that’s like one of the best stories ever that I was able to help this guy and he really wanted to turn his life around and he was just so sweet and willing to learn and just very eager and you know, I’m just really glad that in the hard times we are having right now that he was able to find a job even with all these things, obstacles in his way.

And I think of a lot of people that come out of jail are very anxious about trying to find a job, and being able to tell them “Hey, I know this guy who” and I obviously don’t give them too many details but I just say “He was able to find something” and you’re willing to learn and yeah, and you’re willing to put something into it and you will get something out of it.

Without any particular professional preparation, but as trusted peers, CNs serve as job coaches and job counselors and invent ways to work which mirror trained social workers and librarians, for instance, in striving for follow-up.

(8) I actually assisted this lady who had been coming in for awhile with her resume and looking for work. She had been coming—she’d been coming to me for about —since I started back in —. So four months. We just—I just spent so many, like, times with her, filling out—helping her fill out job applications.

Eventually, she kind of got the hang of it so she would come in regularly, and then she would just ask me: “Well, help me print out this,” and so I’d show her how to print out her resume on her own.

So she would come in with different jobs. She was looking for truck driving jobs. So we constantly looked for different jobs everywhere. Chicago jobs.com and different work sites. So she came in one day, and she told me, she said: “—, I got an interview.” I said: “Thank God.” I’m like: “Thank God, that’s so good. Because, you know, you’ve been so persistent and you’ve been coming in to me, like, you know, three times a week.” And I was really excited for her. The only issue was that she had a felony, she had that on her record from, like, a few years back. I told her, you know, “Be honest on the application. You know, if you decide not to, you know, it’s not up to me to decide that.”

So—but she did put down that she did have a felony on her record, and I’m hoping that everything went well with her. She normally comes in all the time, so I haven’t seen her in a week. So I’m hoping that she did get the job, though. So
that has to be one of the good—one of the best because, you know, they saw that on her application, and for them to still ask her, you know, to come in for an interview, I felt like that was really good. And it was actually with —, so I’m hoping. That was one of the best.

I said: “If you don’t do anything else for me, I can’t accept money. But if you can’t do anything else, just let me know. Because, you know, even if you have to email me, let me know.” I make sure all my patrons, like, do a follow-up with me when I help them with something like that. Or even with – you know, even when I help patrons with – with even, like, email classes. Like, let me know how it went, and let me know if you need help, you know? Always. If you can’t come in, just call me [at the library].

At the same time, jobs are scarce. Online applications even for a basic service job are the rule, and when patrons find this out it can undo them, the CyberNavigator, or both.

(9) First, it requires a lot of patience for this job. And even when the patron thinks that you’re wrong, although, you know, clearly you’re helping them, but they are so convinced that you might be doing it wrong. Or sometimes we’re not allowed to actually handle their personal information. Like, something where they need to put their Social Security number in, things like that. Like, I want to help them, but, I can’t really put in your number. You know, like, I can tell you, whatever your number is, you know, put it in there. I’m going to turn around. You put it in.

They’re like, “Well, then what are you here for?” You know? You’re helping them! Like, some of them get confused between the assistance and, like, assistant, you know? Because some people come in with, like, a resume, and they’re like: “I need to put this online.” I’m like: “OK, well, I can assist you and help you and show you exactly what you need to do, set you up. I will stand right next to you the entire time while you’re typing it. You know, everything.” They’re like: “Well, I don’t know how to type. I’ve never typed.” I was like: “Well, we can do some typing exercises before we even start.” And they’re like: “I don’t have time. I need a job,” you know. And that’s understandable. I can understand the frustration. Like, who doesn’t want to feed your family, continue on, and get this over with and have a job? But at the same time, they understand that I can’t sit there and type it for them, as much as I want to, and do it quickly because I’m just going to have a line of patrons that all expect me to type it for them. So you’re going to have to be fair.

So I feel kind of bad, though, because I can understand. You know, they just want to get that job. They don’t want to learn, you know, all this. So I tried to explain to them that it’s—it’s going to help you in the long run. Even if it’s not for this job, it’s going to be for the next. You know, the computer is being used more and more, so it’s to your benefit to learn more about it. I mean, still, some of them say: “OK, I’ll come,” and they’ll schedule an appointment with me, and things like that. But some just, like: “Well, then you’re just no use to me. Thanks a lot. You are no use to me,” and things. And they just walk out in a rage.
People are alienated about the job search, or emotional, or even carrying addictions that gnaw at them, and the CyberNavigator is the nearest target of their bad feelings.

(10) Probably the worst thing that happened to me is, I was helping someone with their resume and trying to apply to a job, and it was taking a long time because, you know, some of the websites, you have to, like, fill out these personality profiles, and they take 45 minutes to do it, and that’s after you, you know, finish the application process. So we had to go to my computer because the library computers didn’t allow for us to upload the resume that was necessary, I just did it with her on my computer. And, you know, I was OK with doing it, you know, because I don’t mind going out of my way sometimes because a lot of times I’m not very busy. So I’m helping her, and she says to me: “Can you please hurry up? Because my beer is getting hot in the car.” And then I was just like— looked at her, and I was like: “OK, I’m trying to help you get a job, but that’s fine.”

Library workers show the wear and tear of public service and in the discussion CyberNavigators distance themselves from that.

(11) One thing I would say – I didn’t think about this when you’re asking, like, the best experience. There was a gentleman, I could tell he was a little mentally challenged. He was in the Army or something, so something maybe related to that. But he’s fine. He – you know, he talks with good sense. Sometimes he’ll go off the track but, you know. It’s not bad, it’s not what you feel frightened at. But he told me – we sat down, and we started doing some computer stuff, and he came, and he came, and at the end, he said: “Thank you, ——. You’re the only person here that ever treated me like I was a human.” I was—and he brought me flowers. And it was—it was. Yeah. The library staff overall—I will say this on record. I don’t want to give my age, but I’ve been working a long time, since you get your first job after eighth grade when you graduate—I’ve been working for probably almost — years, now. And now, most of my jobs have been independent, but I’ve had jobs working in customer service, working in shoes, working in —— and other things. I have never seen such mean, nasty, lack motivation, no integrity, no “this is my job,” no ownership. I have never seen such blue people in the workplace before.

Lack any sort of empathy.

You ain’t got 15 cents? I’m sorry!

I’m not even talking about the money. I’m just talking about the way they—their whole—I have never—such meanness, such lack of respect for each other, for their boss, for the public. I have never seen that. So to me, as a CyberNavigator, we’re in the system, but we’re not part of that system. We are totally independent. I come in, good morning, good morning, and bam, I’m right with the patrons.

Along with jobseeking, another stream of patrons come in to get Illinois Circuit Breaker tax relief, transit cards, and prescription drug benefits. This story is remarkable for the
multiplier effect of a CyberNavigator helping one person, and then him helping many
others, with a critical service that comes faster to people who apply online. And this
despite a substance abuse problem.

(12) The truth is, if you’re filling out a Circuit Breaker, you probably have some
hard luck stuff going on in your life. Period, you know? But there was this guy,
Mr. ——. I haven’t seen him in awhile. But he would come into our branch, and
he asked me for help filling out a Circuit Breaker one day. Really nice guy. I
mean, totally, was like, typing on the computer, he was—he was intimidated but
also, like, not so intimidated that he couldn’t do it. Like, he was willing to learn.
He was always drunk. Like, he always stank of alcohol, and he would always be,
like, “Oh, I’m sorry, Miss. I’ve been drinking. No, I don’t mean any offense.”
And I was like: “Hey, man. It’s cool. If I didn’t have to be here right now, I’d
probably be doing the same thing.” You know, like, totally joking around with
him. And so we filled out a Circuit Breaker, and then he comes back, like, later in
the week and he’s like: “Hey, remember me? I’m back. I got more Circuit
Breakers.” And I was like: “OK.” Turns out, he—in his world, he was, like, the
Circuit Breaker man. He filled them out for him, for his wife, for his mother. I
don’t know if I was supposed to be helping him fill it out for everybody, but it
was, like, he took a lot of pride and joy in being able to help his friends and
family get their paperwork done. And so each time he came back to do another
one, he would get a little bit more proficient, but he was also drunk, and so
sometimes he would make mistakes and, like, get bumped back to the beginning
of the form. I miss him.

Social conditions around, and therefore in, the library

A particular theme in the focus groups was dismay at the level of social mayhem they
observed. Homelessness is a major theme and prompts struggles over library resources:

(13) I know this is weird but I don’t think the public should use the libraries
bathroom either because we have a lot of homeless people who come in and get
plastered in the library bathrooms and go to sleep. And a lot of the issues stem
around the bathroom as well.

Less extreme, but still a stressor are parents using the computers and the CyberNavigators
as babysitters:

(14) You all were talking about the kids. Now, I’ve actually had parents come in
and like, “OK, well, I’ll be back. So can you, like, you know, make sure that they
are on some educational websites?” And I’m like: “I don’t remember being the
babysitter!” You know.

Did you tell them that?
No, but I told the lady, I said: “I’m going to try, I’ll try to make sure that they’re all right, but,” I said, “I have a lot of other stuff to do around here.” She’s like—“Watch these kids!”

But she brought—it was, like, five of them. She brought, like, five of them in, and then she just set them all on the computers.

Oh, absolutely.

Everyone knows that the library is the unofficial babysitting, period.

It is.

Isolated adults of all ages bring their loneliness to the CyberNavigator.

(15) Where I used to work there was a lot of senior homes around there, like five in a one mile radius it seemed. So they didn’t have much to do at their senior home so they would come over there and just, it didn’t get on my nerves but I just felt bad for them because they needed some family members, some friends or girlfriend or something. It just couldn’t be me. It’s a lot of pressure sometimes as a CyberNavigator cause people really do start to believe that you’re like family. And it’s hard to let them down.

You give them good customer service.

Yeah, you’re so nice to them that they just think that it’s personal instead of like good business, yeah.

Right. I have a guy that asks me to marry him every day he comes in. Yeah. I’m married!

Not every CyberNavigator has become well-known and therefore sought after, but in many communities, demand for their help is nearly constant.

(16) People in the community—when I first started, there was no one coming, and now every day it’s: “Oh, well, such-and-such at the community center told me that you were here, so can you help me do this?” And so I’m doing all this different stuff, and sometimes I literally have to, like, run out the back door so I can go home because I will get, like—they’re waiting for me, and I’ll have people get mad. Like, the library people calling me will be like, you know, “People are getting upset that you’re not here.”

The two senior clerks that work in my library, when I’ll be like, “I’m going, I’ll see you,” they’ll say, “Oh, you’re going already? Well, we need you all day. Are you coming tomorrow?” No. “Oh, you need to be here tomorrow. What about Saturday?” No. “Like, you can’t work extra?” Like, “No, they won’t let me go over 20 hours. Sorry.” I literally have to bookmark everything, like “Here are all the bookmarks on the circulation computer for every single form that I know somebody’s going to come in for.” If it’s not in the bookmarks or if the people
haven’t] just put in their library card number incorrectly, it’s called “He’ll be here Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.”

One reflection of the weak social fabric in Chicago communities is how needy the patrons looking for work can be. Cybernavigating becomes unlicensed clinical social work.

(17) It almost becomes therapy. I’ve heard everything. Because you’re helping them with, like, their personal life, you know, applying for a job. They’re going to tell you their story, why they’re not working, how they got laid off, and this position, this, that, and the other. And you really hear a lot.

They sit there, and like, especially when they’re trying to fill out their employment history or their work history, and it’s like: “Well, I stopped going to school here, and then I stopped working here because I had to go all the way here.” And they just go off on a tangent again, like, just talking about this and this and this. And sometimes they go a little overboard. And I’m not going to be like, you know, “I don’t want to hear it,” because they’re just venting.

