



Vermont's Digital Stories

THE VERMONT COUNCIL ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT
FINAL REPORT ON THE DIGITAL ECONOMY PROJECT | 2014



A SMALL TEAM, led by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) and its great project partners, has made a tremendous difference in Vermont communities, in hundreds of organizations (including both nonprofits and small businesses), and, most importantly, in the lives of individual Vermonters.

VCRD had just 18 months to leverage a \$1.8M federal disaster relief grant from the Economic Development Administration. The Vermont Digital Economy Project had an aggressive work plan to deliver eight different grant services in dozens of Vermont communities impacted by 2011 flooding. It was a unique project in that it bolstered virtual infrastructure, and not roads and bridges.



In 18 months, the team helped thousands of Vermonters across all 14 counties.

VERMONT DIGITAL ECONOMY PROJECT PARTNERS:

The Front Porch Forum

IBM

Microsoft

Snelling Center for Government

Vermont Council on Rural Development

Vermont Department of Libraries

Vermont Small Business

Development Center

Vermont State Colleges

Creating Resilient Communities



VERMONTERS ACROSS THE STATE know that local action makes our communities vibrant. VCRD has worked to build local capacity for Vermont communities for more than 20 years. The Vermont Digital Economy Project was founded on the idea that a more connected community is a more innovative, resilient, and prosperous community. Many of our resources were deployed directly in Vermont communities.



The Snelling Center delivered 25 municipal websites.



Vermont is the only state in the country with its own social network site in each and every community. There are 192 in total serving all 251 towns.



The project implemented 26 downtown Wi-Fi zones and hot spots, for a combined 7.3 square miles of free Wi-Fi coverage.



Building More Effective Organizations

THE VERMONT DIGITAL ECONOMY PROJECT HELPED BUILD more effective organizations through one-on-one advising and more than 160 workshops that assisted organizations of all types to use social media and other technology more effectively. Our work also involved building optimized websites and creating organization-wide efficiencies by using digital tools.



We served 127 nonprofits



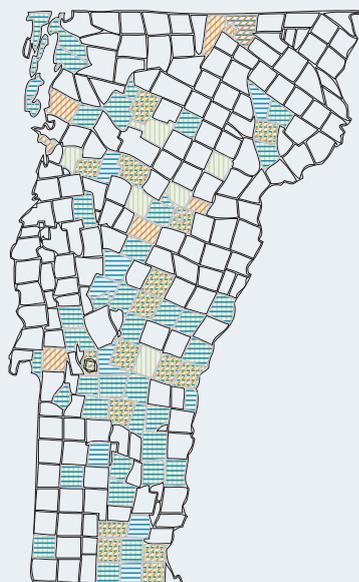
and 266 small businesses



along with 123 farm & forest businesses

Bridging the Digital Divide

IN OUR WORK, we helped Vermonters from all walks of life bolster their digital skills. Several of our grant services were specifically designed to help bridge the digital divide. The **Internet Intern** program placed college interns in two dozen libraries to work directly with patrons to provide one-on-one computer and Internet tutoring. The **iConnect training class** provided a train-the-trainer half-day program on how to teach digital skills to others. It was held in several regions throughout Vermont. Finally, the **Microsoft IT Academy** curriculum was deployed in three locations to provide free, ongoing, online digital workforce education.



- Effective Organizations
- Community Resilience
- Digital Divide

Read More Online

Visit vtrural.org/vtconnected for a complete visual summary of the project. Explore maps of Vermont with links to in-depth digital stories that share how Vermonters, their nonprofits and small businesses, and Vermont communities used digital tools to boost local communications, services and economic opportunities throughout Vermont.



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