

Teleliteracy Assistance for Businesses and Communities

Embracing the e-Revolution

A Call for
Rural Internet Activists



www.nmtabcs.org

Helping Rural New Mexicans Learn the ABCs of
Achieving Prosperity in the Internet Age

It's Not the E-nemy

The Internet is Here to Stay

The public is clearly becoming more comfortable with information technology. This trend is not unique to North America but is a worldwide phenomenon. According to an August 2000 Roper Starch Worldwide survey, 50% of North Americans own personal computers, compared to 55% of those in developed Asia. Overall, 30% of global consumers now own personal computers.

Internet usage is estimated to be at 27% worldwide. In the United States, 41% to 57% of consumers use the Internet. In developed Asia and Latin America, 32% and 11% of consumers, respectively, report that they access the World Wide Web.

Global estimates suggest that 10% of online users worldwide shop online in a given month. In a study by the Angus Reid Group, 40% of all Internet shoppers have made at least one online purchase and **more than half of all online purchases were made by US customers.** Furthermore, Jan Zimmerman reports, in *Marketing on the Internet*, that half of online consumers report that they use the Web to obtain product information or to research future purchases, even if they don't actually purchase online.

Retailing online to everyday people is the area of e-commerce that gets the most press. While figures suggest that these

numbers will grow, it is important to recognize that more commerce is conducted online in the business-to-business markets.

- A Gartner Group survey indicates that online North American retailing between 1998 and 1999, represented 1% of overall consumer spending in North America.

By 2004, e-tailing is expected to account for 5-7 % of North American retail sales.

- In contrast, as much as 25% of all business-to-business purchasing will be conducted online by 2003, growing from \$671 million in 1998 to an estimated \$2.8 trillion.

As consumers and business people become accustomed to the convenience of conducting business via the Internet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, they are beginning to demand the same sort of convenience from government. And there is no reason why government cannot respond! Many routine services can be made available to constituents over the Internet - maps and licensing, tax, service and even voting information can be made available on a government Web page. Many transactions can take place over the Internet. While this makes government more accessible to citizens, it also makes it more efficient and cost effective. Each dollar saved by government or spent more wisely means a citizenry that is more satisfied with government.

Is the Internet Important for Rural Communities?

The use of the Internet and other high-speed technologies that are being developed right now is of extreme importance to rural communities and rural businesses. It's of such importance that if other communities use it, other businesses use it, outside of your area, then they're going to win at your expense, and you're going to lose."



**- Robert Coppedge
Rural Economic Development Specialist**

As a tool, the Internet can help rural communities overcome many of the traditional barriers to viable economic development, such as isolation, low population density, mobility disadvantages, and lack of expertise and human resources. In fact, the Internet can even turn some of the disadvantages into competitive advantages. For example, isolation and low population density can be a distinct plus to some seeking a rural way of life. The Internet allows many professionals to "telecommute" from the geographic location of their choice.

Here's how some of today's New Mexicans are using the Internet advantage

// *How I see my Web site is that it is going to level the playing field for me as a small business owner here where there's not anybody around. We're in a very isolated part of the state, and I'm going to be able to compete with the big stores all over the world. And I like that; I think that's very exciting. People like being able to find the little-known product from these little rural areas."*

**- Becky Christensen,
Owner, Kokopelli's Gift Shop, Aztec, NM**



// *It's possible now to find out something about San Juan County on the Web – some kind of a trip if you're a tourist or whether you're looking for oil and gas resources or whether you're looking for economic data or whatever it is. That sort of information certainly makes us a lot more available to the world. Technology has dramatically helped us*

keep costs down in county government, and the Internet is just another step, another tool that will help us do that."

