Digital Divide Guide

DEFINITION: WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

- **Digital Divide:** The gap between people who have differing levels of access to information technology, based on age, income, race, or nationality.
- **Digital Literacy:** Level of familiarity with and use of existing technologies.
- **Blog:** Short for WebLog. An online journal that uses a conversational style to post information about business, politics, hobbies and much more.
- **Broadband Service:** High-speed data transmission via the internet.
- **Dial-up Service:** Low-speed data transmission via the internet.
- **E-Commerce:** Business transactions conducted online.
- **Instant Messaging:** Online conversations that occur in real time, unlike the time lapse involved with email.
- **Internet:** A worldwide, publicly accessible, interconnected computer network, used to transmit information.
- **Keyboarding**: The process of inputting information to a computer through typing.
- **Voice over IP (VOIP):** Allows phone service via the internet, using your computer.
- **WiFi:** Allows wireless access to the internet.

ASSESSMENT: WHERE DO I STAND?

- General Computer Knowledge
    - Can you log-on, log-off, open, use and close programs on your own?
    - Are you comfortable using a keyboard and mouse?

- Word Processing and Spreadsheet Skills
    - Do you know how to insert and remove/modify margins, tabs, headers, footers, page numbers and line spacing in your word processor?
    - Do you know how to enter, edit, format and delete the contents of spreadsheet cells?

- Communications Skills (email)
    - Do you have an e-mail address that you regularly use to compose, send, reply to email messages?
    - When someone asks you to send a document, do you mail it, fax it or email it?

- Web Skills
    - Have you ever used a browser (Netscape or Internet Explorer)?
    - Have you ever created a website for yourself or your business?
    - Have you ever made an online purchase?

- New Technologies
    - Have you ever used WiFi, broadband, a blog, or instant messaging?

Source: University of Washington http://courses.washington.edu/hsstudev/studev/DigitalLiteracySelf-Assess.doc.

For a more detailed self-assessment, please visit www.PEIconference.com.

What are some areas where YOU can improve your digital literacy?

EXPLANATION: WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Leveling the Playing Field (Economic Equality)

- Access to <u>Financial</u> Opportunities – e.g., government contracting, online granting processes.
- Access to <u>Management Assistance</u> and Networking Organizations – e.g., NC Minority & Woman Owned Business Enterprise Coordinators' Network, Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, Small Business and Technology Development Center, Small Business Center at Cape Fear Community College and many others.

Low Cost Solutions for Business (Economic Growth & Social Mobility)

- <u>Productivity </u>Improvements – Quickbooks SimpleStart ($80) to maximize/track operations.
- <u>Cost reductions</u> through <u>Increased Efficiency</u> –online banking.
- <u>Cost reductions </u>through Sourcing Options –<u>competitive pricing</u> research.
- <u>Connectivity</u> Improvements –24/7 connection to customers and suppliers via website.
- Customer <u>Lead Generator/Customer Management</u> –email, website, MyMailList ($30), Act!
- Access to <u>Distribution</u> –internet sales (ecommerce).
- Inexpensive <u>Advertising</u>–website as advertising vehicle; constant, targeted message for customers.
- Online <u>Educational</u> Opportunities –online training, tutorials.

IMPROVEMENT: WHAT CAN I DO?

Next Steps

- ***Intro to Computers*** class, **TODAY**, **HERE**, 1:00pm-4:00pm. **FREE**.
- Take additional, more specific courses from
    - **Cape Fear Community College** www.cfcc.edu/ce
        - Computers for Beginners: 4/11-5/11, 1pm-4pm, TuTh, $60
        - MS Office Introduction: 2/21-3/23, 9am-12pm, TuTh, $60
        - Web Design Advanced: 3/20-4/19, 6pm-9pm, MW, $60
        - Internet Savvy: 4/11-5/4,   1pm-4pm, TuTh, $60
        - *Call 362-7196 or email register@cfcc.edu for more info*
    - **UNCW** www.uncw.edu
    - or other educational organizations.
- Use Online Courses & Tutorials: for example, http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/default.aspx and http://www.gcflearnfree.org/Tutorials/ and www.ed2go.com/cfcc .
- Use FREE computer services at local libraries, Cape Fear Resource Centers, CFCC Small Business Center.
- Sign up with the **SBTDC** for government procurement opportunities (www.SBTDC.org).
- Start a blog at www.blogger.com FREE and easy.
- Create a website.
- Join a **Partners for Economic Inclusion** Team.

> What are some steps that <u>YOU</u> will take to improve your digital literacy?

2006 Conference
Bridging the Digital Divide – Using Simple Technologies to Improve Your Business