
Digital Access Map Project

Background

Cleveland isn't alone in having a digital divide. Just ask Microsoft consultant Casey Morris, head of EYEJ's Digital Access Map project. In his native Dallas-Fort Worth, Morris researched and completed a map that proved what he now knows to be true in Cleveland as well: that the poorest, most densely populated African-American neighborhoods also have the lowest rates of broadband internet subscription. Using American Community Service data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Morris exposed in unprecedented visual detail true deficits in access to affordable internet, often unearthing disparities even wider than previously imagined.

The Task in Cleveland

In Cleveland, where he now serves on EYEJ's collective board, Morris is hard at work on a Digital Access Map, concentrating on student-heavy neighborhoods around Cleveland Metropolitan School District buildings. His aim is to steer what is currently a rudderless ship, to collect targeted data and metrics that will fully gauge the breadth and depth of the digital divide in Northeast Ohio. His work will focus on inclusivity and affordability, revealing service usage, options, and pricing block by block. Once completed, the Digital Access Map will provide Cleveland residents with timely, neutral, and thorough information that will better inform decision-making and promote equitable, affordable solutions.

Deliverables

- A publicly available compilation of census block-level data organized into a web-based map with a discovery tool and scoring system highlighting the relative severity of the divide in that area.
- Census block population data for each community, indicating potential for greatest impact
- A user-friendly database from which detailed, street-by-street maps can be pulled in 60 to 90 days

Key Outcomes

Given the urgency of the digital divide crisis in Cleveland, EYEJ feels compelled to act quickly. At 60 days, it will have a database, data model, and a viable beta product deliverable to stakeholders. This Digital Access Map will provide:

- Community-specific, user-friendly data with detailed provider information and pricing
- A locator map to nearby wireless hotspots and other free Wi-Fi outlets
- An easily accessible demographics search tool to analyze individual census blocks
- Lists of providers and pricing at block level, including COVID-19 response offers
- The ability to spot internet usage trends and spikes
- Planning tools to gauge risk, impact, and investment potential over short and long terms
- Quick data analysis to identify outliers and investigate details easily
- Holistic maps reflecting multiple data sources

EYEJ



Youth
Council