And you always want to make them feel so comfortable because they’re – like you said, they’re so fearful when they come in, in the beginning. And I think sometimes they look at you more as a friend.

Social conditions include drastically different levels of literacy, and the disparity between the computers in constant use and the almost empty bookstacks prompts questions about that social reality and the library’s response.

(18) We check out way more kids’ books than we do adult books. But, I mean, our computers are booked from, like, 9:00 am until we close. Solid.

People don’t want books.

They don’t like reading. A lot of people in my generation and younger, they don’t really like reading. They—you know, they’re more into Facebook and Twitter and things like that. And, you know, it’s understandable—in the digital age that we’re in right now, it’s understandable. Everything is computerized, and so therefore, we do teach a lot of more adult patrons because, you know, they dealt with typewriters. They’re not into computers they don’t know that much about.

That’s a little bit frightening to me. I really like books, and I think that they totally need a place.

At my branch, they ordered tons of cool new fiction, and that was just up to the librarian, and they circled [circulated] a lots of those. It’s just the way they’re displayed.

[Everyone talking at once.]

I haven’t looked at any numbers, but I would guess more poverty-stricken areas circ fewer books.
Well, they have lower literacy rates. I worked in this branch in my neighborhood, which is a really bad neighborhood, and they had no circ. There’s low literacy.

In the chaotic social environment, stories of caring and mutual aid stand out.

(19) Then there was a husband and wife team, the husband had had a brain injury and his wife [was] a little concerned what he could remember and what he could pick up. So I actually tutored her first so that she could see what my teaching style was like and then I tutored them together. And then she would say, “OK, well, I’m going to go look for something” and I would just tutor him on his own.

Access to the library’s space and computer systems

A fixed location is a key way that patrons find services in the library: circulation has a counter, reference is at a desk. Different CyberNavigators and their branch locations have negotiated different arrangements—or not—that affect the CyberNavigator service. Access to the computer systems used by staff is a similar issue that was discussed by many CNs.

With regard to space, one CyberNavigator reported:

(20) I don’t even have a place to sit.

Another explained it as being invisible or visible to patrons.

(21) It’s a problem because the area that I sit at, most people think that I’m just a patron. Even though I have a CyberNavigator thing, they think that I’m a patron because I’m sitting outside of the circulation desk. And all the people are just like: “Oh, we thought you were, you know, a patron here.” It frustrates me because it’s like, well, there are probably a lot of people that I could be helping, but they don’t have a clue that I’m here. For a while, I actually did sit behind the circulation desk for maybe, like, a month or so, but then the branch manager got upset and told me not to. Even though it was really an area that really no one was sitting at. And it was working. People knew what I was there for.

As a result, the CyberNavigator typically joins the security guard and they are the two workers who occupy the public area, the same space as the public.

(22) The first day I worked it was kind of just “OK, go stand over there.” You were kind of on your own basically. And half the time people in the branch really, they’ll be like “Oh, you’re here today?” So it’s really weird. And it’s funny cause the security guard will actually know more about how I work, how I do all my reservations and stuff and the clerks won’t. Because she sits right next to the
reservation station so she just hears me doing things and I talk to her cause I stand right next to security. So she knows basically more about how to make [an] appointment for somebody with me than the clerks do.

Being seen and having a place; combined problem of space and computer access

(23) Researcher: Do you all have a place to be? Or do you rove? Do you have a desk?

Not necessarily. Not everyone. Some people do. Like, I don’t have one. I was going to the reference, but then we got a new librarian, so it’s three reference that are out there, and the branch manager. So they don’t want me to be at the reference desk. I can’t be at the back desk most of the time because the clerks are back there doing things. So—and you know I can’t be at the circulation desk, so I have to stand there—

OK, where do you want me to sit today? OK, I’ll sit over here today. If you need me, I’m right over here.

Right.

And do you have a sign?

I do have a sign, and I wear my tag most of the time—when I remember, to be honest with you. But, you know, that’s just the issue I have that I think they should find someplace for us. At least give us a computer. Even if they gave us a little laptop, a little section where people know—big sign: “CyberNavigator, right here.” But there are things that we probably can do and help someone in one-on-one type situations and have our own computer to help them—better help them, better serve them.

There is confusion over access to staff computers and software

(24) Do they let you do the [circulation]?

No, that’s the thing. My branch manager doesn’t let me – well, I’m not supposed to, also. Well, she’s all about following the rules, and I respect that. But, like, sometimes I’m like: “Oh, you could kind of bend them because I need to [get on this].”

Yeah, that’s the whole reason that [you have] your own password and username, so that you’re able to.

I know, that’s true. I can log onto them if I wanted to, but I’m not supposed to.

They only gave me, like, a username and password or my email address, but I’m not supposed to be using the library computers.

What?

Yeah, I’m not supposed to touch them. … No, I can’t use any of the computers. I’m not supposed – I’m not even supposed to be in the circulation desk.
No, OK. But what about the reference?

I can’t sit at the reference desk. Only the reference librarians can sit there.

And that was one of the biggest issues when we had the big training. Because I went to the manager’s meeting and I went to the training meeting, and their biggest concern is, the branch managers, that they didn’t want us to be able to. I think that they did not stress it enough to help them understand that we should be able to utilize any computer that has that master program for the reservation station on it. Because it’s almost impossible to do your job and only be able to use the computer that the patrons use. You cannot go in the system and see what the problem is or correct the problem, and you definitely can’t stand there and wait for a clerk [who is busy] checking out a book and ask them to do it because that’s really a part of your job.

At least one CN shares a computer with staff.

(25) I don’t have my, like, own computer. I share it with the reference librarians. But they’re, like, incredibly generous, and also, I think they hate using computers. Which is sort a weird thing where I, like, love it, and they don’t like it. So I sit at the computer most of the time, and whenever they need it, I’m just, like, off in seconds. You know. I’m just like, log off, done, OK, get on. So that’s nice, but also, like, people have gotten, like, really frustrated with me because I won’t, like, plug in their flash drives to my computer and open stuff. Because, like, as soon as you do that, then everybody wants you to, and that’s not a good idea.

This comment segues directly into a topic that was a big source of complaints from CNs: the library’s public computing technology.

The library’s public access technology

Observations in the branches showed a lot of patron confusion with printing, and much time spent helping people print. In the focus group the CNs began to complain about this aspect of the library’s public computing technology, as well as about the applications, the configuration of the operating system, and speed. On printing:

(26) The print jobs. I think I would make that a little bit more simpler because the process of printing is, you have to go up to the front desk, give them your card and money. But then if you don’t remember how many pages you’re printing, you got to go back to the print station, click on it, type in your number, find out how much you owe, go back up to the front desk, add the money to the card, then go back over there, click on the website you’re trying to print, which, how do people know, because everything’s just joined together [in one long filename]. The website is merged into the date and time that you printed it.

And you can’t even see the whole thing.
Right. How do you know where to go, where to click it? There’s nothing telling you to click here. It’s just – to me it’s too much.

It is.

It was a bit hard for people to envision improving the printing system.

(27) I hate the print system. It’s just too complicated for new people. New people come in there, you know, you got to print from over here. They’re already having a problem because the print button there doesn’t work, so they have to go to file and hit print. OK, then you – then they go over to you: “Where’s it’s going to come out at?” OK, now let’s take your library card and go to the circulation desk. Then after they do that, still, nothing’s going to come out. So now—

*What could they do that would be better?*

Sometimes it doesn’t seem like it’ll come – one print screen will come up, and then they’ll press OK. But then you have to wait for another one to come up to say OK again, so you only hit it once, and then you forget about it, it’s not going to send it.

It’s too many steps.

Maybe they could put the money in the—you know how they do the copier.

Maybe that would be simpler than having to wait in the line and—

Three steps.

Yeah. From your computer, you go to the circulation desk, which is checking in, checking out books, and all of that, arguing with people, doing library cards. Then you got to go to the – then you have to go to the print release. Something needs to be more efficient about that. I totally agree.

Then even when you’re at the printing machine, so you have to select. And they have some kind of crazy numbers up there, you know what I’m saying? It’s like XY, to the power of 10, and then it says may be what your document is and what time, and you have to scroll over there, see which one you want to – it’s just too extra.

There was many instances of kibitzing over word processing in the browser, and handling documents with or without flash drives.

(28) I feel like it would improve things to have some more programs to work with people. Specifically with word processing. I’m not sure how you [guys] feel about that cause I know the regional libraries have it, but the branch neighborhood libraries don’t have word processing and then you have to ask, “OK, well, are you familiar with Google? Can we set you up with Google Docs? Do you have an email address? Do we have to create one?” Then it just creates this whole other issue and people bring in their flash drives and you have to say “No, you can’t use that here. The [ports] are disabled on the computers.” You have to send them
somewhere else. To me it almost seems like I’m not sure, I’m assuming this that it will be less headaches if people who are already familiar with Word can have access to it. It will create, yes, a little bit more work with people who aren’t familiar with it but, I mean, even Google Docs, I’ve been using Word for a really long time myself and even Google Docs took me awhile to get used to just cause it’s not the same exact thing. I’m just afraid that if people learn Google Docs and then they have to use Word in a job or something, they’re going be lost cause it’s not exactly the same.

As the speaker above argued, another CN described the problem with teaching people computing with a system configuration that does not exist outside the library.

(29) I think the computers could use more software programs. Since they only have Internet Explorer I can’t really teach them about other softwares. If a person comes up wanting to learn the basics of computers, I just kind of tell them that I can only teach you about the basics of the internet. I can’t tell them there’s going to be other programs. I kind of just tell them that if you use your own computer it’s gonna be different and it’s gonna involved double clicking and opening the other programs. If they give us at least Microsoft Word or something like that we could tell them that this is what you gotta do.

Brainstorming led to opportunity—or impossibility—of sending people to other public computing facilities. It seems an inventory of such facilities would be helpful.

(30) Going off what she said, I would recommend partnerships with community [places] where you could send them easily cause some people can’t really afford to get all the way to Woodson cause that’s the closest place where I tell them to go use their flash drive. They can’t get over there or just they don’t have the, some people are needing stuff [to be] in the community. The last library I worked at we had a long list of local churches, community centers where you could go to use different type of stuff that the library didn’t offer. It’s not like abundance of places where they could go, I don’t think. It’s probably some, I just don’t know where. But we need them highlighted, obvious, in the library.

A problem with speed also came up.

(31) The staff computers are a lot faster than the public computers. And so— They’re way better.

Way faster. And so sometimes if I’m helping somebody, like, do a search for something, the slowness of their computer combined with their not-so-excellent, like, internet research skills—I’ll be like: “OK, so you start working over here. Like, you start searching stuff over here.” And then I run over to my desk and I’m, like, replicating the search that they’re doing, but faster. So that way, they’re helping themselves, but I can, like, boost the process along.
The CyberNavigators themselves, talking shop

Many comments in the focus groups centered on the CN themselves. This was in large part the result of the research goal. But the focus groups were a release for the CNs and the discussions about CN work followed a line of argument from self-revealing moments and celebrations to proposals to collaborate and learn from each other.

First people were heard out and affirmed. Hard experiences of public service to struggling patrons of all kinds needed to be aired. As one CN put it,

(32) This is therapy. You’re paying us to have therapy.

“We’re good!” the CNs declared.

(33) You know, the people in this room, every CyberNavigator I met, we all have, like, this certain personality. I think they’re really—

We want to save the world.

