

THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY



LOCATION:
*Cleveland, Ohio,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
*Government and
Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:
IBM Corporation

ORGANIZATION:

OneCommunity

PROJECT NAME:

OneCommunity

Summary

OneCommunity (formerly OneCleveland)

By extending and expanding the reach of the broadband revolution in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio into government, education, social services, health care, research, arts, cultural, and other community service institutions, OneCommunity is improving lives and helping build a globally competitive regional economy. OneCommunity's regional ultra broadband network enables subscribers to deploy applications and services that change the way our community works, lives, learns and explores. These "community technologies" improve the public's access to vital information, resources and applications, plus they enable collaborations among institutions that otherwise would not be possible.

The benefits derived from OneCommunity are as diverse as the institutions connected to our ultra broadband network. We help the poor get access to government services and benefits. We help inner-city teachers expand learning opportunities by connecting classrooms to the world outside, such as operating rooms and museums. We help people access the Internet and complete high speed downloads of e-books at their neighborhood library. We help accelerate medical research by allowing clinicians to seamlessly share large data files across health care systems. And we help our universities deploy unprecedented learning and research tools. We are helping to create an exciting, innovative world-class community by more effectively and efficiently connecting our residents to each other and to the world.

Introductory Overview

OneCommunity operates a fiber network that provides ultra broadband connectivity (1Gb) to more than 200 locations in Cleveland and surrounding communities. A representative list of institutions connected to the network includes:

- Case Western Reserve University
- Cleveland State University
- Cuyahoga Community College



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- Cuyahoga County Public Libraries
- The Cleveland Clinic
- MetroHealth Systems
- University Hospitals
- Cities of Cleveland, Mayfield Village, Euclid
- Cleveland Public Schools (built fiber to 117 buildings with OneCommunity)
- Cleveland Museum of Art
- The Cleveland Orchestra
- Ideastream (public television and radio partnership)

The speed and capacity of the network enables:

- An unprecedented level of collaboration among institutions as they share information, resources, applications and services
- Private sector technology companies to develop, test and deploy next generation technologies, products and services in collaboration with our subscribers with a history and interest in early adoption
- Enhanced, expanded and innovative services to be developed and deployed by our community institutions to the benefit of our residents and visitors.

OneCommunity is helping build a globally competitive regional economy by assisting our region's public and nonprofit institutions deploy community technologies that provide world-class services and opportunities to residents. By enabling better government services, enhanced educational opportunities, expanded access to health care resources and other services, we are closing the digital divide and elevating the quality of life in the region, creating economic development opportunities and establishing our community, Greater Cleveland and Northeast Ohio, as a global leader. Globally competitive regions are those that are connected – via broadband – to global markets. That is why there is a global race among regions to develop the most robust digital infrastructure. OneCommunity plays an essential role in providing that infrastructure in Northeast Ohio. And the presence of OneCommunity attracts local, regional and global technology entrepreneurs and businesses eager to experiment and grow with our ultra broadband network. By working to reduce barriers and to enable new technologies, OneCommunity also is creating market opportunities for private sector information and communications technology (ICT) businesses that service the region and beyond.

Our successful launch of the OneCommunity network has attracted substantial investment in our region by both regional supporters and global information technology leaders. In 2004, we lit up the network and connected our first two institutions. By the end of 2005, we built a sustainable independent organization which connects almost 200 sites including, numerous hospitals, schools, libraries, universities, government facilities, museums and community service organizations. And in 2006 we anticipate adding more than a hundred additional locations. OneCommunity will serve hundreds of thousands of students, teachers, researchers, medical practitioners and residents looking for better health, lifelong learning resources and an improved quality of life.



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Benefits

OneCommunity creates the opportunity for our region's public and nonprofit institutions to dramatically increase their level of collaboration and their ability to provide their constituents with new and innovative services provided by our ultra broadband network.

For example, OneCommunity helps bring the world into the classroom for children in the Cleveland Municipal School District. By connecting 117 schools to our ultra broadband network and hence all our subscribers via gigabit speeds, the Cleveland Municipal School district has dramatically reduced its IT expenditures and can now more readily access a variety of applications, programs, services, and tools.

