

Broadband / UC2B Engagement Strategy For The Bristol Place Metanoia Centers

Executive Summary

Access to high-speed internet connectivity and possession of the tools and literacies necessary to make effective use of it are quickly becoming social and economic necessities, for individuals as well as for communities. A community tied together by a broadband network that expands and strengthens existing social networks can gain a variety of new capacities, new connections, and new abilities to organize itself and advocate for its needs. The Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband (UC2B) project was conceived with these issues and opportunities in mind.

UC2B applied for three separate-but-interlocking grants to build a city-wide broadband network, including Fiber to the Home for 4650 homes in North Champaign and Urbana. The grants totaled \$33mn, with the \$29mn of that money earmarked for infrastructure, \$3mn for sustainable adoption and training, and \$1mn for building and supporting Community Technology Centers. Only the infrastructure grant was ultimately funded. This situation is unfortunate and possibly endangers the community goals of the project, but it also provides an opportunity for the community to step up and take ownership of the project.

The Bristol Place Metanoia Centers are uniquely positioned to play a key role in the UC2B planning and implementation process, as a neighborhood anchor institution providing access to and training with technology, as a bridge between the UC2B project and the community they serve, and as an advocate for the community's needs within the project. Your organization's past attempts to create and fund CTCs give you invaluable experience both for acting as an effective broadband anchor site, and for working to acquire resources to do more community-based work within the confines of the project. Rev. Dr. Barnes's position of trust and experience within the community, command of the technological, social, and economic issues in play, and his vast experience in activism and advocacy on a national level make him an ideal candidate to engage with the UC2B project as a community advocate and leader.

Through such engagement, opportunities exist to create and sustain thriving CTCs at Bristol Place and Shadow Wood, build alliances and capacities in the broader community, and move the UC2B project in a direction that ensures the network will be a permanent community asset and a catalyst for economic growth, community development, community organizing, and community empowerment.

Theory and Methods

Background: GSLIS and Community Informatics

In order to give you a better sense of where we're coming from, and what our interest is in this project, I thought I would begin with some background information on our department and our studies. The Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) has been heavily involved in the UC2B project from the beginning, first and foremost as the primary grant-writers for the Community Technology Centers and Sustainable Adoption portions of the project.

At first glance, librarians might seem like unlikely candidates to be inserting themselves into community technology projects and community development work, but as technology has rapidly changed our environment, librarians have sought to adapt by broadening our mission to include the study and application of information in many different contexts, and the practice of librarianship in the broader community. In short, because information is no longer contained by walls, neither are we.

This work has led to a new specialization called Community Informatics, which studies how information and information technology work in the context of communities. The LIS 518 class participating in this project is an introduction to that discipline, and our work with you and the other anchor institutions is a way of applying what we are learning in the course and grounding it in experience.

Key Concepts

In the course of this class, we've been exposed to a number of key concepts that might be of use for framing and discussing the UC2B project and its impact on the community. You may or may not already be familiar with some of them, but I'll go over them briefly to define my terms and give some context for our approach.

You are likely familiar with the concept of the **digital divide** from your past Community Technology Center (CTC) work. The digital divide is the context in which UC2B was formed, and the issue which it was designed to address, at least from an access-to-technology standpoint. However, we prefer to think of the digital divide in a larger context. The digital divide did not simply appear out of nowhere when the internet came along. It's a reproduction and continuation of longstanding social inequalities and problems, and is unlikely to be productively addressed without addressing those issues holistically and systematically at the same time.

This is obviously somewhat problematic within the limited scope of UC2B's mandate, but where possible, we want to think in terms of the wants, needs, resources, and aspirations of the community as a whole, and not just in the narrow technological context. Technology should be a tool to serve the needs and build the capacities of the community, not an imperative to which the community must bow.

Another key concept we've been working with is **social capital**. Social capital was conceived as a way of talking about and measuring the social power and reach of individuals and communities. Examples of social capital would be the ability to find a job through your social network, to call upon friends in a time of need, or to learn how to solve a computer problem from a more technically-inclined friend. Social capital is further broken down into two main types: **bridging social capital**, which describes connections between communities, and **bonding social capital**, which describes connections within communities. Bridging social capital is important to bring new people, ideas, and resources into a community, and bonding is important for internal cooperation and mutual support. A good balance of the two is seen as

an indication of a thriving and sustainable community, and a severe lack of either can result in isolation, atomization, and exploitation.