Very down to earth, and all that stuff. Like, they’ve been really good as far as the hiring process. The people who are in these different branches are the perfect fit for their branch, or at least — is really good at trying to find a way to move you around.

Yeah.

To accommodate your schedule. And the flexibility actually does work, too, to get, you know, qualified and get good people in. The hiring process is a really big part of it.

I agree because a lot of times, people come in, and they’re intimidated to even ask you, to even talk to you, because they think they’re going to sound dumb about certain questions. So if you can talk to them and say: “I understand.”

Yeah. Yeah. Then they don’t feel so bad. I agree with you.

“Why are we good?” CNs began to explain.

(34) I always wanted to be a teacher, so I felt like that was the easy part of the CyberNavigator job, because I’m very patient, and I can talk in a way that the patrons aren’t intimidated, and they don’t feel bad about asking certain questions, you know? And they ask me—there is a patron that comes in every day and asks me the same thing every day. Like, he’s pretty tech-savvy, but say he’s logging into his email, he’s going to put www. He’s going to put his whole email address in the username, and I’m like: “OK you don’t have to put www.” You know, just saying it patiently, like I didn’t say it, you know, 20 times [laughter] before, but I don’t know, I just tell everybody, like, repetition is the mother of learning, you
know, and you just have to continue to do it, and then you get more and more comfortable with it. I always wanted to know the things that I know, like we had computer classes in sixth or seventh grade. I felt like you, —, maybe I didn’t think that I was qualified before because I didn’t know how to put it into words exactly, step-by-step. You have to break it down. I just keep telling my patrons, practice makes permanent. So usually they try to keep up with that.

They began sharing experience and solutions—talking shop. And being considerate of each other as they did.

(35) Thinking back about the typing a resume. They really want you to just do them for them. They want you to sit there and type it up for them. But I found, like, on Hot Jobs, it’s like, they just type name, address, then at the very end, whatever template that they chose, it automatically put all the information in the resume format.

They fill in the box.

Right. So it’s a little less complex to them.

The only thing—sorry. Are you still speaking?

No, you go ahead.

The only thing about the Hot Jobs thing is you can only use it on Hot Jobs.

Right. And as an attachment.

Right. So what I actually recommended to them was to use IllinoisWork.net. I don’t know if you’ve heard about it? Yeah, well, you can actually take it out as a document, a PDF, and you can attach it. And you can save it temporarily on your desktop.

But you can copy and paste over to IllinoisWork.net.

You can copy and paste the Hot Jobs one?

Yeah!

Tricks of the trade were shared.

(36) You come to me, and you have to save your username and password. That’s another thing, that [patrons] lose that also. But the good thing is that I’ve created a format [for their email accounts]. I’ve made it that it’s their — of their birthday, then — and —, and their password is their — and —. So that way, they already know their birthday and already know their —.

Right.

Community-building techniques were laid out.
(37) I have a personal work email that I made up so that anytime I setup an email with someone I tell them “This is how far we can go. Any other questions you have with the computer, just email me to, or write me to this email.” So [one older woman writes me on occasions, “Hey my cousin or my son-in-law or my grandchild in Sweden is doing this, here’s a picture, and blah, blah, blah.” She’s awesome. And it continues their education. “How are you doing?” and if I don’t hear from them in awhile I’ll write them and be like “I haven’t seen you in awhile. Are things OK? Do you need anything from me? Here’s some helpful websites” and I keep going.

Then a variety of ways to get together and to talk and improve the work came forth.

(38) I love teaching the classes. There was a—you know, a curriculum set up for lesson plans which, at this point, I’ve kind of, like, adapted a little bit. You know, I mean, you find what works in those lesson plans and what doesn’t. And I love it. It makes me feel really—it makes me feel like an education professional, you know? Which is really nice. And that’s a part of my job that I’m interested in expanding. And so that’s why I try, you know, to start writing – like, piloting some of my own lessons. And so, you know, just, like, to put it on the record, and again, as an answer for this question, I would really like to see us going forward with that, like, volunteer corps of CyberNavigators who get together to develop more lessons to target—you know, pool our knowledge about, like, OK, what are people doing? People need help with resumes, and we don’t have word processing? Let’s put our heads together and come up with, like, a pretty bang up lesson for resume writing in the public library where there is no word processing. You know? Or, like, job searching classes or, you know, like whatever. Different classes. So I think that would be really good because then what you produce at the end of that are these lesson plan documents which are the kind of thing that we’re talking about that we love to have. Like, actual documents that people can refer to.

(39) All of us have different limitations. I know a CyberNavigator that was teaching how to build web pages, something that’s totally over my head. If someone knows how to teach how to build a web page, let us know that so I can refer you to somebody. Because if it’s something that I’m not good at – like, sometimes I do not want to compile another resume. I don’t want to do it; it’s just too much. So if there’s so-and-so, she loves doing resumes? I will send you over there. Or for me, I love social networking. Some people don’t want to teach social networking. Mike, he may not even social network. Me? I’m a social networking, like, fiend. I mean, Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, whatever, bring it to me. I’ll sit on your Facebook for 13 hours and teach you how to build the best profile. So it would be good if we all maybe had our specialties so we can reference each other.

That’s a great idea.
(40) It might be nice to have maybe a date where you pull the CyberNavigators in
and either show them films about conflict resolution or different things that
people may not verbalize as going on a good example would be…There’s a guy at
the branch that’s deaf. OK and a lot of times if you don’t pick up that he’s deaf
people start to get aggravated because he’s speaking loudly. Once you get that
he’s deaf, you got two options. You hand him a pad of paper. He just wants what
any other patron wants. But if you don’t pick up that he’s deaf, staff or other
people in the library, “That guy makes all this [noise].” If you were able to see a
film about that, or a film about people getting angry because they are getting
ready to lose their home or people who are getting angry because they have to
come to the library to add, to fill out an application. All of a sudden you’re
answering questions which may forever be unmentioned but people face
everyday.

(41) We did get some training about how to teach people, but it’s kind of hard in
one session to really learn how to teach people. It’s more of doing it and learning
yourself. I think if we got more training with how to deal with people who are
aggressive and people who come in and their intoxicated or people with
disabilities. Maybe that would help a little.

(42) I think that would actually be a good thing if we met up more cause there’s
only been one time that we’ve met, had all the CyberNavigators together. All as
one big group. I think that if every six months or so we have a meeting and
discuss our issues and work from each other and that would be a better help.

I actually talk about work with my friend a lot. She works in —.

None of my friends work as a CyberNavigator so it’s kind of like just me. So if
we did have a group like this, with all of us, that we could discuss things like this,
I think it would actually help and let other people know our issues.

(43) I would think that the program could be just a little bit more structured. I
definitely think more check-ins, more unity, that it’s a job, because, you know, if
we just feel like, you know, we are contractors, that’s fine. But there just has to be
some more unity in the fact of what we do, what our mission is, you know, rules
and regulations, so on and so forth. So just that I am a CyberNavigator, you know,
I may not work for [the library or the foundation] but, you know, I’m in relation
to [them], and what their overall purpose is. I don’t really know anything about
the Chicago Public Library foundation and what their mission and their vision is.
And how I play a part in that, even as a contractor. And then as a library, as a
whole, I just think that just sensitivity—my heart goes out to people, and I just
think that people are completely just [in routine with] the situation. With the
public that we serve. I think there’s a disconnect going on with the hierarchy and
the people that they serve.
Two systems co-existing

A collective sense emerged from the focus groups of two systems co-existing, the library and the CyberNavigators.

(44) I think, actually, we get used more than the librarians. Like, especially at my branch because I feel like nobody goes to the library for books anymore. Everything seems to be online. So it would only make sense that, you know, with books came the librarian, and with computers came the CyberNavigator, you know? So we really do get used a lot, but they don’t know that we’re here sometimes.

One branch is even puzzling over this.

(45) My library has discussions on their library. Patrons and staff, they have discussions about the impact of the computers on the concept of library. On the impact of computers. I can think of discussions that I have been party to about how the computers detract from what a library is suppose to be. And it’s just very relieving I guess. When you start talking about library and what a library should be. Some of think of books. Some of us think of access, generally speaking. I’m traditional from the standpoint of when I think of a library I think of sacred space not necessarily church-level space but large, really high ceilings, very quiet which I guess is the model of the libraries as I remember as a kid. And it really takes some adjustment. A library with an eight foot ceiling? Are you kidding me? I mean because libraries are suppose to be this space. There are whole generations of people, for them a library is not represented by that model. It’s just very interesting conversation. If you define library as a compendium with information then the computers are just another arm of that compendium. But that assumes that you’re looking at information and looking at the some of the many other things that our patrons look at as adults in the library. It’s just a very interesting conversation on both ends.

Two CNs voiced dismay over archaic methods at Chicago Public Library, not using computers themselves.

(46) I’m, like, an analytical person. It just seems like everything is done backwards. Like, for them to sit there and, take every single book and, like, if it’s going to Manning, they write it on a tag and they put it in Manning, and then they print off a slip and they put it in the book, and then they put that one book in a piece of plastic, and they put the plastic in this, and then they have a truck driver. I’m thinking, why don’t your books go through the El system or some type of other system? Like all the money they get, which is change, they sit there and they count it. And then they have to go to the currency exchange and get a money order. If I can pay my bills online, why are you guys counting out nickels? Like, a
whole table worth of nickels. You don’t even have a counting machine? It just
seems like stuff is going on in the dark ages.

And also, like you said, our staff doesn’t know how to open a flash drive. But you
work at a library. That just doesn’t match, like, when I see the library full of
knowledge and all this. Why aren’t you trained that way? Does it make me want
to be a librarian? No. What I get from working in the library is that I just see the
city of Chicago. When I was laid off I went to the employment office, and I had to
get food stamps. Same thing. Stacks of paper. You sit in the [Link] office for, like,
five hours for them to input your information. Like, I could have done this at
home. So it just seems like everything with the city—the unemployment, the
CPL, CPS, everything is just not working. I go to corporations where everything
is seamless. But this is our city, these are our people, and somehow things aren’t
working right. I can go work at McDonald’s, and McDonald’s, you can get your
meal in 30 seconds, seamlessly. Burger, fries, where everything’s in order. But
you go to the library—

To add to that, I was thinking the exact same thing. McDonalds’ purpose, though,
is to make money. CPL’s purpose isn’t to make money, that’s why I guess, you
know, they have a better flow.

All CPL staff, even managers, are not up on technology, so sharing of knowledge is
valuable.

(47) If — is away on vacation like she was a couple weeks ago, then I’ll come to
— and I’ll say: “I need you to send out my timesheet.” And he’ll send it off. But I
always have to show him how to attach the file. So I show him each time, and,
you know, I don’t know who mentioned the patron who each week you have to
show them a new thing. That was you?

Yeah.

It’s kind of like that with him.

He does not know how to attach a file?

The branch manager. And I showed him how to scan, I showed him everything
about Google.

And there can be a hands-off attitude to helping patrons with computers, but training can
overcome that.

(48) Researcher: Do non-CyberNavigators help people with the computer?

No.

Sometimes. In my branch, we have – there’s three of us that do. And then the
people who don’t know how to do it, like security guards, they’ve been giving
people bad information. But there’s two, but if I’m not there, they help. But they
have their own job functions so, you know, that’s why we need more hours.
Yeah. I think we need more hours.

Or train staff to learn it.

You know, I thought about that.

Because it’s good that we’re efficient, but sometimes they’ll have people lined up. Like, if I look up, oh, they’re waiting for you. Wait a minute.

Right when you walk in the door.

