

Seattle Goodwill

DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVE



Digital Literacy Initiative: Overview

October 2014

Goodwill[★]
Because jobs change lives



Generous support from Comcast allows Seattle Goodwill® to provide vital digital literacy access and training to help those job seekers facing significant barriers in our community find and secure employment. Goodwill's unique digital literacy program provides training on mobile devices, in addition to desktop or laptop computers to provide students the opportunity to practice and build the skills needed to work and further education.

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Digital Literacy Initiative

The Issue

National, state, and city research demonstrates that low-income populations have less access to technology tools and the internet, which are a prerequisite to learning and advancement in the 21st century workplace.^{1 2}
³ International research has shown that those without the digital literacy skills to problem-solve in technology-rich environments are at a distinct disadvantage for obtaining employment and self-sufficiency wages.⁴

Goodwill Student Profile

The average Goodwill student is in their early 40's and has a household income between \$21-22,000. 44% of students live in households with children, and 58% have only a high school education or below. 70% are students of color, and 57% are immigrants or refugees.

To get a better understanding of how our students compare with the population at large, we conducted a survey in April 2014 of nearly 1400 students about their internet access and device usage. When available, we compared our results with national and regional research.

	Nation Overall	Washington State Overall ⁵	City of Seattle Overall ⁶	Seattle Goodwill Students
Internet	70% have home broadband / 85% use the internet ⁷	84% have internet access at home / 88% use broad-band from any location	85% have "some" internet access at home / 89% use the internet	75% access internet at home* / 94% access internet from some location
Smartphone	58% own smartphone ⁸	67% have "hand-held computers" (phones/tablets/or wearable devices) ⁹	66% use smartphone	43% use smartphone
Tablet	42% own tablet ¹⁰		Over 40% use tablet	22% use tablet

*This percentage increases to 83% if smartphones are considered a type of home access.

Though our survey showed that Goodwill's students have greater than expected access to the internet and somewhat less access to devices, there were bigger disparities shown in the activities performed with technology, especially for non-Native English speaking students.

Activities: For the most part, Goodwill students have used technology to perform communication and entertainment related tasks more than employment and education related tasks.

- About 70% of all surveyed students use these devices to send email, watch videos, or listen to music
- Just over 50% have applied to jobs online
- 32% have used an internet capable device at a job
- 45% have used an internet capable device to do school work outside of class

There are significant differences between native and non-native English speakers for many of the activities and tasks surveyed.

Activity Using Technology	Goodwill Native English Speakers	Goodwill Non-Native English Speakers
Search for jobs	82%	45%
Apply for jobs	73%	40%
Work at jobs	49%	23%
Search for education information	57%	40%
Take class/training online	42%	29%
Do class work outside of class	61%	37%

PIACC's international research related to problem solving in technology rich environments has been particularly influential in how Seattle Goodwill sees digital literacy and the development of our framework for teaching and learning described below. The research showed that as people's proficiency increased, so did their levels of employment and wage potential.¹¹ *For more information about our survey of technology access and usage research, see the [Technology Access, Usage, & Digital Literacy](#) full report. For more detailed information about our student survey, see the [Internet Access & Technology Usage Survey Results](#) full report.*

Program Rationale

Our Digital Literacy initiative will work to build on the technology exposure that students have already had while continuing to address students’ needs for better access and more marketable skills. Being digitally literate is an ongoing process in which individuals must actively learn and try out new technology tools and resources, building skills with these technologies, and most importantly using these technologies to meet their needs and achieve their goals. This includes developing more digital “fluidity” so that individuals are able to understand underlying concepts that transfer from one form of technology to another and apply this knowledge in new contexts.

For this reason, our definition goes beyond basic computer skills:

Digital literacy involves the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively navigate, critically evaluate, create or adapt information using a range of digital technologies (independently or collaboratively) to accomplish authentic, relevant goals.