Another important idea to consider is **virtual community** or online community. One phenomenon we have examined in depth is how overlapping virtual and physical communities can interact with, change, and mutually reinforce one another. Studies¹ have shown that on a local level, increased online interaction can actually lead to increased face-to-face socialization and organization. Once a critical mass of the community is online, the time spent on social activities online is not taking away from in-person social life, it's actually facilitating and extending upon it.

As virtual communities strengthen and increase their scope and ambitions, we can begin to cast them in a more political light, and speak of **cyber power**. Cyber power is about the ability of communities to use technology to organize and mobilize themselves in order to make their voices heard, solve their problems, and create new opportunities and alliances. Using the network to organize the community and build cyber power is one of the most promising possibilities of the UC2B project.

Finally, perhaps the most important idea to keep in mind in the context of this network is that of **public space**, which can give rise to a **counterpublic sphere**, and the necessity to fight for and defend both. Public space (whether actual or virtual) is where democracy and dialogue happen, and where ideas of the common good and community action take root. A counterpublic sphere is a safe space carved out within the broader public space, where narratives that challenge the official stories can thrive. The organizing and citizen journalism around the Kiwane Carrington case is a good example of this.

The idea of contested public space featured heavily on the first day of eBlackCU, with Dr. Ken Salo making a [compelling argument](#)² that it is under heavy threat in the current environment, and must always be fought for and claimed. This network is being built initially with public values in mind, but unless the community steps up and takes ownership of it, and claims the virtual space to tell its own stories and fight for its values, in the end it is only physical infrastructure and could easily be co-opted by private interests in the long run.

Approach

Our approach here has obviously been limited by the bounds of a school-based schedule and of attempting to do community work within the context of a college course. As such, our aims are fairly modest. We aim to take an initial inventory of the technological and human capacities and needs of the anchor institutions and their constituencies, and to make connections among the anchors and between the anchors and other organizations, people, and resources that might help them to understand and take advantage of the coming UC2B environment. We also aim to provide our anchor partners with a pilot plan for engaging with UC2B as the project ramps up, which is this document. GSLIS as a whole does have a long-term commitment to working with the community on UC2B and other related issues, and this project is an initial step in that process.

The Broadband Opportunity

Access to high-speed internet connectivity and possession of the tools and literacies necessary to make effective use of it are quickly becoming social and economic necessities, for individuals as well as communities. The FCC's new [National Broadband Plan](#)³ states that:

Those without broadband and the skills to use broadband-enabled technologies are becoming more isolated from the modern American economy.

This is due in part to the rapidly changing nature of work in the digital age. Sixty-two percent of American workers rely on the Internet to perform their jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that jobs depending on broadband and information and communication technologies (ICT)—such as computer systems analysts, database administrators and media and communications workers—will grow by 25% from 2008–2018, 2.5 times faster than the average across all occupations and industries.⁴

However, access to broadband is not simply about economics and keeping up with the Joneses, and mere access is not enough. A community tied together by a broadband network that expands and strengthens existing social networks can gain a variety of new capacities, connections, and abilities to organize itself and advocate for its needs.

Broadband is a platform for social and economic opportunity. It can lower the geographic barriers and help minimize socioeconomic disparities—connecting people from otherwise disconnected communities to job opportunities, avenues for educational advancement and channels for communication.⁵