So I have started with staff. You know what? If they have special, simple requests like this? Go here. The same things I would give a patron, I give it to some staff members just because I look up and take a breath and, you know, it’s like they have these people lined up. Now it’s like: “Oh, she’s here for the computer? We’re not going to answer any computer questions.” No, it shouldn’t be like that, you know? And there’s no reason to send people away when there’s a human being—I mean, if it’s just setting up an email, you may be able to assist them with that.

The library service that is the closest in CN’s minds to their job is reference work.

(49) I feel that we, in our positions, walk this weird line where we are kind of expected to perform reference work to some extent. But, you know, there’s a chain of command, and everything’s really structured in terms of, like, who does what and who can do what, and whatever. So there are times when sometimes I’ll be like: “OK, yes, you might want to do this on a computer, but it is a reference query. It’s definitely a reference query. I’m taking you to the librarian right now.”

And so I can also imagine scenarios, that are also the opposite of yours, where you can also get reamed out by a supervisor for not asking for help—

I actually have.

“That was a reference question.” “Oh, OK.”

Exactly. And so it puts us – we’re constantly trying to balance – like, [finesse] that line, then it’s like, well, do I extend myself to try to do this? Or at what point do I need to turn it over to my supervisor and ask for help? And I there’s not a clear rubric. You’re just self-managing all the time. And then you don’t want to tell a patron, like: “That’s a librarian question. I’m a CyberNavigator.”

This high school student came in the other day, and she knew how to use the computer. Like, I could have showed her, like, you know, database stuff on the computer, and she was doing – she had to do a – some kind of research paper for her school class on Cottonwood trees. I do have a rough idea of how to use the databases. But going back to efficiency and, like, not giving people the runaround. Am I going to be able to give her, like, the fastest way online to, like, find age-appropriate, or whatever, information for school about Cottonwood trees? Heck no. I took her to the children’s librarian, you know? I’m like: “This is a reference query.”
CN’s asked, What is reference work nowadays and what should people be paid to do it?

(50) I’m a little hesitant about learning references and being trained on how to do references.

Without no pay.

Without getting the pay to actually be a reference person. You know what I mean? Like, you’re going to be actually a librarian at the end of the day because you’re doing references now. And now there’s electronic sources.

Well, there’s more to being a librarian than that, but yes.

I mean, it almost seems like all the – not to diminish your job – it almost seems like all they do is go on Find It, nowadays.

That’s the bulk – almost the bulk of their job.

I mean, and if you know how to organize and do this and do that, it feels like you’re a librarian a little bit. And so I know that they’re getting, you know, at least a yearly pay. I don’t want to, you know, quote their pay.

Showing people how to use the computer is our job. Once they start searching, that’s kind of a reference situation.

But I think what they mean is reference in terms of the books and everything.

I think they mean reference, as opposed to programs and databases.

We’ve got to get clarification on that, because I was under the impression that it was reference in terms of where to find the books, how to, you know, help them with books, the Find It, and all that.

It’s because there’s a variety of stuff on the CPL website, the resources, internet resources, that the librarians, the library associates, are supposed to be able to show them. I think we naturally take it as our job, but—

Yes.

Our jobs kind of overlap. They already overlap because the CyberNavigator program is just naturally internet resources and things. At the same time we’ve got to get retrained, or well, trained.

They trying to get rid of some librarians, or something?

Hmm.

Strife between associates and CNs comes from who is busy when, and tasks that need doing, but by whom?

(51) I’m not putting my job at risk to go put away a book and then it’s in the wrong place. And plus, no one ever trained me. Like, in different positions, you’ve been there longer, you’ve caught on. And you used to be a page, but me? I
don’t have access to any databases. I wouldn’t know how to check out a book, I
don’t know where the fiction section is.

But it’s just like we’re saying, it creates strife. You ever get that? Like, people are
looking at you like they’re just jealous, and they’re overworked, and you know.

I’ve gotten side comments. One of the clerks.

I’ve always been really lucky, mine never complain at all to me.

I have a great relationship with my entire staff, but I think when my manager did
introduce me to the staff, she did make it clear my job description is different
from the rest of your job descriptions and not an employee of CPL. “He’s an
outside contractor for Bank of America so, you know, he doesn’t necessarily play
by the same playbook.”

CyberNavigators recruit patrons—especially “regulars”—to help provide service to other
patrons.

(52) We’re limited to what we can do with [a patron’s] laptop. So if there’s
someone who comes regularly that I know doesn’t mind, I say, “They’ve got a
Dell. Go talk to that person.” or “They’ve got [an Apple] so see how they log in.
It didn’t work when we went through our procedure. Check with them.” Usually
that will do it.

So is that a written rule? How do you know that you’re not supposed to do that
with laptops?

We were told that in our training. That we were liable for anybody else’s
equipment so we have to instruct them on how they do it.

And you want to get it done.

Yeah, you want to get it done and you want to help them.

Library staff don’t understand how the CN job works, or if they do, they’ve just learned
by doing over the years.

(53) The clerks’ll make a reservation for people for class with me or one-on-one
time without asking them any questions. So when they come in they’re like
“Well, I don’t have a library card” or “I didn’t make a reservation for this time”
and then I get all the heat for it then because “Well, that person didn’t tell me.
Why isn’t it on your sheet?” At first there was issues with the co-workers not
knowing my place and then doing things when I’m standing right there, kind of
overlooking me but now that I’ve been at my branch for — years now, it’s gotten
a little better but it seems like when we started, and maybe some people still think
this way, that they don’t really know how to go about interacting with us to figure
out how to do certain things when it comes to like making a reservation for a
patron to see us or doing stuff like that.
Standards or descriptions of the process of cybernavigating would help everyone.

(54) I think if maybe the staff better understood, maybe if there was some kind of procedure that they put in place that everyone had to follow cause basically with us, cause at each branch you’ll find something different on how we schedule our appointments and do all this kind of thing. Every different branch is completely different. I was detailed at —. I was working there for a little bit and it was a totally different atmosphere. They had a binder and their classes were run with a librarian and where as in my branch I do it all by myself. And so I think if there was a standard that everyone knew about and everyone in the staff knew about then it would link everything together better.
9. Conclusions

Our most basic finding is that the CyberNavigator program is very good bang for the buck. Since demand increases for their services as they become known in their communities, it is important to find ways to make the program sustainable for the Chicago Public Library and experiment with making it more central to the local library branch.

Thank you for your help.
Appendix 1. Bibliography

Forthcoming.
Appendix 2: Field handbook
and consent form for ethnographies

Cybernavigator Research
Field Handbook
July 2009

Community Informatics Research Lab
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
Abstract ......................................................................................................................... 3
Research plan ............................................................................................................... 3
The ethnographic research task ................................................................................ 3
Questions / note taking technique / equipment ......................................................... 4
Data collection and equipment .................................................................................. 5
Structure and schedule of the field work week ......................................................... 5
Each site, its community, its staff ............................................................................. 5
The CI Lab and the field team ................................................................................... 6
Housing, food, transportation, emergencies .............................................................. 7
Budget and money ..................................................................................................... 8
Appendices .................................................................................................................. 10
CyberNavigator Bibliography 04.16.09 ................................................................. 10
May 2009 research proposal to CPL ........................................................................ 13
Chicago Public Library locations, with and without CNs ........................................ 16
Community Areas
Armour Square ........................................................................................................... 17
Belmont Cragin ........................................................................................................... 19
Humboldt Park ............................................................................................................ 20
Lower West Side ........................................................................................................ 23
Portage Park ............................................................................................................... 27
Washington Heights .................................................................................................. 31
West Englewood ......................................................................................................... 33
Aiko notes on research questions .......................................................................... 34
Ethnic communities in space and cyberspace ......................................................... 40
CTA map ...................................................................................................................... 43
Hostel neighborhood map (portion of Chicago Loop) ............................................. 44

Thanks to Mary Dempsey, Amy Eshleman, Desiree Kettler, and Roberto Pang of
Chicago Public Library for facilitating this study, and to the Institute of Museum and
Library Services for funding.
Abstract

With the cooperation of Chicago Public Library, through library staff Amy Eshleman and Roberto Pang, we are conducting a study of the library’s Cybernavigator program. This program hires college students or college graduates to help people use computers and seek information online in 37 of 79 branches. The study asks a number of questions. Roughly ordered from abstract to concrete, reflecting basic research as well as evaluation research, these questions are:

- Is community possible in the digital age?
- In what ways do our new technologies weaken, augment, or perhaps rely on our local, historical communities?
- How and under what conditions are people self-reliant and resourceful in getting across the digital divide?
- How are Chicago’s ethnic communities using information technology, and where do they turn for help?
- How do cybernavigators help the library, the patrons and the local community?
- What does the Cybernavigator program do and how does it work?

The research relies on four methods or sources of data:

1. the library’s archives on the program
2. observation in several of the branch libraries that have cybernavigators
3. a survey of all branch heads and cybernavigators, and
4. focus groups with the cybernavigators.

For the observation, six of us will go into six branches.

- from Tuesday July 21 through Saturday, July 25
- one graduate student, faculty member, or experienced community/library worker in each branch
- we will practice “involved observation,” that is, we will help the cybernavigator and the branch, following their guidance, removing obstacles, as well as observe.

This handbook focuses on the field observation work.

Research plan

Based on an opportunity with the Chicago Public Library (CPL), the Cybernavigators study will augment other research planned in an IMLS-funded research project, Chicago Community Informatics, or eChicago. Cybernavigators is a ten-year-running, newly expanded program at CPL where special staff are hired to help patrons use computers and
the internet. Outside of management reports, it has not yet been studied outside of the library.

We will explore the interaction between Cybernavigators and local social capital/social networks. Our overarching questions are:

- How is community possible in the digital age?
- In what ways do our new technologies weaken, augment, or perhaps rely on our local, historical communities?

More specifically in this study, we are asking how a program of local skilled IT help benefits from and in turn impacts the local community it serves. The study team will collect data from library archives, ethnography (involved observation), online surveys, and focus groups. We will be observing, interacting with, and collecting data from library staff.

There are four ways we will collect data from individuals and these entail different recruitment methods/contacts:

1) **ethnographic involved observation in selected branch libraries** (6). Library management and the research team have identifying branches that meet our research criteria (serve a range of ethnic communities, have cybernavigator staff/member, have current director in place). The PI will recruit six branches via email communication with the branch head, explaining the observation and obtain a consent form from the director, the cybernavigator, and any library staff member with whom the researcher has significant interaction.

2) **survey of all branch library directors** (79). Library management will tell the directors about the study, explain the library's role as facilitator, invite directors to respond to upcomming online survey which will be emailed to them, and provide research staff with emails of all branch library directors. Research team will implement online survey using a tool called surveygizmo. This will entail up to three invitations/reminders to the directors. The tool enables absolute anonymity of respondents while keep track of who has not responded so that reminders are sent only to those who have not responded.

3) **survey of all cybernavigators** (42). Library management will tell the cybernavigators staff about the study, explain the library's role as facilitator, invite them to respond to upcomming online survey which will be emailed to them, and provide research staff with emails of all staff. Research team will implement online survey using a tool called surveygizmo. This will entail up to three invitations/reminders to the directors. The tool enables absolute anonymity of respondents while keeping track of who has not responded so that reminders are sent only to those who have not responded.
4) focus groups (6) with cybernavigators (42). The PI will invite these staffmembers to participate in one of six scheduled focus group meetings of no more than seven staff.

**The ethnographic research task**

**What is it:** David Garson quotes Johnson who defines ethnography as “a descriptive account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on detailed observations of what people actually do.” Garson’s handy short essay defining ethnography is available at [http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/PA765/ethno.htm](http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/PA765/ethno.htm).