More importantly, connecting the schools to our community network forges closer collaboration among our world-class institutions and students. For example, The Cleveland Clinic, which helped fund the school's fiber build out and connection to the network, has developed lesson plans for teachers who want to link their students to the resources of this world-class health care institution. For example, high school students perform "surgery" on oranges to learn the difference between traditional and minimally invasive surgery. The lesson plan includes interaction with Clinic doctors via high quality web casts that allow students to watch and talk with the surgeons as they operate.

Before connecting to OneCommunity, teachers had to rely on a problematic network that required a connection to distant Columbus, Ohio, to simply connect a school to a Cleveland Clinic doctor located just a few miles away. Inconsistent results and low band-width constrained the capabilities and quality of the experience, discouraging widespread use of these distance learning capabilities. OneCommunity's reliable ultra broadband network enables Cleveland school teachers to bring the outside world into their classroom.

The speed and capacity of the OneCommunity network enables our subscribers to make bandwidth readily available to the public via wireless technology, including WiFi and WiMax. Institutions that once had to limit access or use of their networks because of bandwidth limitations now have nearly unlimited supplies of bandwidth and are eager to share it with others to forge closer connections to their constituents. For example, libraries operated by the Cuyahoga County Library System now offer wireless internet access to customers. With its vast electronic resources, the wireless service enables customers to more readily access books, research resources and other services available from the library and the Internet at large.

Case Western Reserve University and several other institutions around University Circle offer wireless access to the OneCommunity network and the Internet with more than 1,500 access points. University Circle is one extraordinary 520 acre area that is home to dozens of amazing exhibits of arts and sciences, museums and parks, galleries and restaurants. Visitors now have added benefit of free WiFi services.

Another subscriber, the Village of Mayfield, has contracted with a local technology company, Euphonyx, to deploy WiFi and WiMax wireless services to the village's businesses and residents. Village Mayor Bruce Rinker said, "By establishing a solid, technological foundation today, I believe that Mayfield Village will be well-positioned for redevelopment, enhanced government services and enriched quality of living."

OneCommunity's mission is to enhance the quality of life and economic development of our region by facilitating improved IT services at the public and nonprofit institutions of our region.



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We believe our public-private model built on collaboration can be used as a model by other communities across the United States and the globe. We are demonstrating how, when a community unites under a shared vision, that it can deploy innovative, cost-effective community technologies that change the way residents learn, work and explore in a region. We are engaging private sector technology companies to help the public sector enhance their capacity and improve the way they deliver community services and prompt economic development.

The Importance of Technology

OneCommunity is built on the premise that enhanced access to the tools, applications and services made possible by Information Technology will improve the region's ability to compete in the global economy. OneCommunity is focused on the outcomes that result from that enhanced use of community technologies – such as improved health care services, higher levels of education attainment and more efficient delivery of government services. But make no mistake, OneCommunity is a sophisticated Information Technology operation with millions of dollars worth of gigabit networking, supercomputing and software assets readily available to subscribers and technology companies eager to develop, test, and/or deploy services in our community.

Originality

OneCommunity has distinguished itself as a global leader in community networking and technologies because of the breadth and depth of its services and the ambition of its mission. The idea of connecting the region's top institutions to a next generation fiber network was first raised by Case Chief Information Officer Lev Gonick. His original vision was to distinguish Cleveland as a global leader by taking advantage of the vast fiber resources resident, yet unutilized throughout the region.

We are aware of other communities pursuing various efforts to make IT services more readily available to residents. But most of those efforts are limited in scope. For example, Philadelphia is pursuing a public WiFi initiative, but it has not connected its leading institutions and organizations to a fiber ultra broadband applications network. In Broward County, Florida, whom we are trying to aid, the public schools are connected to a robust fiber network that enables distance learning and other applications. However, the region's other leading institutions are not tied into the network. Hence they are not benefiting from the collaboration, sharing of resources and innovative partnerships that are possible on OneCommunity's network.