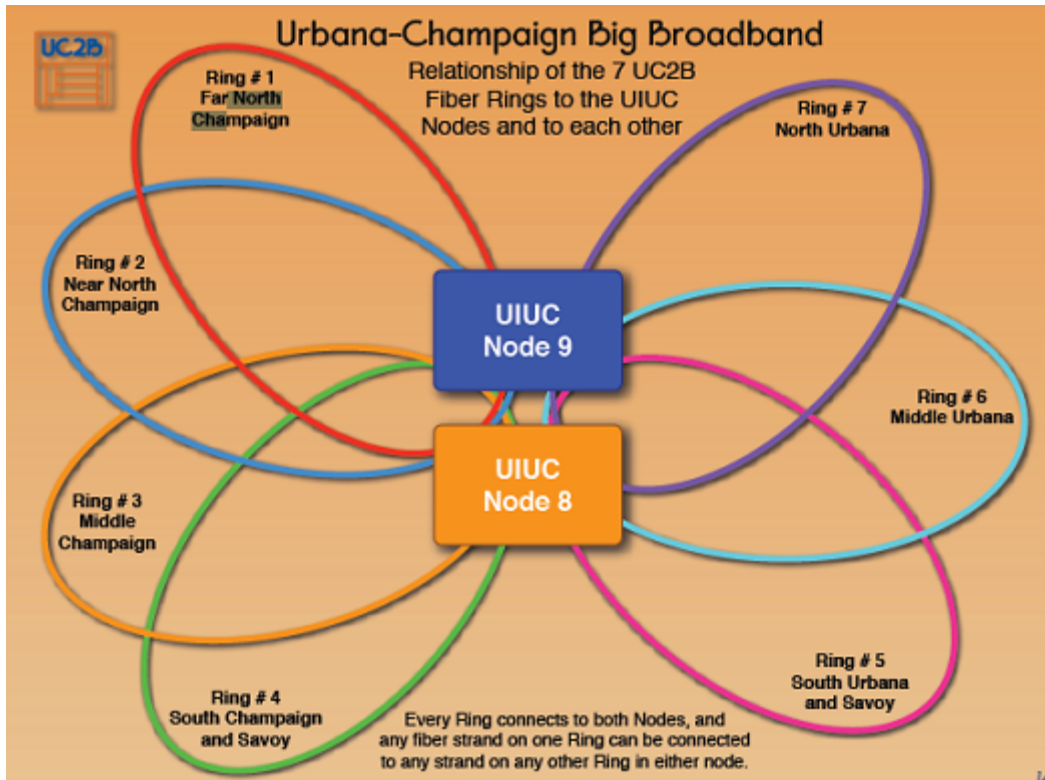
The UC2B project was conceived with these issues and opportunities in mind. Champaign-Urbana has a long history of technological leadership, and the area of broadband is no exception. There have long been community efforts and plans on the table to wire the Champaign-Urbana area for high-speed internet, but the difficulty of funding them proved to be an insurmountable obstacle. The opportunity to put these plans into action finally came when the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#)⁶ (The Stimulus Bill) was passed, including \$7.2bn in funds for broadband infrastructure and adoption.

A consortium (UC2B), which included both of the city governments, the university, and several other local institutions, was quickly assembled to apply for some of this funding. UC2B eventually applied for three separate-but-interlocking grants, totaling \$33mn, with the \$29mn of that money earmarked for infrastructure, \$3mn for sustainable adoption (including things like community development initiatives, literacy training, and other access-to-technology aid), and \$1mn for building and supporting Community Technology Centers. A more thorough summary of this process can be found [here](#)⁷. Also, the [presentation](#)⁸ that Mike Smeltzer, the project lead for UC2B, gave at GSLIS about the project is available online, and goes into much more detail about the project and its context than either this summary or the one linked above. [Notes](#)⁹ from the presentation are also available.

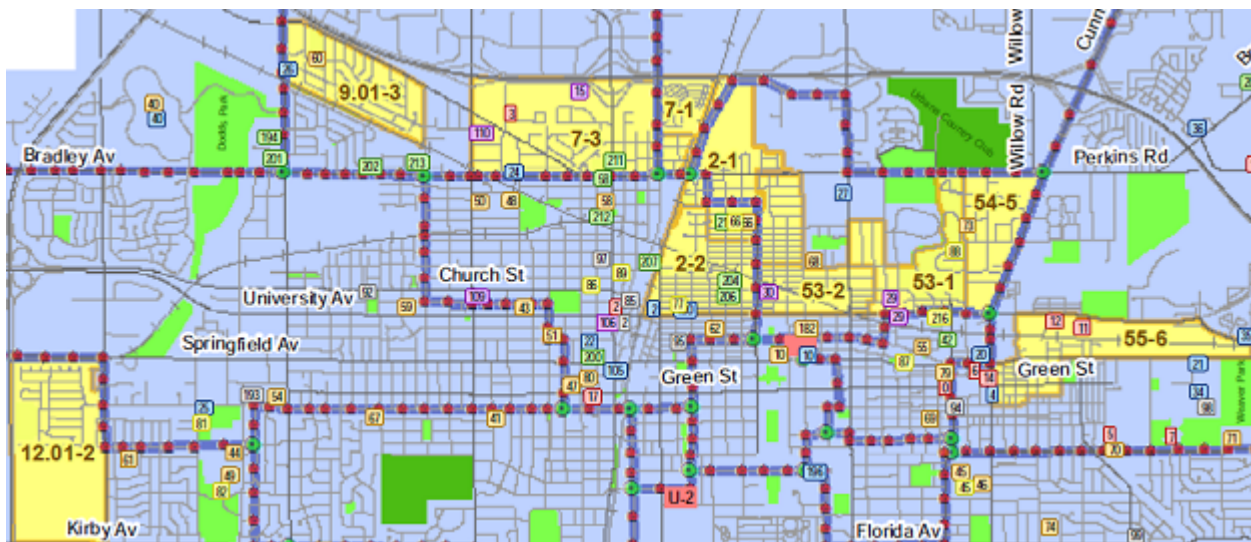
Unfortunately, in the end only the infrastructure portion of the application was funded. This was a heavy blow to the ambitions of UC2B, and it seriously limits what the consortium can do in terms of community outreach and access or technology and computer literacy promotion. In the worst case, this loss could even endanger the project as a true community development initiative, but it does also open up some real opportunities for the community to step up and fill in some of the gaps, and thereby insert itself into and influence the direction and priorities of the project. Such opportunities will be one of the main topics of this report.