*We are looking at what cybernavigators (and patrons, and less so other staff) actually do.*

**Involvement:** Kenneth Clark (*Dark Ghetto*) practiced involved observation as the director of an enormous poverty program in Harlem. He talked regularly with a close colleague who challenged him, forced him to set aside his director perceptions and attitudes and look at things more objectively. Involved signifies a participant who engages, battles, the social forces that appear as obstacles in a process that he or she is studying. It is a step beyond participation that he emphasizes and explains in the “Introduction to a Epilogue” section of the book, which is browsable in google books.

*We are battling for digital democracy, for the fullest use of ICTs by all. This is a core value underpinning our research.*

**Theories and questions:** Michael Burawoy (*The Extended Case Method, Ethnography Unbound*) asserts how our theories, our questions, allow us to do ethnography, because we cannot perceive everything, we have to look out for specific things and use perceptions to test our beliefs. Best to be explicit and conscious about the theories and questions we take into the field. He elaborates how the so-called “more scientific” methods like surveys and interviews aren’t necessarily more scientific than the ethnography, and how different methods have always complemented each other and been in dialogue with each other. Browsable on google books.

*Aiko’s notes in the appendix are a good start at musing over what our theories and questions are. She developed these from a read of the social capital/social network literature and our own earlier studies. Look too at the powerpoint slides for the eChicago mapping study, appended here. That last slide summarizes the theory and the operationalization; compare to slide 2 in the may 2009 research proposal to CPL, also appended.*

**Results:** Shoshana Zuboff (*The Age of the Smart Machine*) demonstrates what tremendous discoveries are possible by paying attention to what happens in a workplace. Her book is a classic of social informatics which is browsable on Google books.
Shoshana's book is vividly detailed but expresses one big idea—informing the workplace means shockingly different skill sets and transformed power relationships, for managers and workers. It is exemplary for social/community informatics scholars.

**Questions / note taking technique / equipment**

Use a notebook (less obtrusive than laptop) as well as a laptop (more accurate and the ultimate home for all notes—remember d3, Digitization). Transfer everything into your laptop daily.

Make two spaces or columns, one for observations and one for reflections. **Observations** means what do you see, what do you see happening. **Reflections** means what do you think or feel about what you see. Strive to produce both each day.

Make jottings in your notebook during the day as you can. Be ready to jot down actual quotes as well as behaviors as specifically as possible. Specific details are crucial. AND twice a day—midway through your time and near the end of the day—allow at least 30 minutes for writing up notes.

The first set of questions is for each field worker to answer every day, so that we have comparable and consistent data.

1. How many public access computers are in use 15 minutes after you get in?
   How many are in use midway through your time there?
   How many are in use 15 before you leave?
   Note the times that you do these counts.

2. For every request for help or interaction with a patron, note down:
   - Time of day?
   - What did the patron ask about?
   - What was the patron trying to do?
   - Who did they ask for help?
   - What language did they use?
   - Did they seem to know the cybernavigator already?

3. For each day, write at least one paragraph about each of these:
   - The most interesting moment
   - The greatest problem
   - The greatest solution

The second set of questions is for you to use to jump start your note taking.

Describe the layout and number and placement of computers and printers.
Describe the staffing and the placement of staff. How close is everyone to each other and to the computers? Describe the relations between staff and patrons and between staff members, especially the CN and others. Do you see any evidence of patrons who are representing or acting for, groups in the community, or for other patrons?

**Data collection and equipment**

You should have both a notebook for paper notetaking and a laptop. If we need to, we can borrow laptops from GSLIS.

**Structure and schedule of the field work week**

Tuesday July 21: depart Champaign-Urbana  
drop-off at hostel, check in (Matt meet up at hostel)  
purchase CTA passes  
travel to branch, meet branch head and staff and start observation evening debriefing

Wednesday: observing in the branch  
evening debriefing

Thursday: observing in the branch  
evening debriefing

Friday: observing in the branch  
evening debriefing, dinner with local host

Saturday July 25: check out of hostel, items into car  
observing in the branch, lunch with branch head and CN  
leave Chicago for Champaign-Urbana

**Each site, its community, its staff**

Each library location is in a particular neighborhood with a particular ethnicity:
CyberNavigators:
A social capital study of community, library, and technology use
Consent form for cybernavigator/library staff

In conformance with federal rules about informed consent, this document briefs you about what we’re doing and asks for your voluntary consent to participate. This research is led by University of Illinois faculty member Dr. Kate Williams of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science. The purpose is to learn how the CyberNavigators program at Chicago Public Library works, how the library and the community impact technology use and vice versa. This consent form concerns our field observations in several library locations. Your branch manager has agreed that your library location will participate, and we are now seeking your consent.

This document is to ask if a research may observe and work alongside you while in your library. The idea is to learn about the CyberNavigators program by doing as well by observing. He or she will keep notes on his or her experiences. The notes will be written so as to preserve the anonymity and privacy of all individuals with whom he or she interacts, and the notes will be shared only within the research team and not with any Chicago Public Library managers or staff. Consent forms will also be used with any of your staff with whom the researcher has significant interaction.

No risks to this research are foreseen beyond those of daily life. It is expected that your library location will benefit in from the volunteer work that we do during our observation, and the research will be disseminated to the library as well as to the professional/research community, to add to knowledge that may lead to a better understanding of how libraries and communities work together in the digital age.

At any point, you may choose not to answer any questions from the researcher. You also may discontinue participation in the research at any time without prejudice. The decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your or anyone’s grades at, status at, or future relations with the University of Illinois. You will receive no monetary compensation for your participation. The University of Illinois does not provide medical or hospitalization insurance coverage for participants in this research study nor will the University of Illinois provide compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.

The materials from this research will be used for research presentation/publication. Any information that is obtained in connection with this research that can be identified with you or any individual will remain confidential. The only documents that will be retained with your name on it will be the signed consent form.

If you have any questions regarding the research, please ask. You can email or call the lead researcher collect at any time (katewill@illinois.edu or cell 419-215-2563). If you desire additional information about your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact
the UIUC Institutional Review Board office at 217-333-2670 or irb@illinois.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you.

I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

________________________________________
Name and signature of cybernavigator/library staff

________________________________________
Name and signature of researcher

_______________________________________
Date
Appendix 3: focus group plan and consent form

Cybernavigator focus group / October 26-27-28, 2009

Setup.
Linda Naru / room access and parking stickers
Computers, survey on each machine, folder ‘survey’ on desktop
Tables (food and coat near door, welcome table)
Recording

Check in.
Aiko: give name tag, offer refreshment or lunch, place to put coat and bag.
Kate: go over consent form, receipt form, give them $ and parking sticker.

Monday
8 we arrive
9:30-9:45 CNs arrive, welcome, consent forms, payment
9:45-11:30 focus group
11:30 food arrives, commence lunch and online survey
1:30 two people come, welcome, consent, lunch
2:30 end focus group
2:30-3 survey

Tuesday and Wednesday
9:30-9:45 morning CNs arrive, welcome, consent forms, payment
9:45-11:30 focus group
11:30-1 lunch and leave
12-12:30 afternoon CNs arrive, welcome, consent, lunch
12:45-2:30 focus group
2:30-3 survey
Part 1. Go around the room asking each person to introduce themselves and tell two stories. One the, worst thing that happened as they were working as Cybernavigator. Two of the best thing that happened. This is “best” and “worst” in whatever way you think of it.

Who
What
When
Where
Why
How

Break. Ask everyone to move to a different seat.

Part 2. How would you make the cybernavigator program, and your job, better?

1. working conditions – hours – pay – benefits – qualifications
2. training – their own, other staff, the public
3. collaborations and cooperation – with other staff, with other organizations in community, other libraries
4. outreach and marketing – what do people call you? Is the name cybernavigator important? Does the community know enough about you? What should they know? How best to tell them?
5. Technology: internet speed – public PCs – printing and reservations system – staff computers – how would it change your job if you had a laptop?
6. Policy:
   a. office applications on PCs?
   b. time limits – too long? too short?
   c. are you an activist? are you a missionary? do you feel burnout?
   d. porn a problem? should it be allowed or banned?
   e. should computers be given more space in the library at the expense of other activities?
7. Should CNs work more than 20 hours a week? could students do that? Should it be a full time permanent position? should CNs do other functions at branch? Should they get library training?
8. What have you learned about libraries since becoming a CN (good and bad)
9. Are you considering going to library/information school?
10. What contributes to your enthusiasm for your job, what detracts? What would boost your sense of purpose and mission? What would combat burnout?
Cybernavigators:  
Consent form for focus group and questionnaire

In accord with federal rules about informed consent, this document explains what research we’re doing, informs you of your rights, and asks for your voluntary consent to participate.

We are studying how people in Chicago use computers and the internet and who helps them. The research is led by Dr. Kate Williams of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign Graduate School of Library and Information Science, with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

By participating in this research, you are helping inform libraries and others towards a better understanding of how to serve people and communities in the digital age. This document is to ask if you will:

1) join a focus group of cybernavigators
2) allow us to audiorecord the focus group discussion
3) answer a brief questionnaire.

Your identity, your participation, the audiorecording, and your survey answers will all be kept confidential, safeguarding your privacy. They will be shared only within the research team and not with any Chicago Public Library managers or staff. The materials from this research will be used for research presentation/publication. Any information that is obtained in connection with this research that can be identified with you or any individual will remain confidential. The only document that will be retained with your name on it will be the signed consent form, and that will be part of the data kept confidential by the researchers.

No risks to this research are foreseen beyond those of daily life. Benefits of the research include a $50 payment to you in appreciation for your time and knowledge.

At any point, you may choose not to answer any questions from the researcher. You also may discontinue participation in the research at any time without prejudice. The decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your or anyone’s grades at, status at, or future relations with the University of Illinois.

If you have any questions regarding the research, please ask. You can email or call the lead researcher collect at any time (katewill@illinois.edu or 217-244-9128). If you desire additional information about your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign’s
Institutional Review Board office at 217-333-2670 (collect calls accepted) or irb@illinois.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you.

☐ I understand the above and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

☐ I consent to the digital recording of the focus group.

________________________________   ________________________________
Name and signature of cybernavigator/library staff

________________________________
Date
Appendix 4: Survey

Technology inventory

Write your file number ______ and then check the things below that you do

create or maintain web pages
read an online bulletin board
belong to an electronic discussion list
post to an electronic discussion list or bulletin board
host or edit an electronic discussion list or bulletin board
post information on the Web in some other way, blogging for instance
use Wikipedia
add to or change a Wikipedia entry
take digital photos
record digital audio
record digital video
share photos, audio or video or that you have made
send or receive e-mail as part of group activities
create documents on a computer
use a spreadsheet
use bookkeeping software
look for information on the Web
talk over the Internet as you would on a telephone (e.g. Skype)
use Linux or any open-source software
write a program
use online chat
use instant messaging
talk on a cellphone
text on a cellphone
send/receive email on a cellphone
browse the web on a cellphone
use wireless to connect to the Internet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you help...</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Less than monthly or never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a group of two or more people who have come together for help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone who tells you that non-CPL-staff referred them to you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone who already knows your name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone you know by name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone you recognize but don't know their name</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone you know from an activity or organization you are part of outside work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you help people...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handle their reservations</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>print</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use the mouse or the browser</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>search for jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get or use email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>get health information</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>produce or update a resume</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>produce or update another type of document</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apply for a job online</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>get or check on benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use other government websites</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seek resources relating to being homeless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank, buy, sell, or do other e-commerce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look into current events or cultural information</td>
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<tr>
<td>use the library catalog</td>
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<td>use online databases</td>
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<td>Activity</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
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<td>do other research</td>
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<tr>
<td>use social networking sites (MySpace, etc)</td>
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<td>play an online game</td>
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<td>How often does the security guard connect you with someone to help?</td>
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<td>How often do the paraprofessionals connect you with someone to help?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do the librarians connect you with someone to help?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apart from printing/reservations, how often do other library staff provide computer/internet help?</td>
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<td>How often do you teach a class from a set curriculum that people have signed up for in advance?</td>
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<td>How often do you bring your own laptop to work?</td>
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<td>How often do your patrons use your laptop as part of your helping them?</td>
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<td>How often do you see, run into or get together with library patrons outside of work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you see, run into or get together with library co-workers outside of work?</td>
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You and others

List all the branches where you have worked as cybernavigator, from first to last.

