



# SIMMONS

School of Library and  
Information Science

## Digital Inclusion Outcomes- Based Evaluation

Net Inclusion Summit  
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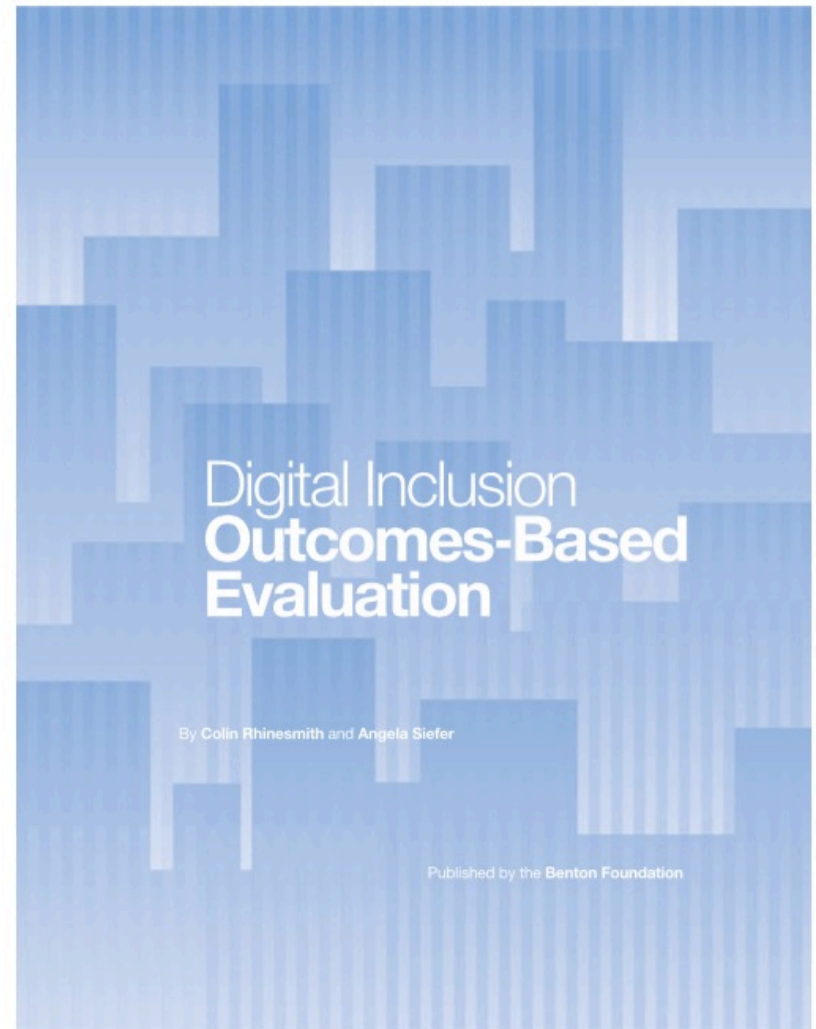
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# Introduction

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- New report co-authored with Angela Siefer (NDIA) & published by Benton Foundation.
- Findings build on research in Rhinesmith (2016) digital inclusion report.
- Describes the outcomes-based evaluation (OBE) needs of stakeholders.



# What Is Outcomes-Based Evaluation?

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OBE is the measurement of results: achievements or changes in skill, knowledge, attitude, behavior, condition, or life status for program participants.

1. identifies observations that can credibly demonstrate change or desirable conditions,
2. systematically collects information about these indicators, and
3. uses that information to show the extent to which a program achieved its goals.

- Institute of Museum and Library Services (2016)

# What Is Digital Inclusion OBE?

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An individual, client-focused outcome might be an older adult feeling more connected to her family members or a young adult gaining new job readiness skills as a result of their participation in digital literacy training programs.

# What Is Digital Inclusion OBE?

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Whereas, a broader family or community outcome might be understood as increased civic engagement and participation in democratic processes or more collaboration between community-based organizations and other local entities, including local government.

# What Is Digital Inclusion OBE?

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- This type of evaluation can be helpful for both funders, policymakers, and for the organizations that offer DI programs.
- OBE can be useful in the program planning and implementation phases, as well as for measuring program outcomes over time.
- Therefore, this methodology is often iterative and requires organizations to engage in a continuous process of data gathering and analysis.

# What's the Problem?

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- In 2016, 73% of U.S. adults had access to high-speed broadband Internet service at home (Pew Research).
- Digital inclusion (DI) stakeholders are experiencing increasing pressure from funders to demonstrate outcomes of their efforts in communities.
- Rhinesmith (2016) found that most organizations don't have time and resources to conduct OBE
- Scholarly literature has also recommended that more research is needed to understand DI OBE.