Infrastructure and Technical Details

The infrastructure portion of the grant that was funded consists of two main parts. The first is a series of large-scale fiber optic rings that cover the whole area, and link the city governments and other partners, the university, and the community anchor institutions together. These serve as the “backbone” of the network, and the base off of which the rest of it will be built. A map that shows the actual geographic routes where these rings will run can be found [here](#)¹⁰. A complete set of maps related to the project is available at the [UC2B website](#)¹¹.



The second part of the infrastructure project is perhaps more relevant in terms of the goals and interests of the Bristol Place Metanoia Centers and the community it serves. This portion is designed to provide Fiber to the Home (FTTH) access to 4650 homes and 200 businesses, mostly in North Champaign and Urbana. The census blocks shaded yellow in the map below are the neighborhoods that are slated to receive FTTH infrastructure. They were chosen after door-to-door surveys to determine which neighborhoods in Champaign-Urbana were “underserved”, which the guidelines of the grant defined as any census block in which 40% or fewer of households currently subscribe to broadband service.



As indicated on the map (section 7-1), both Bristol Place and Shadow Wood are set to receive FTTH access, as are most of the surrounding neighborhoods. The FTTH portion of the project is unique nationally. It was the only project with FTTH on this large of a scale that was funded under the Stimulus program, and it will likely receive considerable national attention as a pilot program for similar efforts elsewhere. This extra attention may also open up opportunities for collaboration and funding from other groups who are interested in community broadband and building fiber optic networks that reach every home on a national scale.

Due to the constraints of the funding grants, these infrastructural projects are set to be completed on an accelerated schedule over the next 12-18 months. Serious planning is already underway, with regular weekly or bi-weekly public meetings of several working groups, and requests for bids already being issued. UC2B anticipates building the ring part of the project and connecting the anchor institutions to it between June and November of 2011. Depending on the progress of that part, they may begin rolling out the FTTH in some areas by next fall, but spring of 2012 seems more likely at this point.

What Does This Mean for You and Your Community?

At minimum, it means better infrastructure and more choices at better prices for internet, landline phone, and cable TV services. UC2B will be an internet service provider in its own right, and plans to offer basic internet service (at higher speeds than Comcast or AT&T currently offer) for 19.95 a month, with free installation and modem. The network will also be open to anyone else who wants to sell services on it, and UC2B expects to line up multiple vendors for TV and VOIP, and other services over the network. UC2B owns the infrastructure, and providers currently do not have a stake in it, so in order to access the network, they'll all have to play by the same rules and pay the same rates.

At very least this will break the current Comcast/ATT monopoly and force the providers to truly compete on price and service, and the average resident or business who already subscribes to one or more of these services can expect to see their bills go down and their range of choices and quality of service go up. For people who do not currently subscribe to these services, the hope is that UC2B will be able to get pricing down to a point where many more will be able to, although how many remains to be seen.