How many paraprofessionals are usually at work in your current branch?

How many librarians are usually at work in your current branch?
Do you live in the same neighborhood as your current branch? (If you have worked as CN in more than one branch over time, please answer for each)

Did you work for Chicago Public Library in any other job? What job? What branch(es)?

Please list any church or team or other community organization you belong to or participate in.

Which of these groups might your current branch patrons belong to?

What languages do you use as a cybernavigator?

Where were you born?

What K-8 school(s) did you attend, and in what town(s)?

What high school(s) did you attend, and in what town(s)?

What college(s) or graduate schools did/do you attend, and in what town(s)?
What were/are your major(s)?

If you work another job, who is your employer?

What is your job title there?

How many hours a week is that job?

Do you have any children?

**Your computer use**

In the past week, what sort of work or activities have you done on computers or the internet?

Do you have a laptop or desktop at home? Which?

If you have internet access at home, is it dial-up or broadband?
What do you pay for it monthly?

What other digital tools do you own or have at home? (cell phone, game device, digital camera, other peripherals, be as specific as possible)

**You helping others**

Would you say your help-giving is mostly scheduled in advance, or not?

Where do you usually sit at work, in staff-only space or public space?

What websites do you remember using last week in helping people?

Where do you get your curriculum for teaching? (Be as specific as you can)

Outside of cybernavigator work, who else do you help with computers and the internet?

List the other places you know of where your patrons use computers and the internet.

**Others helping you**
List up to five people who help you with your own computer/internet use questions (first names or initials).

For each, are they family, friend, co-worker, acquaintance, or an institutional resource you don't know in advance?

For each, how often do you see them? (Daily, weekly, monthly, less than monthly)

For each, how often do you have other contact with them besides face to face? (Daily, weekly, monthly, less than monthly)

For each, are they paid to help you or is their help given for free?

Thank you!
Appendix 5: eChicago symposia

Table of contents (from eChicago 2007 proceedings)

Preface—Cheryl Johnson-Odim .................................................................1
Foreword—Joan C. Durrance .................................................................3
Introduction—Kate Williams .................................................................5
Part 1: Conference program and presentations ...........................................9
  Conference program ..............................................................................9
  Donna Carroll—President’s welcome .....................................................11
  Doug Schuler—Too early for the brandy and cigars: Twenty-five years of
  community technology: Lessons learned for libraries and
  local communities ..............................................................................13
  Nancy John—Discussant .......................................................................23
  Kathryn Clodfelter—Indiana’s community networking movement and
  implications for community informatics ..............................................25
  Karen Mossberger—Digital citizenship and communities: What we know, what
  we need to know ...............................................................................31
  Salvador Rivas—Digital inequality among U.S. Latinos: What do we know?
  What do we want to know? .................................................................36
  Amy Kerr—Evaluating two Chicago projects: Wireless Community Networks
  and the Illinois Community Technology Fund ......................................43
  Adrian Kok—Computer training for older adults: What do we know about
  resources in the community and what do we want to know? ..........47
  Diane Velasquez—Public access computing in 14 Midwestern public libraries ...58
  Paul Adams—Technology and information transfer through university
  engagement ..........................................................................................61
  Frances Roehm—SkokieNet and SkokieTalk: Building community .............64
  Harold L. Lucas—Bronzeville, Chicago’s Black Metropolis: Innovations in
  cultural heritage preservation ............................................................71
  Tracie Hall, Ann Peterson Bishop, Doug Schuler, Charles Benton, and
  Susan Roman—Understanding and implementing technology
  in local communities: What have we learned today? What are
  next steps? ..........................................................................................78

Part 2: Reflections by key participants .......................................................90
  Prudence Dalrymple .............................................................................90
  Michael Maranda—“We Chicago” .........................................................92
  Don Samuelson ...................................................................................93
Part 3: Reprints of work by speakers and key participants ................................................................. 96

Charles Benton—Organizational statement by the Chicago Digital Access
Alliance: The Community Benefits Agreement and the
Establishment of a Digital Excellence Trust ................................................................. 96

Ann Bishop, Imani Bazell, Bharat Mehra, and Cynthia Smith—Afya:
Social and Digital Technologies that Reach Across the
Digital Divide ...................................................................................................................... 101

Kathryn Clodfelter—A Midwestern Community Networking Movement: A
Planned Multitheoretical Multilevel Social Network Analysis... 109

Prudence Dalrymple—Improving Health Care through Information: Research
Challenges for Health Sciences Librarians................................................................. 111

Tracie Hall—Race and Place: A Personal Account of Unequal Access ........ 127

Nancy John—About Things Open: A Quick Primer on Openness............... 131

Adrian Kok—Multiple Perspectives in Learning and Collaborating: A Case
Study of the Healthsource Collaboration................................................................. 143

Michael Maranda—Speaking Out on the Digital Divide ....................... 152

Karen Mossberger, David Kaplan and Michele A. Gilbert—How Concentrated
Poverty Matters for the “Digital Divide”: Motivation, Social
Networks and Institutions......................................................................................... 158

Salvador Rivas—Coverage Error: The Achilles’ Heel of Web-based Surveys.. 193

Don Samuelson—Initial Thoughts: Developing a Broadband Policy
for Illinois ...................................................................................................................... 224

Doug Schuler—Community Networks and the Evolution of Civic
Intelligence ...................................................................................................................... 230

Susan Strawn—Entrepreneurship and Cultural Passion: A Case Study of Aid to
Artisans in Armenia, 1995-1997 ................................................................................. 251

Diane Velasquez—Introduction to a Research Proposal: The Impact of
Technology on Organizational Change in Public Libraries: A
Qualitative Study......................................................................................................... 278

Kate Williams and Joan C. Durrance—Social Networks and Social Capital:
Rethinking Theory in Community Informatics................................................. 331
Appendix 5: Tables of contents for proceedings of eChicago 2007, 2008, 2009; program of eChicago 2010

eChicago 2007

Kate Williams, editor
eChicago 2007

Kate Williams, editor

Proceedings of the inaugural eChicago symposium
held at Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois, April 20, 2007
A Dominican University Graduate School of Library and Information
Science monograph co-published with the University of Illinois
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
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Dan Schiller, John Unsworth, Marlo Welshons

Dominican University GSLIS eChicago Advisory Group
Chris Hagar, Tracie D. Hall, Susan Roman
# Table of contents

Preface—Cheryl Johnson-Odim ................................................................. 1
Foreword—Joan C. Durrance ................................................................. 3
Introduction—Kate Williams ................................................................. 5

Part 1: Conference program and presentations ..................................... 9

Conference program............................................................................... 9
Donna Carroll—President’s welcome .................................................... 11
Doug Schuler—Too early for the brandy and cigars: Twenty-five years of
community technology: Lessons learned for libraries and
local communities ................................................................. 13
Nancy John—Discussant........................................................................ 23
Kathryn Clodfelter—Indiana’s community networking movement and
implications for community informatics............................................. 25
Karen Mossberger—Digital citizenship and communities: What we know, what
we need to know.............................................................................. 31
Salvador Rivas—Digital inequality among U.S. Latinos: What do we know?
What do we want to know? ............................................................. 36
Amy Kerr—Evaluating two Chicago projects: Wireless Community Networks
and the Illinois Community Technology Fund .................................. 43
Adrian Kok—Computer training for older adults: What do we know about
resources in the community and what do we want to know? ........47
Diane Velasquez—Public access computing in 14 Midwestern public libraries...58
Paul Adams—Technology and information transfer through university
engagement....................................................................................... 61
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cultural heritage preservation ...................................................... 71
Tracie Hall, Ann Peterson Bishop, Doug Schuler, Charles Benton, and
Susan Roman—Understanding and implementing technology
in local communities: What have we learned today? What are
next steps? ..................................................................................... 78

Part 2: Reflections by key participants ................................................. 90
Prudence Dalrymple............................................................................. 90
Michael Maranda—“We Chicago” .................................................... 92
Don Samuelson.................................................................................. 93
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Charles Benton—Organizational statement by the Chicago Digital Access Alliance: The Community Benefits Agreement and the Establishment of a Digital Excellence Trust ........................................96

Ann Bishop, Imani Bazell, Bharat Mehra, and Cynthia Smith—Afya: Social and Digital Technologies that Reach Across the Digital Divide .................................................................................. 101

Kathryn Clodfelter—A Midwestern Community Networking Movement: A Planned Multitheoretical Multilevel Social Network Analysis... 109

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Adrian Kok—Multiple Perspectives in Learning and Collaborating: A Case Study of the Healthsource Collaboration........................................... 143

Michael Maranda—Speaking Out on the Digital Divide .......................... 152

Karen Mossberger, David Kaplan and Michele A. Gilbert—How Concentrated Poverty Matters for the “Digital Divide”: Motivation, Social Networks and Institutions............................................................... 158

Salvador Rivas—Coverage Error: The Achilles’ Heel of Web-based Surveys.. 193

Don Samuelson—Initial Thoughts: Developing a Broadband Policy for Illinois ................................................................................................................. 224

Doug Schuler—Community Networks and the Evolution of Civic Intelligence .................................................................................................................. 230

Susan Strawn—Entrepreneurship and Cultural Passion: A Case Study of Aid to Artisans in Armenia, 1995-1997 ......................................................... 251

Diane Velasquez—Introduction to a Research Proposal: The Impact of Technology on Organizational Change in Public Libraries: A Qualitative Study....................................................................................... 278

Kate Williams and Joan C. Durrance—Social Networks and Social Capital: Rethinking Theory in Community Informatics...................................... 331
eChicago 2008

Kate Williams, editor

Proceedings of the second eChicago symposium
held at Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois, April 3-4, 2008
A monograph co-published by the Dominican University and
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Graduate Schools of Library and Information Science
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Introduction—Kate Williams

Symposium program

Symposium participation

President’s welcome—Donna Carroll

Libraries as technology centers: The Chicago story—Karen Danczak Lyons

Twenty years of organizing public access computer labs: What have been our victories? What is our agenda?—Shireen Mitchell

Mapping Ethnic Chicago—Brooke Bahnsen

Community dynamics and race relations in Chinese Chicago—Shanshan Lan

The Arab American experience: Fighting for identity & presence—Ray Hanania

The Black Metropolis Research Consortium—Kathleen Bethel

Community informatics at Dominican University—Chris Hagar

Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation/Chicago field work case study: Use of computer technology—What are we doing? What needs to be done?—Jan A. Rodgers

Empowering teens through technology: A look at Intel Computer Clubhouse—Donna Dohnalek

Using the Internet to build networks of people focused on helping kids through school and into careers—Daniel F. Bassill

Reuse is a real hardware alternative—Willie Cade

2010 Digital Literacy Collaboration Project with CTCs and CPLs—Licia Knight

Five themes of Chicago's eGovernment: Digitizing information, making it accessible, automating transactions, streamlining operations, and boosting productivity—Douglas Hurdelbrink

The State of Illinois promoting broadband, kids laptops, and eGovernment: A view from Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn's office—Ryan Croke

eGov: Embracing the capabilities of technology, organizations, and people—Jon Gant

Skokie teens and technology @ the library: Building community—Frances Roehm
Developing free tools for modeling elementary mathematics—George Reese.............. 143
Gaming, teens, and libraries—Jenny Levine ............................................................ 149
Chicago leading a digital nation .............................................................................. 175
  Don Samuelson ................................................................................................. 175
  Roberta Webb ................................................................................................. 176
  Ann Peterson Bishop ......................................................................................... 178
  Shireen Mitchell ............................................................................................... 180
  Abdul Alkalimat ............................................................................................... 182
  Thom Clark ........................................................................................................ 184
  Chris Hagar ....................................................................................................... 186
  Héctor R. Hernández ......................................................................................... 186
Kate Williams, editor
The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign Graduate School of Library and Information Science has a distinguished tradition of publishing high-quality publications for the field of LIS and actively produces Library Trends and The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books. Our 50 year publishing history includes scholarly and practical publications that address current issues and also serve as historical archives. Here you can find quality books, journals, papers, and conference proceedings for teaching, scholarly reading, and daily application.