**- Steve Neville,
County Commissioner, District 3,
San Juan County**



// *I've been ordering all my parts now for six to eight months – everything online, and it's worked out real well. I can order on weekends, nights, I can come in, I don't have to wait until somebody's around to take my order on the phone or something. And, of course, it's fast. I get an order in early in the morning and my parts are here two days later."*

**- Beal Gleason,
Small Equipment Dealer,
Lovington, NM**

// *Well, my business is an obscure one and requires a worldwide market in order to function and the Internet is about the only way that that is really possible. I ship all over the world. And I require that kind of market, because, even with the world market, it's still a small market. The Internet gives me access to nearly anywhere in the world. I ship to Singapore, Hong Kong, all over Europe - everywhere but Antarctica and South America at this point. It gives customers instant access to what I'm doing. And, of course, through my Web site they can link to reviews that have been done by amateur and professional reviewers. So it's sort of a virtual advertising community for me."*



**- John Wyckoff,
Owner, Hammer Dynamics
Magdalena, NM**

// *We had made a contact with a transitional living facility through the Internet and by just plain using e-mail to communicate with them. As of Friday, they have a contract on a 50,000 square-foot building here, and they're going to start renovating and that will bring a little new life."*



**- Claydean Elkins,
Mayor,
Jal, NM**



// *And marketing is the key word here. We need to reach out to the many markets through the world that are looking for us, that are looking for our art work, looking for something unique and different, wanting a part of world history, and we are a part of world history ."*

**- Esadadernos Sal Da Na,
Native American Artist,
Gallup, NM**

Be a Winner

How can your business and community join the “winners” -- those who opt to join the Internet revolution and use cutting edge electronic technologies to their advantage?

A recent *INC. Magazine* article indicated that broadband is available in only 5% of towns with populations fewer than 10,000. These communities contain the people and businesses that have been forgotten in the push to integrate all into the new electronic economy.

Federal policies effectively red-line small and mid-sized communities and businesses in the rural West. The crisis is further compounded by the fact that many community and business leaders in these communities do not even realize how quickly and, potentially, irrevocably they are being pushed further down on the economic scale by failing to insist that current digital divide-creating public policies are overturned.

Involvement in Internet programs is not optional for a prosperous rural community. An article

in the Harvard School of Business says "winner institutions" must provide quality content to their clients through seamless, high-quality Internet delivery, while "losers" postpone action. The need for broadband (Internet access) must be recognized and a policy of activism followed to counter the lack of infrastructure and information.

Local Internet activists must be found or developed to drive the process of joining the Internet Economy. Becoming an Internet Activist means understanding what the Internet connection can do for you, making a plan for your community's future, working with Internet Service Providers to make telecommunications part of that future, and making sure everybody in the community buys into and works toward achieving your goals.

Here is what fellow New Mexicans are saying about the importance of Internet Activism:



// "I think the reason it's important to have high-speed technology in this area is because this is an isolated area. A lot of people live in rural communities. They're away from a lot of the good technologies that other metro areas have. You have rampant unemployment out on the reservation, over 50% in some areas. People are

very skilled, but they need to market their wares, and this gives them the opportunity to do."

- John Peña,
Mayor,
Gallup, NM



“ It is vital to be able to get the knowledge level in telecommunications raised to a point . . . in New Mexico . . . where they understand why things happen the way they happen and what technology can do for them and how they can use that technology – to improve themselves

personally, or their businesses or their community or their health care situation. You name it. Telecommunications is far-reaching. It helps with education - with distance learning. You can have schools in rural New Mexico tied directly with some of the finest schools in the state, including New Mexico State University, for instructional purposes. You can have doctors in urban areas diagnose patients in remote rural areas -- real time – where the patient doesn't have to come in to the big city. They can be seen at a clinic in a rural area and, because of telecommunications, that information can be transmitted over the telephone lines so that the doctors are able to diagnose and have a much broader coverage to be able to provide health care . . . we believe to have an educated community on telecommunications is very important. It can do nothing but help rural New Mexico . . .”

- Leo R. Baca,
**Director of External Affairs for
 Qwest Communications International Inc.
 in New Mexico**

“ It's tough. Change is frightening to many people. And the fears that people have with regard to threats to their present lifestyle are certainly totally legitimate. So it becomes our responsibility to attempt to inform about the options that are likely to become available . . . there are those who would prefer to see no change. And, I think, some who don't acknowledge the fact that regardless of what we desire, there will be change. And we see it as up to us to inform people in such a way that we can guide the change in such a way that it is going to be positive rather than negative.”