## Research Questions

- What are the shared challenges facing a broad and diverse group of DI stakeholders in their efforts to develop OBE frameworks?
- What other solutions, tools, and strategies could be developed to assist DI organizations, funders, and policymakers in developing OBE frameworks?

- In 2016, we held three half-day workshops with digital inclusion practitioners, their partners, funders, and other key stakeholders.
- Net Inclusion Summit (Kansas City), Alliance for Community Media Conference (Boston), and Community Technology Empowerment Project at the St. Paul Neighborhood Network.
- Angela Siefer led the workshops while Colin Rhinesmith led the research efforts.

## The Core Needs of Stakeholders:

- 1.) The need for shared vocabulary;
- 2.) The need for OBE tools and implementation support;
- 3.) The need for common indicators; and
- 4.) The need for time and resources needed to conduct outcomes-based evaluation.

## Recommendations from the Workshop Participants:

- 1.) Develop shared definitions, indicators, and data elements;
- 2.) Engage other stakeholders in digital inclusion;
- 3.) Create a robust online tool and resource.

## Recommendations from the Authors:

- 1.) Develop training materials for staff;
- 2.) Find organizations and outside researchers to conduct outcomes-based evaluation;
- 3.) Engage more stakeholders in developing an outcomes-based evaluation tool.
- 4.) Add your voice!

- IMLS Building Digital Communities (2012)
- Project Outcome (Public Library Association)
- Impact Survey (University of Washington)
- Open Technology Institute (2015)

## Digital Equity

“A condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.”

- NDIA (2016)

## Digital Inclusion

- 1) “affordable, robust broadband internet service;
- 2) internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user;
- 3) access to digital literacy training;
- 4) quality technical support; and
- 5) applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration.”

- NDIA (2016)



## Digital Inclusion Activities (Rhinesmith, 2016)

- 1.) Providing low-cost broadband;
- 2.) Connecting digital literacy training with relevant content and services;
- 3.) Making low-cost computers available; and
- 4.) Operating public access computing centers.

# New Digital Equity Logic Model

ORGANIZATIONS' OR COMMUNITIES' PLANNED WORK			ORGANIZATIONS' OR COMMUNITIES' INTENDED RESULTS		
RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MID- TO LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACTS
<b>In order to accomplish our set of activities we will need the following:</b>	<b>In order to address our problem or asset we will accomplish the following activities:</b>	<b>We expect that once we have accomplished these activities they will produce the following evidence or service delivery:</b>	<b>We expect that if accomplished these activities will lead to the following change in knowledge, awareness, skills at the individual and family level:</b>	<b>We expect that if accomplished these activities will lead to the following changes in actions, behaviors, and policies at the community level:</b>	<b>We expect that if accomplished these activities will lead to the following changes:</b>
Options for affordable, robust internet service	Help individuals gain access to affordable, robust broadband internet service	# of affordable, robust broadband internet connections	Increased access to affordable, robust broadband internet connections	More jobs, local businesses, and increased wages	Full participation in our society, democracy and economy, which is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.
Ability to facilitate access to internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user	Help individuals gain access to internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user	# of internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user	Increased access to internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user	Higher levels of educational attainment	
Digital literacy training materials	Help individuals gain access to digital literacy training	# of people with access to digital literacy training	Improved digital literacy capacity to become confident, safe, secure, and self-directed learners	Increased access to healthcare and wellness	
Public computing centers	Help individuals gain access to digital literacy training	# of people with quality technical support	Improved access to quality technical support	Improved public safety and emergency services	
Ability to facilitate or provide access to quality technical support	Help individuals gain access to quality technical support	# of applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration	Improved access and use of applications and online content designed to enable and encourage safety, self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration	More robust civic engagement activity	
Support from and collaboration with local government and/or community partners	Help individuals gain access to applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration	# of applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration	Increased access and use of applications and online content designed to enable and encourage safety, self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration	Increased levels of social connections, social capital and collaboration	
				More inclusive for people with disabilities	

## Our Work Ahead

- To strengthen the impact of local programs, the field needs resources dedicated to the creation of a shared, online, collaboratively developed outcomes-based evaluation tool created explicitly to promote digital equity.

## Our Work Ahead

- In addition, digital inclusion programs need professional development and financial support to implement outcomes-based evaluation in meaningful ways that reflect the needs, strengths, and aspirations of local communities.

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**Thank you!**

For more information, download the report:  
<http://benton.org/outcomes-based-evaluation-report/>