Perhaps the most innovative or original component of OneCommunity is our focus and commitment to public-private partnership. This is not just a technology project. This is about community engagement in the form of collaboration, co-investment, risk sharing, and resource sharing. Our commitment to collaboration and partnership helps our region address our top social priorities and to drive economic development. Comparatively, the technology that makes up OneCommunity is the simple part. It's this innovation and collaboration that has fueled our rapid success. We have succeeded by bringing together such diverse (and often divergent) interests as cable, phone, and utility companies; elementary schools, community colleges and research universities; libraries, museums and hospitals; and governments, foundations, and entrepreneurs. Our success has allowed us to expand the reach of our network. This year we'll begin to serve five more counties, including the cities of Akron, Canton and Youngstown.



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OneCommunity's ability to achieve its mission is contingent on the widespread use of the network by a broad cross section of the region. We are not content with simply improving Internet access to institutions or to the public. We have a much more ambitious, and original mission to expand access and use of Information Technology to improve the region's ability to compete in the global economy.

Success

The Cleveland Housing Network (CHN) works with 23 community development corporations in Cleveland to foster home ownership opportunities in the city. Much of its efforts are targeted at low-income Clevelanders. The CHN works closely with its constituents to help them develop the skills and financial resources necessary to be successful home owners. In late 2005, OneCommunity partnered with CHN and others to help low-income Clevelanders get easier access to online tax resources. In particular, CHN wanted to increase the number of Clevelanders applying for low income tax credits. Each year millions of dollars of available credits go unused in Cleveland simply because people who are eligible aren't aware of the credits or don't have access to the tools needed to take advantage of the tax credits.

OneCommunity joined the effort and hosted an easy to use software application, provided in partnership with the IRS, which allowed CHN volunteers and their clients to file their taxes – and apply for tax credits – online. The CHN clients accessed the OneCommunity application via computer terminals distributed throughout the region at CHN sites, plus community development centers and at country libraries. Through the first six weeks of the project we generated more than \$2 million in tax refund filings by low income Clevelanders.

OneCommunity's targeted audience has quickly embraced the use and benefits of our ultra broadband network.

We measure adoption and success in three key areas:

1. Connections to the OneCommunity Regional Ultra-broadband Network.
2. Development and use of applications and technologies enabled by the network.
3. Growth of the region's ICT industry who are leveraging OneCommunity as a platform for market development and innovation.

1)Connections to the OneCommunity Regional ultra broadband network.

By the first measure, our progress to date has been remarkable. In the past year we connected more than 20 of our largest public and nonprofit institutions and organizations in Greater Cleveland to our network. The connections were extended to more than 150 sites, including 117 public schools. Our network now serves more than 200,000 teachers, students, researchers, health care providers, and government workers. The public also accesses our network via public WiFi and public access terminals in libraries. We anticipate our subscriber base will double this year as we extend our reach in our existing service area and expand into new counties.

2)Development and use of applications and technologies enabled by the network.

We have previously highlighted a few of the uses of "community technologies" by subscribers and others. We are still in the early stages of deploying these and other technologies throughout the region. We are working with subscribers and technology partners on the deployment of



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numerous community technologies serving the government, education and health care sectors. OneCommunity will work closely with subscribers and technology companies to identify and deploy appropriate new technologies that can have a high impact on our community. While there's too many subscriber led applications to mention (not to mention track), OneCommunity has a leadership role in the following initiatives:

Health Care – OneCommunity is one of the leaders in the development of a regional healthcare interoperability organization. This effort aims to improve the quality of health care, reduce costs, improve regional collaborations and extend the reach of health care to the underserved and uninsured. We helped convene the region's health care providers to develop this organization and one of our representatives is serving as chairman of the effort's finance committee. We have helped the organization can funding for its next phase of development. OneCommunity, as Chair of the Finance Committee, has recently helped the group design this organization and secured funding for the next phase of development.

Government – We are helping our region's diverse governments develop e-government services using a shared services model. We are also working with technology service providers to help governments deploy regional wireless networks (unlicensed for public spaces and licensed for public safety/homeland security applications). We are helping pilot applications that will significantly improve the ability of government to serve their constituents in such areas as public safety, standardized regional communications, video surveillance, automated meter reading, and mobile workforce. As an example, last year with Intel we launched a new building permit application with the City of Cleveland that reduced the permit process from months to days, using a PDA and a shared regional wireless infrastructure powered by OneCommunity.

