



MEMORANDUM

TO: Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

FROM: Sharla Chamberlain, Program Specialist
Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

DATE: April 8, 2015

SUBJECT: Connect 4.1 – User Research

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the status of the implementation of the Connect 4.1 initiatives as outlined in the 2014 Digital Inclusion Strategy.

Staff is working with the City of Austin Innovation Office to complete some user research related to program inventory mapping and data visualization. The purpose of this user research is to understand the needs of partner programs. Interns from the Innovation Office developed a script of questions to ask front-line staff and data management employees from key partner organizations.

This memorandum includes the draft script that will be used in user research interviews.

For additional information, please contact Sharla Chamberlain at sharla.chamberlain@austintexas.gov.

Exhibit

A- Connect 4.1 – User Research Script

Exhibit A

Connect 4.1 – User Research Script

April 6, 2015

Script

First, thank you for meeting with us today, we value your time and appreciate your feedback. Emily and I/Grace and I are both working on our master's degrees in Information and Library Science and are interns within the Office of Innovation. We are in conjunction with the Digital Inclusion team to gather information about our digital inclusion promoters and better understand their wants and needs.

The Digital Inclusion team is looking to revamp their web presence and reinvent their website, austinconnects.net. In general, the team is looking to create a more effective program to give residents up-to-date information about beneficial digital resources within the Austin community. Also, the team is hoping to create a system where they can best provide the surveyed information they have gathered about Austin residents and their digital habits to providers, like yourself. The team is exploring a couple of different options of how to do this, including reconstructing the austinconnects website, creating a brand new website, or partnering with the digital service, Aunt Bertha. A developed plan for this project is projected to be created by later this spring and may leverage civic hacking events like ATX Hack for Change for its implementation.

Educational providers in the community, which include your organization, play a vital role in the Digital Inclusion team's goal and therefore, we are here to ensure that they have the best understanding of how they could help and better enable your organization. The team realizes how essential your role is for promoting digital inclusion and they strongly value your input in this new project. We are here to ensure that the Digital Inclusion team can fully promote your organization's work through sharing your resources and providing surveyed information back to you.

General Questions

Currently, what are the best ways which the Digital Inclusion team is helping promote your programs? In general, is there anything the Digital Inclusion team could be doing differently and/or better to help promote your cause?

Does your organization have a preferred vocabulary around how you describe your programs? Your users? Have you found any words or phrases that have been perceived as alienating for your users?

What are the ways your organization promotes your programs? Do you think it is more/less valuable to connect your organization's computer services to other services? (For example, advertising your programs alongside SNAP, affordable housing, etc.)

Organization Specific Questions

Right now, what are some of your organization's biggest struggles with providing computer literacy and public access services?

What are some best practices your organization has found with your programs?

Has there been anything that surprised you about working with your organization's program?

Austinconnects.net Questions

Have you used the Digital Inclusion's website, austinconnects.net?¹ (Follow-up) (If yes..) How exactly have you used the website? How has your experience been on the website? Was there anything that stood out to you, either negatively or positively?

What part(s) to the website are essential to your organization's needs? What part(s) to the website are nonessential to your organization's needs?

Has your organization used any other website to promote your programs?

¹ If no, show on laptop.

Aunt Bertha

The Digital Inclusion Team is considering using the online service, Aunt Bertha, as a replacement for austinconnects.net. Are you familiar with Aunt Bertha? Have you or your organization ever worked with Aunt Bertha? Opinions?²

(Follow-Up) If the Digital Inclusion Team exclusively uses Aunt Bertha, there would not be a mapping component to the website. How much do you think your users would want an actual map displaying the programs rather than a list?

The city may be able to collect some data through Aunt Bertha about which types of programs are being searched in each zip code and the frequency of those searches. Would your program find this helpful? Would it be helpful if the Digital Inclusion team were able to share this information with you on a regular basis?

Gathered Data about Residents

The Digital Inclusion Team has gathered data about Austin residents' Internet habits and opinions, both in 2011 and 2014. Do you think the results from these surveys could be useful for your organization? What parts exactly would you find interesting to know? A mapping visual aid?

One of the debates within the Digital Inclusion team is whether or not to include the surveyed data about residents and inventory tool in one digital location (i.e. consolidated in austinconnects.net) or in multiple digital locations (i.e. Aunt Bertha to house the inventory and a separate platform for data sharing). Do you think you and your organization would prefer one consolidated platform, or multiple tools that are more customized to the user experience? How inhibiting would you find it to have these two types of information found in multiple locations?

² (If no) Aunt Bertha is a search engine designed to bring together all of the social services in the area into one platform, making it easier for individuals to find the information.

Supplemental - How else can the City help?

What else can the City do to help publicize your programs and connect them with residents?

Some of our partners have expressed interest in learning more about what other groups are doing in the community related to digital inclusion, and that the City could help to connect them to other organizations, companies and service providers. Would your organization benefit from knowing more about these other groups in the community? Would a regular networking or similar event be helpful to connect you with them?