For the purpose of this initiative, we have broken digital literacy into three phases:

1. Exposure and Exploration – Discovering and trying it out
2. Foundational Skill Building – Learning the “how-to” and practicing
3. 21st Century Skill Building - Putting it to use to solve real-world problems and achieve goals

We have broken these phases down into specific competencies and examples of teacher and student behaviors. *For more information about our philosophy and digital literacy framework, see the [Digital Literacy: Theoretical Framework](#) document.*

New Strategies for the Digital Literacy Initiative

ESOL Digital Literacy Pilot

Instead of creating special or supplemental classes which focus more heavily on technology and digital literacy, Goodwill is working to better integrate these skills into our current ESOL classes. By integrating digital literacy skills into the current ESOL themes like employment and community, instructors can create authentic activities that students can apply immediately and directly into their everyday lives. We know that most job postings and applications are online, many community events and resources are posted on websites, and numerous ESOL resources can be accessed 24 hours per day online, so it is our responsibility to provide the skills needed to complete these real world tasks.

To accomplish this goal, Goodwill has a dedicated curriculum developer creating technology integrated lesson plans and working with staff to weave digital literacy into their current lesson plans. The lessons and activities cover a range of levels, integrate a variety of technologies, and provide a springboard for future lesson adaptations and activities incorporating digital literacy. These materials are being compiled into an online resource bank for instructors to share.

Mobile iPad Learning Labs

Mobile iPad Learning Labs for each of our Job Training and Education centers is a major component of integrating technology into our ESOL classes. The iPad lab can move from classroom to classroom and allows students in any class to have access to the internet and classroom applications outside of the computer lab. In addition to this flexibility, mobile technology is becoming more and more pervasive, so iPads provide students with the opportunity to explore and build skills on the latest technology. Touch screens also provide an experience that is often more user friendly for beginning computer users. Currently an iPad lab is being piloted at our Seattle center with the intention to roll out to all ten centers by the end of the fiscal year.

Future Strategies

Goodwill plans to build on the experience of the ESOL pilot and work to better integrate digital literacy and technology into all of our program offerings. This involves:

- Adapting existing activities & materials to include more digital literacy skills & practice.
- Making classes more student-centered with digital literacy as a key approach.
- Empowering more students to use more of the technology that is available at our centers.

In addition to exposure and foundational skill building using technology, in the long term Goodwill seeks to increase our student's 21st century work readiness skills like collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving through the digital literacy initiative.

Notes

¹ E. Badger, "The Most Revealing Broadband Adoption Maps We've Ever Seen," *The Atlantic Cities*, February 28, 2014, <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/technology/2014/02/most-revealing-broadband-adoption-maps-weve-ever-seen/8517/>; J. Kasperkevic, "Connection failed: internet still a luxury for many Americans," *The Guardian*, January 26, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/money/us-money-blog/2014/jan/26/internet-luxury-low-income-americans>; "Mobile Technology Fact Sheet," *Pew Research Internet Project*, January 2014, <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/mobile-technology-fact-sheet/>; K. Zickhur and A. Smith, "Home Broadband 2013," *Pew Internet and American Life Project*, August 26, 2013, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/08/26/home-broadband-2013/>.

² Washington State Broadband Office, Washington State Department of Commerce, *Broadband in Washington 2013 Annual Report*, 2013, accessed from <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/2013-Broadband-Report-Final.pdf>.

³ City of Seattle, Department of Information Technology, *Technology Access & Adoption in the City of Seattle Report*, 2014, accessed from http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Tech/CofS_TechUse_r8single.pdf.

⁴ Madeline Goodman, Robert Finnegan, Leyla Mohadjer, Tom Krenzke, and Jacquie Hogan, *Literacy, Numeracy, and Problem Solving in Technology-Rich Environments Among U.S. Adults: Results from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies [PIACC] 2012: First Look* (NCES 2014-008), October 2013, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, p. B-10, accessed from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2014008>.

⁵ Washington State Broadband Office, *Broadband in Washington*.

⁶ City of Seattle, *Technology Access & Adoption*.

⁷ A. Smith, "Technology Adoption by Lower Income Populations," *Pew Research Center*, Oct 8, 2013, accessed from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/10/08/technology-adoption-by-lower-income-populations/>

⁸ "Mobile Technology Fact Sheet," *Pew Research*.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey*, 2013, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

¹⁰ "Mobile Technology Fact Sheet," *Pew Research*.

¹¹ Goodman, et al, PIACC, *Literacy, Numeracy, and Problem Solving in Technology-Rich Environments Among U.S. Adults*.