Preface

What is Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet)?

CTCNet serves as a support mechanism for Community Technology Centers (CTCs) by providing electronic and in-person linkages for its affiliated programs. CTCNet develops and provides resources to its members, offers the benefit of national partnerships and collaborations, and facilitates sharing of experience and expertise within the Network. CTCNet promotes, but does not provide, financial support to its affiliates except as funding opportunities arise through partnerships and collaborative programs.

CTCNet affiliate members are independent community service, social action, and/or alternative education agencies or programs. All share a commitment to providing technology tools for those who otherwise might lack access to them, along with a willingness to be active in the CTCNet community, open to sharing expertise, success, failure, and resources.

CTCNet is an expansion of the Playing To Win Network, which itself was an outgrowth of Playing To Win's Harlem Community Computing Center. That Center, established in 1983, was the first public access computer facility in the country to be located in a low-income neighborhood. Thus, CTCNet brings to the development of this manual more than 15 years experience in starting, operating, supporting, and sustaining neighborhood technology access programs.

Evolution of this manual

Early in 1996, CTCNet was asked to assist Georgetown University in preparing a manual for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Networks initiative. In agreeing to work with Georgetown, and recognizing that much of the content would be coming directly from its affiliate members, CTCNet retained

the right to amend or extract text and information that could contribute to its own manual. Georgetown was extremely cooperative and even provided CTCNet with copies of the disks containing the text of the HUD publication with full permission to use as it saw fit. Accordingly, a first draft of this manual was made and distributed to all CTCNet affiliates at the June '96 All-Affiliates Conference.
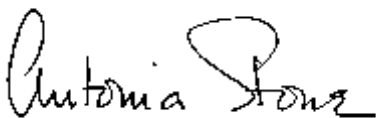
Affiliates were asked specifically to critique the content, the sequence, and to identify missing or slighted areas as well as those that could be shortened or omitted. Most importantly, they were encouraged to offer anecdotal support from their own experience so that this final version can reflect the broadest expertise possible.

The willingness to share experience is the cornerstone of CTCNet, and this manual has been enriched by that willingness on the part of CTCNet affiliate members and potential affiliates, so many of whom have given so generously of their time - to read and reread, critique and offer constructive feedback, supply documentation, and, most importantly, share their hard-won successes and even some of their mistakes so that others may find a clearer and easier path.

CTCNet and EDC staff, too, have invested time and energy in the preparation and countless revisions of this material. To each of them, my personal thanks, and, in particular, to Stephen Ronan without whom it simply would not have happened.

Dedication

This manual is dedicated to all Community Technology Centers, past, present, and future, and to the people who make them happen and keep them open to serve those who otherwise would have little or no opportunity to engage the power of technology in service of their own life and learning goals.

Antonia Stone
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