

Community network

Community network is the use of networking technologies by, and for, a local community **Free-nets** and civic networks indicate roughly the same range of projects and services, whereas community technology centers (CTCs) and **telecentres** generally indicate a physical facility to compensate for lack of access to **information and communication technologies**(ICTs).

A community network is a computer-based system that is **intended to help support geographical communities by supporting, augmenting, and extending already existingsocial networks**.



Installation of a "supernode" of [fguifi.net](#)'s community network in Tarragona

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Function

Community networks often provide web space, e-mail, and other services for free, without advertising. [VillageSoup](#) launched a distinct form of community networking in 1997. This form uses display ads and informational postings from fee-paying business and organization members to generate revenue critical to the support of professional journalists producing news for the community

Community network organizations often engage in training and other services and sometimes are involved in policy work. The Seattle Community Network is a prominent example.

When one looks at the entries of community network directories or the papers and Web sites whose titles and names include "community network" or "community networking", it is noticeable that a variety of practices exist. This diversity can be seen in the types of information and services offered, who operates the network, and the area covered.

The most extensive array of information services in a community network includes news from professional and amateur reporters, news and information from businesses and organizations; community events listings; weather forecasts; listings of governmental offices, businesses and organizations; and galleries of images of the place. Services include requesting alerts and RSS feeds; making reservations; searching for goods and services; purchasing images and auction items; and posting personal and commercial advertisements. A printed periodic publication is sometimes a service of the community network.

Some community networks limit themselves to functions such as facilitating communication among non-profit organizations.

Internet-based volunteer networks of blogs and groups have been formed in the internet social-networking field as well. The [Alabama Charity Network](#) for example provides another place for people to connect to fundraisers and charity information using internet-based social networking.

The entities in charge of planning and operating the community networks may be government offices, chambers of commerce, public libraries, non-profit organizations, for-profit entities or volunteer groups.

The primary goals of a community network may include providing a sustainable, trusted platform for an urban neighborhood, suburban village or exurban town or region to enhance a vital community and functioning democracy; closing of the digital divide across socio-economic lines; offering easier access to already existing information and services; promotion of local economic development and employment; strengthening of local identity; and/or revitalization, promotion, and/or maintenance of local communal ties.

The area identified with a community network could be a town, city, county, metropolitan neighborhood, state, and occasionally a region.

History

Among the earliest practices that are frequently mentioned are Big Sky Telegraph (Montana, USA), Cleveland Free-Net (Cleveland, USA) Public Electronic Network (PEN) in Santa Monica (California, USA), Digital Stad (nl) in Amsterdam (The Netherlands)^[1].

AWMN in Athens Greece is a CN which started back in 2002 and has over 800 backbone nodes plus a few thousand Client nodes

Bryggenet is a community network in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Guifi.net, in Catalonia, is the largest community network in the world, with over 30,000 nodes.

Fox Cities Online (FOCOL) is a community network in the Fox Cities region of Wisconsin that has been in operation since the early 1990s.

Redbricks Intranet Collective (RIC) is a community network started in Manchester, UK in 1998.^[1]

VillageSoup created the first community network based on a business model suggested in the 1997 book *Net Gain: Expanding Markets Through Virtual Communities*, authored by John Hagel III and Arthur G. Armstrong, two McKinsey & Company, Inc. consultants.

See also

- Community informatics
- Metropolitan area network
- Municipal wireless network
- Wireless community network

References

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External links

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- "Free Culture, Free Software, Free Infrastructures!" Interviews with Kloschi, Jürgen Neumann (Freifunk Germany), Kurt Jansson (Wikimedia Germany), Rishab Aiyer Ghosh (United Nations University), Lawrence Lessig (Creative Commons), Allison, Benoit (Montréal Wireless Community)
- MyKomms (Find ways to help your community)
- Alabama Charity Network (Alabama charity network blog)

Wikibooks

- [Information and Communication Technologies for Poverty Alleviation](#)
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