Graduate School of Library and Information Science

Library and Information Science Building
501 East Daniel Street
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Fact Sheet: "Community-Wide Networking: Building Equity and Participation"
Funded 1997: 1.3 million grant, including support from the Telecommunications and
Information Infrastructure Assistance Program and The Kellogg Foundation

Mission: To provide computers and information access to disadvantaged residents of Champaign-Urbana, while also researching the generation and exchange of neighborhood-level community information by individuals and local organizations.

Services: Over the next two years, more than 1,000 low-income families in four Champaign-Urbana neighborhoods will receive free computer equipment, free computer support, and low-cost or free Internet access from UIUC Graduate School of Library and Information Science faculty and students.

▸Donated computers are being refurbished and distributed to 1,000 households.

▸ One-hundred local, low-income teens are being trained to repair and use computers, and then provide technical computer support for the additional program participants.

▸ The local community computer system sponsored by the school–Prairienet–is being redesigned to make information more useful and accessible to low-income households.

This project supports the school's core belief that information is a basic freedom, regardless of social and economic standing.

Concurrently, project director Assistant Professor Ann Bishop is investigating the social framework that surrounds household media use, and how social networks in low-income neighborhoods support the adoption and innovative use of information technology. Her W.K. Kellogg-funded research, part of a larger Department of Commerce grant, also examines the generation and exchange of neighborhood-level community information by individuals and local organizations. Bishop–whose expertise is in community information systems, information needs and uses, and the organization and access of information–has been named a Centennial Scholar by the school in recognition of her research, and was among 15 "local heroes" during President Bill Clinton's January 1998 campus visit.

Support: A $1.3 million grant to the University of Illinois:

▸ $625,000 is from the commerce department's Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program (TIIAP).

▸ The Kellogg Foundation is providing $130,000.

▸ The rest of the funding will come from local sponsors, including Champaign and Urbana school districts, the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club, the Housing Authority of Champaign County, and the Lincoln Trail Libraries System; and ,at the U. of I., the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, and the School of Social Work.

▸ Matching grants will take the form of free computer site use, training, and computer equipment.

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