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eChicago 2009
Cybernavigating our Cultures

Introduction—Kate Williams with Chris Hagar ................................................................. 1
Symposium program ......................................................................................................... 5
Photo gallery—Robert A. Sengstacke .............................................................................. 9
President’s welcome—Donna Carroll .............................................................................. 19
Dean’s welcome—John Unsworth ................................................................................... 21
Digiplace and cyberscapes: Rethinking the digital divide in urban America—Matthew A.
Zook ................................................................................................................................. 23
Provost’s welcome—Cheryl Johnson-Odim................................................................. 41
Dean’s welcome—Susan Roman ...................................................................................... 43
Via Chicago: Ethnic media, new media and the experience of migration and mobility—
Steve Jones ........................................................................................................................ .. 45
Sustaining the cyberlife of Chicago’s ethnic communities ................................................. 61
  Abdul Alkalimat ........................................................................................................... 61
  Brooke Bahnsen .......................................................................................................... 62
  Aiko Takazawa .......................................................................................................... 63
  Hui Yan ..................................................................................................................... 65
  Melissa Martinez ....................................................................................................... 67
  Sarah Cottonaro ....................................................................................................... 68
  Héctor R. Hernández ............................................................................................... 70
The CyberNavigators of Chicago Public Library ............................................................. 79
  Roberto Pang ........................................................................................................... 79
  Sophia Hou ............................................................................................................. 83
  Juan Pablo Avalos ................................................................................................... 84
  Omar Ramirez ......................................................................................................... 84
  Alicia Henry ............................................................................................................. 85
eChicago 2010
Seizing the Broadband Moment

8:30-5:00 on Friday, April 30 and 8:30-3:30 on Saturday, May 1
UIC Student Center West, 828 S. Wolcott, Chicago
Medical District stop on Blue Line, Polk stop on Pink Line
http://www.echicago.illinois.edu

From grassroots to citywide agencies, on campus and community, Chicagoans are
demonstrating digital expertise and creativity. Now, will the 2010 arrival of broadband—
fast internet—help us launch community and economic recovery? Can it generate
sustainable livelihoods for everyone?

Hear from:
☐ Broadband projects leaders from Chicago and beyond
☐ Cybernavigators and others from our branch libraries
☐ Asian, Latino, and African American community-based leadership
☐ Chicago’s eGovernment experts
☐ Chicago contributors to Wikipedia
☐ Community archivists and media organizers
☐ Graduate student researchers and activists
☐ …and more

Keynotes: Hardik Bhatt, City of Chicago CIO; respondent Neville Roy Singham,
Executive Chairman, Thoughtworks; Erik Garr, General Manager of the FCC’s
Omnibus Broadband Initiative; respondent Drew Clark, Director, Partnership for a
Connected Illinois.

This fourth eChicago meeting is a practice, policy, and research symposium sponsored by
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Graduate School of Library and Information Science
University of Illinois at Chicago Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement
University of Illinois at Chicago College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs
The Benton Foundation
And we gratefully acknowledge support from the Chicago Community Trust
## eChicago 2010: Seizing the Broadband Moment

**Thursday, April 29, 2010 / 6:00-7:30 pm / Roundtable Reunion: Job?Tech at 15**

**Friday, April 30, 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>Registration and coffee</td>
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</table>
| 9:00-10:15| Introductory Remarks: Terry Mazany, The Chicago Community Trust (invited)  
Seizing the Broadband Moment in Chicago / Hardik Bhatt, City of Chicago;  
Neville Roy Singham, ThoughtWorks, respondent |
| 10:15-10:30| Break                                                              |
| 10:30-11:45| Building Broadband Infrastructure  
Mark Pradun, Chair                                                                 |
| 11:45-12:45| Lunch in the Market Place (poster session)                         |
| 12:45-2:00| eGovernment: information and civic engagement  
Joe Hoereth, Chair                                                                  |
| 2:00-2:15 | Break                                                              |
| 2:15-3:30 | Perspectives on the Economic Recovery  
Alexander Sherman, Chair                                                               |
| 3:30-3:45 | Break                                                              |
| 3:45-5:00 | Strategies for Broadband Use  
Susana Vasquez, Chair                                                                |
| 5:15-8:00 |                                                              |

**Saturday, May 1, 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>Registration and coffee</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 9:00-10:15| Seizing the Broadband Moment Nationwide / Erik Garr, FCC;  
Drew Clark, Connected Illinois, respondent |
| 10:15-10:30| Break                                                              |
| 10:30-11:45| Latino Perspectives  
Hector Hernandez, Chair                                                                 |
| 11:45-12:45| Lunch                                                              |
| 12:45-2:00| eBlack: Introducing the Black Experience in Cyberspace  
Abdul Alkalimat, Chair                                                                 |
| 2:00-2:15 | Break                                                              |
| 2:15-3:30 | The way forward: Abdul Alkalimat, Charles Benson, Amy Eshleman (invited), Matthew Guilford, Karen Mossberger, Kate Williams |

**Notes:**
Thursday April 29, 6:00-7:30 pm
In Conference Room A: *Roundtable Reunion: Job?Tech at 15*

*Chair: Abdul Alkalimat,* University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Graduate School of Library and Information Science and Department of African American Studies

Friday, April 30, 8:30 am-5:00 pm
8:30-9:00 Coffee and registration second floor of UIC Student Center West
9:00-10:15 Plenary in Conference Room A

*Chair: Kate Williams,* University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

*Welcome: Terry Mazany,* President and CEO, The Chicago Community Trust (invited)

*Speaker: Hardik Bhatt,* CIO, City of Chicago, “Seizing the Broadband Moment in Chicago

*Respondent: Neville Roy Singham,* founder and Executive Chairman of Thoughtworks

10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-11:45 Breakout sessions

In Conference Room B: *Building the Broadband Infrastructure*

*Chair: Mark Pradun,* Governor’s Office State of Illinois

*Alan Kraus,* Northern Illinois University

*Doug Power,* Northern Illinois University

*Mike Smeltzer,* University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In Conference Room C: *Latino Perspectives*

*Chair: Hector Hernandez,* Chicago Public Library

*Christina Gomez,* Northeastern Illinois University

*Jaime Guzman,* The Resurrection Project

*Alejandro Molina,* Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School

In room 206: *CyberNavigators: Research and findings*

*Co-Chairs: Roberto Pang,* Chicago Public Library, and *Kate Williams,* University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

*Matt Jensen,* Chicago Public Library, Legler

*Kera Kelly,* Chicago Public Library, Thurgood Marshall

*Theresa Kettler,* Chicago Public Library, Edgewater

*Aldo Vasquez,* Chicago Public Library, Belmont

In room 213: *Public Computer Center*
The Public Computer Center is a hands-on opportunity for conference participants to enhance their technical knowledge, skills, and experience by learning about online resources from fellow eChicago attendees in 15 minute sessions.

11:45-12:45 Lunch: Meal tickets for the Marketplace onsite will be provided to conference attendees

Available during lunch: Poster Session in Conference Room C

12:45- 2.00 Breakout sessions

In Conference Room B: eGovernment: Information and Civic Engagement
Chair: Joe Hoereth, University of Illinois at Chicago
Joe Germuska, Open Gov Chicago
Karen Mossberger, University of Illinois at Chicago

In Conference Room C: Graduate Students: Research and Action
Chair: Brooke Bahnsen, Fremont Library
Andrew Gordon, University of Michigan
Kristen Kogachi, University of Michigan
Gabriel Krieshok, University of Michigan
Catherine Le, University of Michigan
Alex Pompe, University of Michigan
Lauren Walker, University of Michigan

Aaron Fleisher, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Jeff Ginger, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Noah Lenstra, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Anna Pederson, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Susan Rodgers, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Aiko Takazawa, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In room 213: Public Computer Center

The Public Computer Center is a hands-on opportunity for conference participants to enhance their technical knowledge, skills, and experience by learning about online resources from fellow eChicago attendees in 15 minute sessions.

2:00-2:15 Break
2:15-3:30 Breakout sessions

In Conference Room B: Perspectives on the Economic Recovery
Chair: Alexander Gail Sherman, Civic Consulting Alliance
Marie Lynch, Chicago Career Tech
Justin Massa, MCIC
Andrew Pinçon, Digital Workforce Education Society

In Conference Room C: Community Archives in Chicago: Technological Opportunities and Financial Obstacles
Chair: Lisa Calahan, Black Metropolis Research Consortium
Joy Kingsolver, Shel Silverstein Archives
Andy Steadham, Black Metropolis Research Consortium
Lourdes Torres, Center for Latino Studies at DePaul University

In room 206: The Future of the Branch Public Library
Chair: Linda Naru, University of Illinois at Chicago
Richard Dohnalek, Chicago Public Library (Lincoln-Belmont)
Veyshon Edmond, Chicago Public Library (Bessie Coleman)
Moshi Kamau, Chicago Public Library (Woodson)
Zach McMahon, Chicago Public Library (Harold Washington)

In room 213: Public Computer Center

The Public Computer Center is a hands-on opportunity for conference participants to enhance their technical knowledge, skills, and experience by learning about online resources from fellow eChicago attendees in 15 minute sessions.

3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-5:00 Breakout sessions

In Conference Room B: Strategies for Broadband Use
Chair: Susana Vasquez, LISC
Patrick Barry, LISC
Bill Callahan, One Community
Kurt Demaagd, Michigan State University
Scott Goldstein, Teska Associates

In Conference Room C: Work and Workers in the 21st Century
Chair: Abdul Alkalimat, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Lenny Brody, Progressive Democrats of America
Sheila Garland-Olaniran, National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United
**Draft, please check back**

**Bruce Parry**, activist
In room 206: *How will online tools impact community media?*
*Chair: Thom Clark*, Community Media Workshop
*Ralph Braseth*, Loyola University of Chicago
*Suzanne McBride*, Columbia College of Chicago
*Glenn Reedus*, South Suburban News
*Ernie Sanders*, Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation

In room 213: *Public Computer Center*

_The Public Computer Center is a hands-on opportunity for conference participants to enhance their technical knowledge, skills, and experience by learning about online resources from fellow eChicago attendees in 15 minute sessions._

5:00-8:00 All invited to drinks and dinner at Rosebud, 1500 W. Taylor Street, Chicago (complimentary for students of the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences LEEP program)

**Saturday, May 1, 8:30 am-3:30 pm**

8:30-9:00 Coffee and registration second floor of UIC Student Center West

9:00-10:15 Plenary in Conference Room A

*Chair: Kate Williams*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

*Speaker: Erik Garr*, General Manager of the FCC’s Omnibus Broadband Initiative, “*Seizing the Broadband Moment Nationwide: Mapping, Planning, Doing,*”

*Respondent: Doug Clark*, Executive Director, Partnership for a Connected Illinois.

