

**Tech Ascertainment Survey Update for the
Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission
September 8, 2010**

The residential technology survey is meant to ascertain the needs, availability, and use of digital and communications technologies by our citizens, as well as the community's level of technical literacy and education. Such information is of particular interest to Austin, with its high-tech economy and identity.

After extensive study by the Commission, and with its help, TARA set about implementing a survey effort with these goals in mind. In addition to recruiting City demographic and statistical talent to help with the project, TARA partnered with a group led by Dr. Joe Straubhaar at the University of Texas School of Radio, Television and Film.

Dr. Straubhaar's team is doing similar survey work among international and immigrant groups and they are bringing their expertise and energy to the collaboration. They have played a big part in the design, testing and production of the survey instrument; they will also do the tallying and reporting of results once those come in. TARA is securing the printing and mailing vendor, as well as a commercial source of randomly-sampled Austin addresses.

The ascertainment team decided that a mail-out survey would yield the best data at the best cost. An in-depth questionnaire of approximately 60 questions will be mailed out to 15,000 Austin households, with a notification postcard mailed to those same addresses a couple of weeks beforehand to help encourage the response rate.

In keeping with typical survey results, the team expects a 10% - 12% response rate. This will be sufficient to give an approximate +/- 3% margin of error for the data gathered. This amount of coverage, together with "zip plus 4" mail coding will provide a basis for relatively fine-grained geographic interpretation of the data, as well.

Costs incurred by TARA's FY2009-10 budget will be an estimated \$16,500 for postcard and survey production and mailing and about \$9,500 for postage for a total of \$26,000.

Time-line for the survey project:

- August 2010: questionnaire initial design completed
- September: questionnaire pre-test and final revision
- September (late): postcard mailed
- October: questionnaire mailed and in the field
- November-December: data analysis by UT
- January 2011: final report