Education, Workforce Development and Digital Divide – OneCommunity has focused on building the infrastructure and resources to elevate the quality of education offerings in our region, instill a culture of lifelong learning and make sure that all residents have access to broadband resources. This year we helped secure the funding for and connected 117 schools to our network. Our city's school children are now connected to our community's world-class education, health care and research institutions. Our next step is to help aggregate our wealth of programming in this area, coordinate it and build on it to provide our region's residents – young and old alike – with ample and efficient access to these programs. We've largely completed an inventory of these programs and will convene key stakeholders this year to plan the launch this collaborative effort. One element of this effort we call Community Computing. This solution is a thin client model where our mainframe serves the region with an inexpensive, maintenance free computing solution. Essentially it's just a monitor and a keyboard powered by our super-computing server which hosts open-source and free web-based software, and where we manage all security, backup, storage, upgrades and applications from one central location. Community Computing enables our subscribers to offer public access to computing and Internet resources at a marginal cost and with no IT support requirements. While currently in pilot in our library system, we envision having Community Computing terminals available throughout our community, including bus and train stations, waiting rooms, churches, community centers, government offices and schools. We've also developed a kiosk version for use by tourists and travelers at the airport and other locations.

3)Growth of the region's ICT companies that are using OneCommunity to foster market development and innovation.



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While certainly difficult to measure, we are working with more than half a dozen global technology companies that have invested substantial funds to develop, test and deploy emerging technologies on our network. Each of which is formally expanding staff in our market, plus the staffs of their local partners.

We also know that more than half a dozen technology companies that we work closely with our also expanding to take advantage of the increased demand for broadband services driven by OneCommunity. These companies are in a wide variety of ICT services, including help desk, disaster recovery, security and application service providers. OneCommunity and these companies are working together to expand the ICT market in our region. The power and potential of OneCommunity has also attracted promising, young international technology companies to our market. This calendar year we have completed several pilots with such companies that leverage our customer base, network and hardware infrastructure. This program is available at no cost to providers committed to growing an office in our market.

Lastly, OneCommunity spends millions of dollars annually on its outsourced IT services partners, including network management, last mile connectivity (fiber and wireless), data center, disaster recovery, and other services. Each partner has had to hire to meet our growing demands of our customers. As an example, our local cable provider has indicated that their commercial fiber business is up more than 60% this year because of our efforts.

Difficulty

OneCommunity wrestles with many challenges every day. We have effectively overcome skepticism regarding the ability of our network to cost effectively deliver unprecedented bandwidth capacity and speeds. Initial hesitancy to connect to OneCommunity has now been replaced by demand that sometimes exceeds our small organization's capacity to swiftly respond to opportunities. We have recently added staff to improve our responsiveness and to improve customer service. We remain, however, a small nonprofit organization with limited resources and a staff of seven that manages a large, diverse group of public and private sector partners.

OneCommunity has purposely positioned itself to serve a segment of the marketplace that historically has not been an effective user of Information Technology. The nonprofit and government sector traditionally lack the resources – both financial and human – to deploy innovative IT-based services and applications. OneCommunity, to be successful, must overcome those limitations and persuade subscribers that ultra broadband is about more than just lower cost connectivity. OneCommunity is clearing these hurdles by leveraging relationships with world-class technology companies to introduce our subscribers to the potential leaps in service, capabilities and performance made possible by effective use of “community technologies.”

As we are increasingly able to show our community concrete examples how “community technologies” do indeed improve the quality of life in the region, we believe that our public and nonprofit institutions (and even for profit entities) will increasingly want to experiment and innovate with what is possible in an ultra broadband world. Indeed, we already beginning to see institutions break down old barriers, such as the Cleveland Clinic and school district, to take advantage of collaborations made possible by OneCommunity.

Ultimately, it is how our region uses the “community technologies” made possible by OneCommunity that will determine the success of our efforts. We are encouraged by the rapid increase in



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subscribers and their expanding use of our network. We are excited about the growing interest from additional global technology providers. We are confident that OneCommunity can indeed play a vital role in building a globally competitive regional economy in Northeast Ohio.

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