A Community Network / A Networked Community

The true opportunities opened up by UC2B are much more significant than fast downloads and more and cheaper media choices. UC2B also offers a unique opportunity for community development and community organizing. Some of the ideas introduced above can form a coherent narrative that models how this process could work over time. The project initially gives the community a chance to enhance both its bonding and bridging social capital. If most households do get online and anchor institutions and other efforts are able to help people get to a good enough level of literacy and comfort to make effective use of the technology, the potential for the growth of online interaction and community within the areas slated to receive FTTH is great.

This could result in a much more connected and stable social life within the neighborhoods (bonding), while the imperatives of the project and the new connections and skills of community members could lead to much better and more consistent engagement with the university and the rest of the Champaign-Urbana area (bridging). As the online and offline components of the community begin to mature and build, they reinforce one another, gain better capacity to share information and resources, and ultimately to organize the community to respond to issues that affect it and create or take advantage of new social, economic, and educational opportunities (cyberpower).

The Obama campaign proved the efficacy of online tools and online community for mobilizing people and raising money and sharing information on a national scale, but it ultimately did not result in the direct empowerment of many who participated. A more local approach where the online community is rooted in and enhances a permanent physical community may have a better chance of leading to sustainable, grassroots empowerment that integrates the power of the new tools with the fabric of existing community bonds and organizations.

Practical examples are a better way to illustrate these possibilities than abstractions, and several good ideas for community applications for the network have come up at eBlackCU and in the LIS518 class. A sampling follows:

1. An **online collaborative space for the anchor institutions and/or the churches** which would supplement and record offline meetings and collaborations, and maintain an inventory of resources and services offered by each. It would provide a place to rebuild bonds within the community and between community organizations and churches, to share resources and knowledge, and to organize a coordinated response to the coming of UC2B. This would ideally be in operation before UC2B comes online, as it could be a good dry run for later more complicated and ambitious online/offline community projects. By organizing to advocate for themselves on the UC2B project, the community teaches itself to use these technologies and builds its capacity to organize and create with these new tools once they have access to them. Students at GSLIS, the public libraries, and community partners like CU-Access and the IMC may take interest in helping to make a project along these lines happen.

2. At eBlackCU, Misty Bell of the Urbana Neighborhood Connections Center suggested a **one-stop civic engagement portal**, where people can find out what is going on at school board, city council, and other public meetings that is relevant to the community, and organize themselves to play a role and have a voice in these matters. Unity in Action Magazine is interested in helping to facilitate this project, and it may already be in the planning stages.

3. **Living archives for community memory.** At eBlackCU, Rev. Chambers mentioned that decades of NAACP history are sitting in archives, and getting that online, as well as getting the old photographs and church history out of the closets and cupboards and back into regular contact with the community could be a real rallying point and a way to help the community get in better touch with its history. eBlackCU is already doing some [pilot programs](#)¹² in this vein, but there is much more to be done, and the community ultimately needs the power and capacity to be doing this kind of work themselves.

4. **Video** is being seen as a big early application. The churches want to put their sermons online, and there could be further video generated by public meetings, community-generated content, kids' programs at the CTCs and schools, public media and citizen journalism, and so on.

The question is, where will all of this video live? And, more generally, if the network is going to be a home for a living community memory and a vibrant online community life, where will all of that physically reside, and who will control it? How will it be sustainably stored and maintained?

This is an example of where the community could be engaging with UC2B and fighting for the network to be a public space. If projects like these seem attractive, then the community needs to start asking what UC2B can do for it to some extent, and demanding that public server space and other infrastructure to facilitate community use be a part of the plan from the start. The funding for this is not there within the grant, but if it's a priority, this could be accomplished by setting aside some portion of subscriber revenue, or by fundraising and applying for more grants, partnerships, in-kind donations by the city or university IT infrastructure.

Such things will only be a top priority if the community steps up and demands them though, as will many other policy and funding considerations crucial to full community participation in and ownership of the network that arise as the project begins to take shape.

UC2B Situational Analysis

If the community must fight for a stake and a voice in the direction of the process, the next natural question is: how to do so? Fortunately, the manner in which the project has developed has created potential avenues for community engagement and power. The main opportunity lies in the gaps left by the failure to get funding for the community engagement and training parts of the project. As a result of this, the project has very few resources for advertising, outreach, or anything else that isn't below-ground infrastructure. If the community can step in and take the place of the money, they will make themselves an indispensable part of the plan and guarantee themselves a seat at the table and a voice in the decisions to be made about the future direction of the project.

