

Mission:

EYEJ drives social justice reform by empowering young people to advocate for change.

Vision:

An equitable and inclusive world.

HISTORY OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN CLEVELAND

1879

- Cleveland was the first city in the United States to light its streets.

1933

- New Deal aims to improve lack of housing in America; lends itself to 'state-sponsored segregation'. Non-white people coaxed towards urban housing.

1934

- Redlining starts: Federal Housing Admin provides no insurance for housing near/in African American neighborhoods; builders subsidized for selling copious households to white peoples and not selling to non-white peoples, despite that across all racial demographics, people are able to afford housing.

1968

- Fair Housing Act passed, allowing all people to purchase houses in suburban neighborhoods; however, these homes are no longer that affordable as they used to be.

1986

- Teleco opened as a provider of telecommunications systems.
 - AT&T, Level3, One Communications, First Communications, Winstream, Paetec, and Telnes Broadband.

1990

- First Website.

1995

- Commercializations of the internet.
- 14% of U.S. adults are now online, most using dial-up modem connections.

1998

- Google founded.

2000

- The Spectrum-Cleveland City Council Neighborhood Technology Fund founded to promote the use of telecommunications and computer equipment and services for residents of the City of Cleveland.

2003

- Skype founded.
- OneCleveland is founded and has a focus on connecting businesses

2004

- Facebook founded.
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2005

- Intel announced that Cleveland and Northeast Ohio is one of its first three pilot Digital Communities around the world as part of an initiative aimed at helping communities use wireless technology and innovative applications to expand and improve services for constituents.

2006

- OneCleveland name changed to OneCommunity.

2007

- AT&T successfully lobbied state lawmakers in 2007 to allow it to compete with cable companies, which at the time had exclusive rights for services in cities.

2008

- AT&T introduced its new wave of fiber broadband technology, but skipped neighborhoods due to digital redlining; AT&T denies they say they invest due to capacity and demand for our services.
 - 18% of Cleveland residents are 65+.
- AT&T has since made additional investments in the city, including adding fiber cables on poles in some of the poorest neighborhoods, but the WiFi still equates to what a wealthy suburban neighborhood would have gotten in 2005 (6 megabits or less).

2009

- Federal stimulus funding received to expand the broadband footprint and launch Connect Your Community.

2010

- \$44.8 million goes to OneCommunity from \$118 million in federal stimulus money to Ohio to expand broadband access and to build a fiber optic network that might entice 21st century businesses.
- Connect your Community founded.
- Cleveland public libraries start to quadruple the number of computers available and increase WiFi capacity.

2012

- Connect Your Community's 2 year program ended.
 - They had provided over 30 hours of digital device training
 - Over 5,500 new internet users in Cleveland and East Cleveland

2014

- Sale of OneCommunity Broadband assets to Everstream.

2015

- FCC classified broadband as a telecommunications service of its Open Internet Order.
 - Sep 2015 - OneCommunity receives \$50 million private investment.
 - DigitalC is incorporated as new non-profit corporation and its focus is on residents.
 - City Council President Kevin Kelley puts in Free Wifi hotspots in Old Brooklyn connects 90% of the community.
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2016

- FCC classified broadband as a information service of its Open Internet Order.
- Launch of Connect the Unconnected Initiative.
- The city has spent more than \$3.2 million through the end of 2016, and the city anticipates spending about \$36 million over the course of the consent decree.
- AT&T: Census map shows that low income neighborhoods denied installment of medium and high speed internet.
- AT&T reports 22% of Cleveland Census blocks have max download speeds of 3 mbps or less. 55% had max download speeds of 6 mbps or less. Rest of Cuyahoga County were 12% and 24%, respectively.

