**The ROI of digital inclusion: Business reasons to invest in digital inclusion partnerships**

**Wed May 17 at 10 AM**

**Room: Library-Otto Bremer**

How it makes good business sense for certain companies to be investing in digital inclusion, not just for PR and charitable reasons, but because it increases their client pools and ultimately their bottom line.

**Moderator:**

[Joel Krogstad](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joel-krogstad-03b2b22a/), St. Paul Neighborhood Network

**Speakers:**

[**Jordana Barton**](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jordana-barton-22622812/)**, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas**

## [Closing the Digital Divide: A Framework for Meeting CRA Obligations](https://www.dallasfed.org/~/media/documents/cd/pubs/digitaldivide.pdf), Dec 2016[Healthy Communities: A Framework for Meeting CRA Obligations](https://www.dallasfed.org/~/media/documents/cd/healthy/CRAframework.pdf), Mar 2014

[**Amy Sheon**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/bio-national-digital-inclusion-alliance-summit-amy-sheon)**, Urban Health Initiative**

The multi-billion dollar investment in electronic health records have produced tools made freely available to patients that have the power to transform patient self-management of chronic illness. They can also lead to improvements in health care quality and reductions in costs. However, the same patients afflicted with the highest rates of chronic illness are least likely to use these portals. I will present data exploring the ways in which lack of digital access and skill inhibit portal use, and also offer some highly innovative new models for leveraging health care institutions to improve digital inclusion.

[**Hannah Lucal**](https://www.linkedin.com/in/hannah-lucal-0a651047/)**, Open MIC**Open MIC is working to build a coalition of investors and businesses to take action on the issue of digital equity and put into place a long-term strategy to address the problem. We believe increased broadband internet access is good for people and the nation’s economy. In November 2016, Open MIC worked with institutional investors to submit a shareholder proposal to AT&T pressing the company to “review and publicly report on AT&T’s progress toward providing Internet service and products for low-income customers.” AT&T blocked the proposal from being put to a shareholder vote at the company’s annual meeting. Meanwhile, public tension has been building with regards to reports of "digital redlining" by AT&T which some investors believe could expose the company to significant legal and reputational risk. I'll discuss the business challenges and opportunities for investors seeking to put pressure on major companies to address the digital divide, as well as the need for more confrontational, targeted action against companies like AT&T.

* [Shareholder Proposal to AT&T on Digital Equity](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57693891579fb3ab7149f04b/t/583ef053c534a59807d8dec9/1480519763828/ATT_Digital%2BEquity%2BProposal_Final.pdf)
* [Open MIC Press Release on AT&T Shareholder Proposal](http://www.openmic.org/issue-articles/2016/11/30/investors-challenge-att-on-digital-equity-for-low-income-americans)
* [National Hispanic Media Coalition: Public Interest Groups Slam AT&T’s Refusal to Serve Low-Income Americans Through Lifeline Program](http://www.nhmc.org/public-interest-groups-slam-atts-refusal-serve-low-income-americans-lifeline-program/)
* [Digital Denied: Free Press Report Exposes the Impact of Systemic Racism on Internet Adoption](https://www.freepress.net/press-release/107701/free-press-report-exposes-impact-of-systemic-racism-on-internet-adoption)
* [NDIA Report: AT&T’s Digital Redlining Of Cleveland](https://digitalinclusion.org/blog/2017/03/10/atts-digital-redlining-of-cleveland/)
* [Haas Institute Report: AT&T FIBER DEPLOYMENT IN CALIFORNIA LEAVES MIDDLE AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES BEHIND](http://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/att-fiber-deployment-california-leaves-middle-and-low-income-communities-behind)

[**Mark Danaro**](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mark-danaro-057a8a2/)**, Infoxchange**

Infoxchange is an Australian not-for-profit social enterprise that has delivered technology for social justice for over 25 years. To continue making an impact for the next 25 years, Infoxchange is harnessing a collective view on sustainability and attacking the issue through shared value commercial opportunities.

Traditional corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a fantastic vehicle for funding and nurturing relationships, but is it the best approach in all circumstances? Of course, it’s important to recognise that CSR will continue to be a valid vehicle in the future .

In the past we had government, CSR, philanthropy and public donation. Now we have Start-ups leveraging crowd funding to deliver local and global community projects. There is a shift to a more direct funding model, cutting out traditional community organisations. Fund raising is going online and social. This also has to be factored into the ‘what next debate’. Shared value may be necessary for corporates to get their message across in the future.

We are now seeing an evolution driven by economic challenges … an openness and eagerness towards projects that deliver meaningful and measurable outcomes for all parties involved. These engagement models aren’t anything new - they have long been the basis for successful commercial relationships. The change; however, is grounded in the way NFPs calculate and convey value and the way they demonstrate ROI to business people, not just CSR teams.

If true commercial value relates to and drives worthwhile social change, strong partnerships form and the potential for sustainability is greatly improved. Doing ‘good’ whilst making a profit is not a bad thing. This shift is not trivial, especially since it requires a level of business acumen and an appetite for experimentation. The good news is that taking a leadership role in connecting ideas and organisations is powerful, and can also reduce a NFP’s dependencies on seeking funding from (traditional and) predetermined campaigns offered by public or other private entities.

The key isn’t about becoming corporate … it’s about collaborating in a strategic and professional manner.”

* Example 1 - Wired Communities
* <https://www.infoxchange.org/au/community-programs/youth-it-careers>
* <https://www.godigi.org.au>
* <https://www.infoxchange.org/au/cio-plus-all-your-daily-it-needs-covered-plus-strategic-advice>