- Harry Kroyer,
**Chairman,
 Magdalena Area Community Development Corporation,
 Magdalena, NM**

Key Questions

**Key questions for businesses to ask
before moving or starting up in a new location.**

1. Can I connect to a fiber-optic network in your city?
2. How much will it cost to plug in?
3. How long will it take?
4. Who's competing to provide me with service?
5. What are the rates?
6. Is the network connected to major cities nearby?
7. How many other companies are there?
8. Do they use the network?
9. Can residents connect to the high-speed network and telecommute?
10. Are wireless services available?

Source: "On the Wired Front" by Jill Hecht Maxwell, *Inc. Magazine*, September 15, 2000.

Activities:

After watching the video, organize one or more of the activities below.

- Convene a panel of community Internet users, such as representatives of the local Small Business Development Center, the local planning department, an Internet Service Provider, a business that uses some aspect of the Internet, or a local hospital. Ask panel members to speak briefly about their organization's use of the Internet, then encourage an exchange among panelists and audience members.
 - Have a brainstorming session to identify a committee of local individuals who have a vested interest in improving local community or business involvement in Internet use. Identify what role each member might play as an Internet Activist.
 - Conduct a mini planning session to encourage an increase in Internet use by members of the business community and/or local government. Here are some questions that you should try to answer:*
1. Who are you trying to serve?
 2. What defines the population?
 3. What types of services does the population want?
 4. What types of services are already being provided?
 5. What type of service are you trying to provide?
 6. Is anyone else currently providing or developing this service?
 7. What is your overall objective?
 8. Who will need to cooperate to get it done?
 9. Why is this a good idea?
 10. What information is already available and what is needed?
 11. Who are the key players? Involve them!

Activities, cont.

- If Internet access is available, have a local service provider show you how to set up a customized portal into the Internet. A Web portal is a “cyber door” to the Internet. These are the home pages that come up when you access the Internet. They provide a familiar starting point each time you start your Web activities. Portals usually include information, news and trivia of personal relevance, e-mail, bulletin boards and other tools that can assist you in your information searches on the Web.

Most service providers – whether global (eg. Netscape, Alta Vista) or local (in New Mexico: Zianet, Gilanet, Dellcity) – allow you to customize the portals so they provide information that is relevant and useful to you, including stock quotes, market prices, links to newsletters or industry-specific news.

For example, by selecting My Netscape at Netscape.com, you can make Netscape your home page. Before proceeding, you’ll be asked to register by filling out a questionnaire. To build your own page, click on Preferences. You can decide what information you want displayed, and where you want it placed on the page. You can select from categories such as the weather, stock quotes, a calendar, bookmarks of your favorite Web sites and the latest headlines.

Suggested Internet Sites

SITES THAT ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING CONNECTED

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

Connect New Mexico (CNM) is an association of representatives from the telecommunications, broadcast, computer and Internet industries, who work together to leverage New Mexico resources for information and network technology.

<http://www.connectnm.org/map/allcom.html>

Check this site for telecommunications systems in New Mexico.

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

Digital Divide Network: sponsored by the Benton Foundation, is dedicated to information about the Digital Divide and its elimination.

<http://www.digitaldivide.gov/#newsletter>

Closing the Digital Divide is a clearinghouse of information about the federal administration's programs to close the digital divide.

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/>

NTIA is the Web site for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, US Department of Commerce.

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

Center for Next Generation Internet looks at upcoming developments in the Internet and Internet applications.

Suggested Internet Sites

E-BUSINESS & E-COMMERCE SITES

<http://ecommerce.internet.com/>

Internet.com's Electronic Commerce Guide is a source of information about electronic commerce.

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/library/reference/guides/ecommerce/>

Catherwood Library: Guide to E-Commerce is designed as a beginner's introduction to e-commerce, providing links to a broad array of resources.

<http://www.ebusinessforum.com/>

e-Businessforum is sponsored by the same group that publishes the *Economist* newspaper, seeks to provide insight into and analysis of successful strategies for the global digital economy.

<http://www.becrc.org/index.html>

E-commerce Resource Center, ECRC Bremerton, WA, provides a wide range of e-commerce and Internet resources at beginner and expert levels.

<http://www.tpeditor.com/tponline.htm>

The online version of the Telecommunications Policy - Journal; covers policy and knowledge infrastructure development, management and regulation.