First and foremost, the project will have to rely heavily on the cooperation of the anchor institutions and other community leaders to recruit subscribers and train people to use the technology. UC2B estimates that they need 2700 subscribers out of the 4650 households and 200 businesses in the FTTH neighborhoods in order to make the project financially sustainable, and they want to do even better than this in the hopes of growing the project and building FTTH in the rest of the city as well. This will be a difficult ask in the current economic situation, especially among a population that was financially strained even before the economic crash. This situation gives a community leadership that can mount an organized response to the project considerable leverage to shape it.

UC2B have perhaps been slow to realize their predicament in this regard. The compressed time scale of both the grant application process and the construction timetable has meant that not many resources have been devoted to these issues so far. The core group working on this project is not very large (which presents another opportunity, in that simply showing up to meetings means your voice will be heard), and most of their attention has been absorbed by the immensely complicated logistics of applying for the grants and planning the infrastructure construction. This has shown up in their strategy so far, which is focused on traditional marketing via media and informational brochures, and the sort of "hard sell" approach that was on display somewhat at eBlackCU.

However, these issues are only beginning to be addressed within UC2B, and there are strong voices within the group advocating for a bottom-up community engagement strategy for getting the word out and building and sustaining the network. Dr. Alkalimat from GSLIS is on the Policy and Marketing committees, and he helped to organize eBlackCU partly as the first step in that sort of strategy. Others on the marketing committee also view the project in these terms to varying degrees. The lack of resources for traditional marketing will likely mean that the organization has to rely on the community to a large degree in the end, but it would be better for everyone involved if the community was engaged and an equal partner from the beginning.

This does not necessarily indicate a strongly confrontational approach. Rather, it entails recognition that UC2B and the affected communities need one another and need to be equal partners for the project to succeed on its own terms. That relationship has been unequal so far, and a move by the community to assert itself and its interests and equalize matters would do a lot to resolve the uncertainties about the project's future sustainability and direction. If this fails to happen, the likely fate of the network is as free infrastructure for the cities, the university, and the cable and telephone companies, and the

community opportunities and public space will be lost, and ultimately, so will even the price and quality of service advantages.

The Organization

Hardware/Software

The Bristol Place Metanoia Centers is a neighborhood community center located in a former single-family home at 1313 N. Clock St. in North Champaign. They have previously operated as a CTC and have 5 PC computers with Windows XP, Microsoft Office, and a full suite of productivity software. They also have broadband, telephone, printing, and fax services available, and a small community meeting space.

They offer walk-in services and work on local and national community organizing and advocacy projects, but currently do not have an active lab and do not offer regular programs due to lack of funding and staffing. They would like to do so again in the future if a sustainable source of funding and staffing can be secured. They would also like to build a separate, larger CTC facility and community space in or near the Bristol Place neighborhood if they can get access to the resources needed to do so.

Rev. Dr. Barnes and the Metanoia Centers also helped to start a CTC at the Shadow Wood Mobile Home Community, which is adjacent to the Bristol Place neighborhood, just off of Market St. in North Champaign. Shadow Wood is a majority-Hispanic immigrant community, and many of the residents speak English as a second language, or don't speak it at all. The Shadow Wood CTC is housed in a mobile home that has been converted into a community center, and has five PCs donated by Human Kinetics and Brian Bell's computer recycling program at Parkland. Three of the PCs are running Windows XP and have a full suite of software, and the other two are Windows 2000 and need some software upgrades. There is also a printer, a scanner, and each computer has speakers. The center has a broadband connection from Comcast. It is currently rarely open to the public, and only when volunteers can be found to come in from outside of the community to staff it.

Over the past few years, a variety of outside groups have attempted to run programs in this lab and engage with the Shadow Wood community more generally, but the efforts have been uncoordinated and the results disappointing so far. A more sustained and coordinated approach is required to get real momentum in this area and to get the CTC up and running regularly again, the beginnings of which will be outlined later in this report.

People

Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes is the executive director and founder, and his position of trust and experience within the community, command of the technological, social, and economic issues in play, and his vast experience in activism and advocacy on a regional (with the [Central Illinois Organizing Project](#)¹³) and national (with [National People's Action](#)¹⁴) level make him an ideal candidate to engage with the UC2B project as a community advocate and leader.