2017

- 113,746 (out of the total 537,621) households, or 21% of the population in Cuyahoga County lacked internet access of any type.
- About 31% of the entire City of Cleveland also lacked internet access.
- Launch of ReStart Program.
 - DigitalC's ReStart Program offers free digital literacy, technology skill building, certification and career preparedness courses for Cleveland's underserved population. Courses have ranged from basic PC and internet navigation to more advanced certification opportunities. 99% of responders said they would recommend the program to others.
- DigitalC partners with housing authorities in Cleveland -- broadband is sent from antennas placed atop a nearby charitable hospital to receivers on nearby housing authority properties and a homeless shelter.
- More data from the Connect Your Community 2 year program.
- From Connected Insights : over 76% of the first time internet users kept their connectivity more than 6 years later.
- AT&T less likely to provide upgraded home wired internet in primarily Black communities in Cleveland.
 - A mapping analysis of Federal Communications Commission broadband availability data, conducted by Connect Your Community and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, strongly suggests that AT&T has systematically discriminated against lower-income Cleveland neighborhoods in its deployment of home Internet and video technologies over the past decade.

2018

- DigitalC completed its pilot project called Connect the Unconnected, providing devices and Internet access to over 500 households.
- Cleveland is the fourth-worst-connected city in the nation, according to U.S. Census data and a 2018 study.
- Cleveland libraries partnered with the Cleveland Foundation and Huntington Bank to purchase 1000 hotspots available for check out.

2019

January

- ReStart Program report (Survey Results on the Outcome of Digital C's Basic Digital Literacy Training Program) is published by Connected Insights.
 - Cleveland had the highest percentage of homes without internet subscriptions. 31% of Cleveland homes did not have any broadband connection plan - including mobile phones - making Cleveland the worst connected city in terms of any broadband subscription.
- Cleveland ranks worst BIG city in the United States (drops from #3 slot).

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2020

March

- COVID Pandemic, CMSD schools and City of Cleveland closes down.
- Spectrum offers two months free Internet to students.

June

- State of Ohio: House bill 13 passed 81-8 House of Representatives.
 - For: \$20 million for broadband expansion for State of Ohio for Rural Areas.

August

- August 24 - CMSD Schools open for new school year, but remote and hybrid learning

Late August

- 27,000 laptops and tablets and about 13,500 temporary WiFi hotspots (for a school district with an enrollment of about 40,000 students) from CMSD.
- The district has paid about \$11 million for the devices and \$3 million for the hotspots and one year worth of data.
- Comcast Cable is also offering free internet to low-income families during the coronavirus pandemic. Comcast is also waiving late fees and will not disconnect service during this crisis.
- Shaker schools have given 200 hotspots and 1100 Chromebooks. They have delivery and a pick-up system through a need-based approach.

September:

- RTA implements free WiFi hotspots in all Vehicles and 10 facilities.
- DigitalC hiring project manager to have a dedicated resource to focus on empowerCLE+ and launched EmpowerCLE network for \$18/month and able to be subsidized.

October

- The Cleveland Browns donated \$350,000 to East Cleveland schools to tackle the digital divide as part of the "Stay in the Game! Keep Learning, Every Day" initiative.
- Cuyahoga County and the Cleveland Foundation recently announced a \$4 million program, in partnership with T-Mobile, to provide 10,000 computers and 7,500 WiFi hotspots to student families.
- DigitalC and CMSD innovative fixed-wireless system to 8,400 households by June 2022.
- PCs for People is the lead partner in the County's effort to provide 10,000 laptops and other devices to non-CMSD schools.

December

- State of Ohio - House Bill 13 - Senate Approval for \$50M for funding to help close the Digital Divide.
- EYEJ Youth Council presents testimonies and recommendations to Senate, Senate Chair and Senators.
- Senate Chair asks for recommendations from EYEJ Youth Council for this bill and new bills regarding the Digital Divide.
- Cleveland Clinic joins with nonprofit DigitalC, manufacturing company TransDigm Group Inc., and The Lubrizol Foundation to bring affordable broadband to Fairfax.

January 2021

- House Bill 13 fails in Ohio Senate
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