<http://ext.msstate.edu/srdc/E-Team/index.html>

E-Team is a national, land-grant university design team organized to promote education on electronic business issues.

E-GOVERNMENT SITES

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/>

National Telecomm and Info Admin (NTIA) is the Web site for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, US Department of Commerce.

<http://www.digitalgovt.com/>

Center for Digital Government provides government and industry leaders with services to help them with issues related to electronic government.

<http://www.ieg.ibm.com/>

IBM-Electronic Communities-Government is the Web home of the Institute for Electronic Government, founded by IBM in 1995.

<http://www.fcw.com/>

Civic.com is a source of information about the use of information technology in government.

OTHER

www.learnethenet.com

Multilingual guide and tutorial explores the basics of the Web, such as e-mail or newsgroups, and advanced topics like conferencing.

<http://www.nmusa.com/nmisps/nmcounty.htm>

New Mexico Internet Providers listed by county.

About This Program

Embracing the e-Revolution - is one of four educational packages featured in New Mexico State University's Teleliteracy Assistance for Businesses and Communities (T-ABCs) program:

E-asy Does It! - Welcome to the Electronic Age - This brief program highlights the many ways that rural New Mexicans can benefit by traveling the Information Highway. Designed for general audiences, this educational package includes a short video (approx. 10 min.) in which New Mexicans from Gallup to Jal tell about their Internet ventures and how this amazing technology is enriching their lives.

Embracing the e-Revolution: A Call for Rural Internet Activists - This short program will convince rural leaders that they must act together and act immediately to bring the benefits of the "e-revolution" to their businesses and communities. The centerpiece of this educational package is a video that highlights several of New Mexico's rural businesses and small governments that embraced the e-revolution, some of the battles they waged and won, and why it is so important to be involved.

The ABCs of e-Business - In this eight-lesson workshop series, business owners and entrepreneurs will learn how the Internet and related technologies can add speed, efficiency, and profitability to every step of the traditional business process – from product and market research through sales and customer support. A variety of New Mexico businesses are featured.

The ABCs of e-Government - This five-lesson workshop series shows community leaders the many ways that electronic telecommunication technologies can increase interactions between local governments and citizens, make local government more efficient and effective, and improve the climate for community economic development. This educational package highlights the efforts of innovative leaders in several rural New Mexico communities.

T-ABCs curricula were developed by faculty members from NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service, College of Business Administration and Economics, and College of Arts and Sciences. Extension's media and Internet production unit developed multimedia tools for the programs.

Extension's Rural Economic Development Program has won numerous awards, including the Arthur Little Award for Overall Excellence in Economic Development. Extension's media and Internet production unit has produced an award-winning PBS documentary, *The Seamless Society*, on the impact of the Internet on the American workplace. The studio has developed multimedia educational programs for the Smithsonian Institution, National Food Stamp programs, National 4-H Council, US WEST, Welfare-to-Work Program, and Foreign Agricultural Service and National Science Foundation-funded programs.

T-ABCs is made possible with support from:

- Qwest Communications International Inc.
- NMSU Cooperative Extension Service
- NMSU College of Agriculture and Home Economics
- NMSU Center for Business Research and Services
- NMSU College of Business Administration and Economics
- NMSU College of Arts and Sciences

Other partners include New Mexico Technet Inc., ENMR - Plateau Telecommunications Inc., Albuquerque TVI, the New Mexico Small Business Development Centers, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, the New Mexico Internet Professionals Association, San Juan College and the San Juan Economic Development Service.

Additional funding partners welcome.

EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Robert O. Coppedge
Jeanne Gleason

WRITER

Jan Brydon, Edit Plus

EDITORS

Vicki Harley-Taggart
Natalie Johnson

PRINT DESIGN & LAYOUT

Connie Padilla

T-ABCs

Box 30003
Dept MSC 3AE
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM 88003

www.nmtabcs.org

Program copyright: © 2001, NMSU Board of Regents.
Package design and summary: © 2001 NMSU Board of Regents.
All rights reserved. Leading Object is a trademark of New Mexico State University's Cooperative Extension Service.

Permission will be granted for reproduction of these materials for educational purposes only.
To obtain permission contact TABCs at vtstudio@nmsu.edu.

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.