10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-11:45 Breakout sessions

In Conference Room B: *Latino Perspectives*

*Chair: Hector Hernandez*
*Pablo Castro*, Casa Central
*Jaime Guzman*, Resurrection Project
*Elvia Rodriguez Ochoa*, Pros Arts Studio

In Conference Room C: Wikipedia Chicago

*Chair: Tony Vernon*, Wikipedia Chicago WikiProject
In room 213: **Public Computer Center**

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11:45-12:45 Lunch: box lunches will be provided to conference attendees

12:45-2:00 Breakout sessions

In Conference Room B: **eBlack: Introducing the Black Experience in Cyberspace**  
*Chair: Abdul Alkalimat*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In Conference Room C: **Seniors Going Digital**  
*Chair: Don Samuelson*  
**Adrian Kok**, Dominican University  
**Bo Xie**, University of Maryland

In room 206: **Smart Communities: Research and Practice**  
*Chair: to be announced*  
**Rishi Desai**, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation  
**Karen Mossberger**, University of Illinois at Chicago  
**Norma Sanders**, Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corp.

In room 213: **Public Computer Center**

*The Public Computer Center is a hands-on opportunity for conference participants to enhance their technical knowledge, skills, and experience by learning about online resources from fellow eChicago attendees in 15 minute sessions.*

2:00-2:15 Break

2:15-3:30 Plenary in Conference Room A: **The Way Forward**  
*Chair: Abdul Alkalimat*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
**Charles Benton**, Benton Foundation  
**Amy Eshleman**, Chicago Public Library  
**Matthew Guilford**, City of Chicago Department of Innovation and Technology  
**Karen Mossberger**, University of Illinois at Chicago  
**Kate Williams**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

*Each eChicago symposium becomes a published book. Pick up your copy of eChicago 2009 (complimentary to last year’s speakers) and celebrate with us.*
WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR PERSONAL COMPUTER CENTER?

THIS IS THE INAUGURAL ISSUE OF A SMALL NEWSLETTER devoted to the dissemination of news and events to interested persons about the Personal Computer Center of the Chicago Public Library located at the North-Pulaski Branch Library, 4041 W. North Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60639. Our phone is 312-235-2727. Our Electronic Bulletin Board Number is 312-235-3200.

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO USERS

The equipment (hardware) at the Personal Computer Center was made possible by a generous grant from The Friends of The Chicago Public Library. This grant funding also paid the full cost of an on-site service contract which gives our Center same-day maintenance and repair when necessary. (Down time has always plagued services of any type to the public when dealing with machines but perhaps more in the case of a computer: since it will do more, it is missed more when it is unavailable.) Software has come from several sources: 1) non-book materials library budget, 2) computer club software library, and 3) donation of software by individual microcomputer enthusiast.

At the moment, the Center has one Apple II, two disk drives, MX-70 Printer, modem, and 48K RAM memory. Programs include several tutorials (typing, BASIC, The Learning System, US Constitution, SAT), Invoice Factory, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable General Ledger, Compu-Spell, Compu-Read, Data Base Management (Data Factory), etc. For a full description, see our "Software Library" brochure.

CENTER TO UNDERGO PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Each year we will receive new software and, as it is received, it will be reviewed here in these pages. Our acquisitions will be based upon our own reading of reviews and (hopefully) actual interaction by the System Operator(s) of the programs before purchase. Your suggestions are eagerly sought. Please don't forget to fill out the user's questionnaire each time you make use of the facility: you may register your suggestions for improvements or thoughts about software purchases in the spaces provided therein. Remember that we want to obtain software that people will use and not something that will just sit in a notebook on a shelf. Let's keep the dialogue that has begun between Center staff and patrons going and even increase it.
CENTER VOLUNTEERS

The Personal Computer Center now has two active volunteers, we would like more. If you have at least four hours per week for at least four months to spare that you could devote to this community project as a volunteer, please let us know. Call Dewey at 235-2727. The job involves learning the use of the equipment and then helping to orient others in the use of the computer and how to run most of the major programs and how to work your way through the others. Some programs require specialized learning and have manuals hundreds of pages thick. However, most are simple and run from a menu. Carry-over from one program to another is great.

COMPUTER LITERACY SHORT COURSES

TO MAKE OUR CENTER MORE VALUABLE we are planning a series of short computer classes or seminars, to begin in February. The series will last for approximately ten weeks for one two-hour period each week. Included will be discussions of microcomputer uses, programs, fundamentals, guest speakers, films, etc. Computer literacy materials have been provided by Apple Computer, Inc. and consist of 25 Apple manuals, a "Computer Literacy Show and Tell Kit" and several guides. The next "Public Computing" will include more details.

COMPUTER CLUBS WELCOME

We have begun discussions with a number of Special Interest Groups in local computer clubs in hopes that they might use our meeting room to hold their periodic gatherings.

COMPUTER MAGAZINES TO BEGIN IN JANUARY

Orders were placed this year for about a half dozen computer magazines here at the North Pulaski Branch, including BYTE, PERSONAL COMPUTING, and several Apple Journals. Subscriptions are scheduled to begin shortly after the new year. Back issues are available for several magazines, including a couple of years of BYTE, CREATIVE COMPUTING, and PERSONAL COMPUTING.

A COMPUTER BOOK CLUB SCHEDULED FOR THE KIDS

Keep your eyes peeled for publicity around the branch to clue you in on the rules for joining up in our "Computer Book Club". Winners will obtain a certificate and an amount of time for playing their favorite games at the computer, including Space Invaders, Raster Blaster, Chess, and so on. The Big Prize: ONE HOUR GAME TIME. Several second and third prizes. Some kind of prize will be computed for anyone who reads at least one book.

The Personal Computer Center is sponsored by a generous grant from the Friends of the Chicago Public Library.
PROGRAM PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

The following programs all run from diskette #035. Simply type: RUN HELLO and hit the return key and the following "MENU" will be displayed --

CATEGORIES AVAILABLE ARE:
1. BUSINESS
2. MATHEMATICS
3. STATISTICS
4. MISCELLANEOUS
WHICH WOULD YOU LIKE?

Please reply to the question with a 1, 2, 3, or 4. It is not necessary here to hit RETURN.
According to what you select from the above MENU you will be presented with one of the MENU's depicted below -- On those MENU's below you MUST enter a number and then RETURN.

Programs in the business category:
1. Future value of an investment
2. Annuity
3. Regular deposits
4. Regular Withdrawals
5. Initial investment
6. Min invest for withdrawals
7. Nominal interest rate
8. Effective Interest rate
9. Earned interest table
10. Depreciation rate
11. Depreciation amount
12. Salvage value
13. Discount commercial paper
14. Principal on a loan
15. Regular payment on a loan
16. Last payment on a loan
17. Remaining balance on loan
18. Term of a loan
19. Annual Interest rate on loan
20. Mort amort table

Programs in the mathematics category:
1. Greatest common denominator
2. Prime factors
3. Area of a polygon
4. Vector analysis
5. Parts of a triangle
6. Vector operations
7. Coordinate conversion
8. Coordinate plot
9. Angle conversion
10. Polar equation plot
11. Function.plot
12. Linear interpolation
13. Curvilinear interpolation
14. Simpson's rule
15. Gaussian quadrature
16. Trapezoidal rule
17. Derivative
18. Quadratic formula
19. Real roots: Newton
20. Real roots: HalF-Interval search
21. Tric polynomial
22. Simultaneous equations
23. Liinear programming
24. Simple matrix operations
25. Matrix multiplication
26. Matrix inversion

BE SURE YOU'RE ON OUR MAILING LIST!

CALL 235-2727 to make appointments -- Ask for Patrick Dewey/ Librarian/ System Operator
STATISTICS PROGRAMS:

1. Permutations and combinations
2. Mann-Whitney U Test
3. Geometric Mean
4. Binomial distribution
5. Poisson distribution
6. Normal distribution
7. Chi-square distribution
8. Chi-square test
9. Student's T-distribution
10. Student's T-distribution Test
11. F-distribution
12. Linear correlation coefficient
13. Multiple Linear regression
14. Linear regression
15. Nth order regression
16. Geometric regression

MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORY PROGRAMS:

1. System reliability
2. Average growth rate
3. Federal withholding taxes
4. Tax depreciation schedule
5. Check writer
6. Recipe cost
7. Map check
8. Day of the week
9. Days between two dates (enter as 00, 00, 0000)
10. Anglo to metric

EXAMPLE OF SUBMENU:

Which program would you like to use? (RETURN)

1. Inches to centimeters
2. Feet to centimeters
3. Feet to meters
4. Yards to meters
5. Miles to kilometers
6. Teaspoons to cubic centimeters
7. Tablespoons to cubic centimeters
8. Cups to liters
9. Pints to liters
10. Quarts to liters
11. Gallons to liters
12. Bushels to liters
13. Pecks to liters
14. Ounces to grams
15. Pounds to kilograms
16. Tons to kilograms
17. Fahrenheit to Celsius

(TO END PROGRAM ENTER 0)

WE ALSO HAVE:

US CONSTITUTION TUTOR
&
SAT TUTOR...

...a review next month

CALL 235-2727 to make appointments — Ask for Patrick Dewey/Librarian/System Operator
### Table 1: Libraries of Chicago, 1833-72

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Library Founded</th>
<th>Library Discontinued</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aurora Turnverein</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Became University of Chicago Divinity School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist Union Theological Seminary</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell's Commercial College</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Formerly Gale's Circulating Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burley's Circulating Library</td>
<td>184—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Library Society</td>
<td>1842 (?)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Academy of Design</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Burned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Academy of Sciences</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burned; revived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Arbeiterverein</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Astronomical Society</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Burned; revived; discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Board of Trade</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Became Illinois Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Became Illinois University School of Pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago College of Pharmacy</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Historical Society</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burned; revived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Law Institute</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burned; revived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Library Association</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Continuation of Young Men's Association, burned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Lyceum</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Books taken by Young Men's Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Medical College</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Became Northwestern University Medical School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Normal School</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Theological Seminary</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Turngemeinde</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineers Club of the Northwest</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobb's Library</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook County Normal and Training School</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Society</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Library</td>
<td>1869 (?)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gale's Circulating Library</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>184—</td>
<td>Became Burley's Circulating Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hahmemann Medical College</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyde Park Lyceum</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Became Chicago Public Library branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Moulders Union</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Lyceum</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short-lived; Was Chicago Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics' Institute</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Sold for debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Avenue Free Library</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Discontinued; books sold about 1874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Church Library</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Burned; revived; soon discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newberry Library</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bequest received; organized, 1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shore Rolling Mill</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Northwest</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Became McCormick Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rush Medical College</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eventually part of University of Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Francis Xavier's Library</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>1885 (?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Ignatius College</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Luke's Hospital</td>
<td>1871 (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svea Society</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Catholic Library Association</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Chicago (old)</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>University closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Chicago law department</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Men's Association</td>
<td>1841</td>
<td></td>
<td>Became Chicago Library Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Men's Christian Association</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burned; revived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Men's Christian Union Library</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organized ten days after fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Men's Library Association of the First Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Men's Lyceum</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>1885 (?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Side Library</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zymotecheinic Institute</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rental collection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>