History and past connections / attempts

Bristol Place Metanoia Centers is also ideally placed to act as a conduit for hardware and training for potential FTTH subscribers in the neighborhood, and to help fill the gap left by the loss of the sustainable adoption and CTC portions of the project. Bristol Place Metanoia Centers has set up and run two CTC's (one at their site, one at Shadow Wood) on an ad-hoc basis over the past decade, and made multiple attempts in partnership with other local community organizations to secure stable funding to

sustain and expand them and run more programs. These attempts were ultimately unsuccessful, but the lessons learned and capacities gained could be of great value within the new UC2B context.

Ideas

Finally, the Bristol Place Metanoia Centers has an interesting conceptual framework to bring to the relationship between the community and UC2B. Rev. Dr. Barnes has promoted the concept of a [Community Benefit Agreement](#)¹⁵ for any large development project within the community that utilizes taxpayer funding. This agreement is made between the community, the developers, and the funders before work begins on a project, and is designed to insure that the community sees real and lasting social and economic benefits from the development. This is accomplished by building community participation into a project from the start, for example, through requirements that a certain percentage of jobs on the project go to local workers, and then setting up training, accountability, and auditing structures to ensure that this happens. In light of the opportunities and issues outlined earlier in this report, something like a Community Benefit Agreement could be an interesting avenue to set clear terms of engagement, and to ensure that the community has a voice in the process and is guaranteed a fair portion of whatever gains accrue from the project.

What Can Be Accomplished? / Proposals

In light of the situation and context outlined above, I've proposed three possible goals to pursue over the next 12-18 months, and some actions to be taken in their pursuit. The first two are specific to Bristol Place Metanoia Centers and its past and present community projects, and the last relates to the engaging the UC2B project as a whole and what its relationship with and benefit to the community will ultimately be.

Goal# 1: Get real momentum behind the Shadow Wood Community Center

A number of partners, including people from GSLIS (both students and faculty), CU Citizen Access, Parkland, and the SOAR After School Program seem to be coalescing around Shadow Wood. In the new context of UC2B and the accompanying push to engage the community and do more literacy work to help lay the necessary groundwork for broadband adoption, there is a very good chance that something can finally stick and result in sustainable ongoing programs and engagement at Shadow Wood.

What to do?:

The keys are to get buy-in and participation from within the Shadow Wood community itself so they don't have to rely on outsiders coming in to have access to their own computers, and to find some source of sustainable funding to keep the doors open and the machines running, which might be easier within the UC2B context where there will be a push for community engagement on technology use and more potential partners and funders for grant applications.

Another key is to find partners, either within the community or from outside, to help with the language barriers, and possibly with the immigration-related issues that could be hindering Shadow Wood residents from participating in the broader community and dialogue.

Finally, the various efforts at engagement with Shadow Wood need some kind of ongoing coordination and memory or archive, especially since they involve institutions that are often subject to rapid turnover and thus deficient at sustained and consistent engagement over time. Again, the impetus of UC2B will help here to keep things more sustained, but Bristol Place Metanoia Centers' primary role in terms of

Shadow Wood is likely in this capacity, along with efforts to obtain more sustainable funding for staffing and outreach, of which, more in the next recommendation.

Goal#2: Secure funding and/or volunteers to staff and reopen a full CTC/Community Center at Bristol Place

Bristol Place Metanoia Centers' location in the heart of one of the FTTH neighborhoods and experience and knowledge from past attempts to open and fund a CTC put you in an ideal position to seek another round of independent funding for a CTC, and possibly to sustain both the Bristol Place and Shadow Wood CTCs. The new environment ushered in by UC2B is going to open up many new opportunities for projects like this, and help to provide the partnerships, capacities, and expertise it takes to get and keep grant funding for them. People at the monthly UC2B meetings are already talking about how and when to go out and seek funding, whether via grants or private fundraising, to replace the community-focused parts of the grant that did not come through.

Bristol Place Metanoia Centers and their partners can and should be a part of this process, and can even be a leader of it. The loss of the community funding in the main grant was unfortunate, but one possible positive side effect of not getting that money is that if the community goes out and gets its own money, they're a full partner and have more control and latitude over where their projects and the network as a whole go.

What to do?

Do another round of CTC grant apps with community and institutional partners and in the new UC2B context. Consult with UC2B, GSLIS, and others for grant-writing support, and for some leads on volunteers for staffing in the interim. GSLIS has a tech volunteer program at the Urbana Free Library and two student clubs that work on community technology issues, and some of those people could work in your lab or at Shadow Wood if a regular schedule can be re-established. There will be rounds of grant-writing and fundraising at some point to bridge the gaps opened by the parts of the grant that didn't come through, and your past CTC proposals and activism put you well ahead of most other anchor institutions when it comes to knowledge of and capacity for this process. Momentum will also be gathering for volunteering around technological literacy CTCs as the project ramps up, and your two CTCs put you in a good position to take advantage of that groundswell. Getting involved in the day to day process and activities around UC2B is the best way to position yourself to take advantage of these opportunities, which brings us to the third and final recommendation.

Goal#3: Advocacy and organizing to ensure that the UC2B project is a true community network.

Rev. Dr. Barnes, finally, as you have probably noticed by now, this document has been written primarily as a road map for your personal engagement with the UC2B Project. You are skilled and experienced advocate and organizer who is conversant in all of the different areas of expertise that this project involves. You have experience with the technological issues from your personal background and past efforts to run CTCs, you're familiar with the policy questions and funding environment around community technology from your past attempts at funding those CTCs, and you are embedded in and have an intimate knowledge of the history, resources, needs, and aspirations of one of the neighborhoods that is central to the project. You also have connections and experience in the activist, church, and community organization worlds, and an understanding of the perspectives and possibilities of each.

Few if any other anchor institutions and community leaders involved with this project are better positioned to have a positive influence upon it and guide it in a direction that better serves your

community's needs than you are, and I very much hope you are able to play a positive role in the development of UC2B as a vibrant community network and space for community development, community memory, and community empowerment.

What to do?

First and foremost, please start attending some of the weekly UC2B meetings and speaking up, and urge others to do so as well. The policy meeting is the most relevant in general for the issues outlined in this report and for the direction of the project as a whole, and all of the other committees eventually report to it. The technical meeting is less relevant, but perhaps worth attending once or twice to get an idea of what they are doing. The marketing meeting is where the initial decisions are going to be made about how the project engages the community, and is the place where a strong advocate for the community's perspective could do the most immediate good. A table of the meeting times and places is included at the end of this document.

Beyond the meetings and the UC2B structure, the most pressing need is for the community to organize itself around this issue, decide on a program of action and some proposals or demands, and begin to assert itself and push those into the process. There is also a need for the community to organize around expanding literacy and awareness, so when the broadband does arrive the capacity is there to take full advantage of it and use it to further empower the community in some of the ways described in this report. Perhaps the Metanoia Centers and Shadow Wood CTCs can begin to ramp their programs and activities back up over the coming months, and to build alliances and raise awareness with an eye towards that goal.

Notes and Acknowledgements

UC2B Meeting Times and Places

Meeting	Dates/Times	Location
UC2B Policy Meeting	1st/3rd Thursdays, 11:45AM	Champaign Library, Douglass Branch
UC2B Technical Meeting	1st/3rd Tuesdays, 2:30PM	Champaign City Council Chambers
UC2B Marketing Meeting	2nd Tuesdays, 11:45AM, and 4th Thursdays, 6:30PM	Champaign Library, Douglass Branch
Next eBlackCU Community Forum	Jan 8 th , Morning	Champaign Library, Douglass Branch

Table of visits/meetings and activities

Date	Place	Activity
09/30/2010	Bristol Place Metanoia Centers	Initial site meeting / introduction
10/07/2010	Urbana Library Douglass Branch	UC2B Policy Meeting
10/08/2010	Bristol Place Metanoia Centers	Second meeting, organizational history and background, referral to Shadow Wood for Technology Education Work
10/08/2010	Shadow Wood Mobile Home Community	Initial site meeting / introduction
10/13/2010	Shadow Wood Mobile Home Community	First CTC volunteer session
10/20/2010	Shadow Wood Mobile Home Community	Second CTC volunteer session
11/03/2010	Shadow Wood Mobile Home Community	Third CTC volunteer session
11/04/2010	Urbana Library Douglass Branch	UC2B Policy Meeting
11/05-06/2010	GSLIS / Urbana Library Douglass Branch	eBlackCU
11/16/2010	Urbana Library Douglass Branch	UC2B Marketing Meeting

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Notes

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