Connecticut Broadband Internet Coordinating Council

CBICC SUMMARY
Teleconference, May 13, 2011 ◆ 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Attendance

Mike Chowaniec, Cablevision

Lou Manzione, *CBICC Chairman*, University of Hartford

Jack McCoy, Town of Manchester

Guest: Doug McDonough, Library Director, Town of Manchester

Matt Miller, Consultant

Bill Vallée, Office of Consumer Counsel

Guest Speaker: Ken Wiggin, State Librarian

Also Present: Ann Bertini and Richard Strauss, CASE

Introduction — Manzione provided background about himself and the CBICC to guest speaker Ken Wiggin, CT State Librarian. He also provided copy of his presentation from the March CBICC meeting, summarizing that briefly for the teleconference. Manzione noted that the presentation should serve as a spark in furthering the discussion of libraries and broadband.

Ken Wiggin Presentation Key Points

- *E-books are being treated electronic entities to be licensed.* Not just like printed books.
    - Manzione asked if the license renewal could be likened to replacing a book that is worn out. Wiggin said he still sees a difference: e-readers are part of the market and will replace a certain volume but not everything. Some benefits: large print, downloadable etc.
- *Libraries have had productive meetings with publishers and distributors.* We're trying to figure out models and get the best licenses we can, he said. People are willing to buy up to a point but they also want to borrow.
    - Amazon is finally allowing libraries to loan Kindles. They've learned that allowing libraries to loan it generates business.
- *Libraries are still important in leveling the playing field* – making technology available to people who cannot afford or choose not to buy.
- *Population in flux:* Some people like Smartphones others don't. Blind readers have been finding if the audio is good they can use the digital recordings.
- *Libraries still need space.* Library space is changing and technology plays a large part in what a library does. The biggest need we have in renovating is the demand for more electricity. Libraries are still loaning CDs and DVDs and even VHS in some cases.
- *Be circumspect about trends.* We don't fully understand what it means that Amazon says that they are selling more e-books.

Q&A with Ken Wiggin

There was a question about library subscriptions online.

Wiggin noted that for the past decade libraries have had online access to a wide range of periodicals through iCONN.org . The service is more for searches on specific topics, not necessarily to read the full issue of a specific magazine. There are licensing issues with that.

One example is *Consumer Report,* which made a deal with an exclusive database aggregator which meant that the aggregator iCONN.org was using had to stop providing access. CT libraries that wanted access had to license it separately. We do some statewide licensing of audiobooks. The audio book publishers have not had a problem with this. We would like to do the same with ebooks.

Do you have the bandwidth you need?
We're part of the CT Education Network (CEN). Some libraries have separate access for staff vs. public (i.e. cable for one, CEN for others). CEN is pretty good. Part of the BTOP grant will bring higher bandwidth to libraries that can currently only get DSL or other slower technologies. The CEN saves everyone money in a lot of ways.

Items that will increase bandwidth demand f libraries:
- Putting more resources on online.
- Special Netflix licensing for libraries, which is likely.
- Libraries are a key access point for government information. As the state begins to put more services online that will consume more bandwidth.

If there were something on your wish list — to the extent that the CBICC can— what advice would you have us give the legislature?
- The CBICC could encourage CEN and CEN expansion to broader municipal use. Legislature seems to feel CEN is funded and it's done. The highway analogy still works. You have to constantly re-pave roads or upgrade bridges. The same is true for networks and the legislature has to get this message. It would be great to establish a fund for that purpose.
  - Connect more buildings. CEN is connected to many municipalities, but not to all buildings. Understand there are ongoing costs and it's a good investment.
  - Support efforts to help us extend the network. BTOP is a start.
- Encourage the legislature to move to e-government in thoughtful and reasoned way. Go in that direction but not all at once in disorganized way.
- Support and encourage digital literacy across the spectrum from disenfranchised youth to non-digital native older adults.
- Support the State Library *(here Wiggin referenced Governor Malloy's now scrapped Plan B which would have cut several state agencies including the State Library.)*

With regard to workforce competitiveness – there's so much that can be learned online through courses etc. What are libraries doing?
Many libraries do this (Wiggin cited South Windsor as one example). One of the things is we need more funding for iCONN.org. There are a lot of courses out there. It is also important to have a staff to help someone use it. It's important to be able to back up these opportunities with other resources. The State Library has partnered with workforce development in the state. What can the legislature do? Understand that it's not just one agency, but many agencies that need to work together.

Wiggin also cited the English as a Second Language program in Danbury that has aided many of the Spanish speakers working in hotel industry there. The program has helped them build new skill sets and their employers are helping their workers advance. Connecticut has many immigrants in the state and many different levels of education across the general population. Libraries fill that bill with modest budgets and few people.

A council member cited an example of response time being poor on the network.
Wiggin said he was not aware of that but noted that the State Library is hoping to implement better monitoring of speed on the different connections. He said he is unsure where the bottleneck is because the state is supposedly buying all if access it needs. This could be a hardware issue and will require a conversation with DOIT.

Any cautions, information about the DOIT reorganization?

- It behooves all of us to watch what's happening. A CIO is to be named and that would be good. Commissioner DeFronzo should be brought into the conversation; he may not know the scope of the CEN and what it is.
- This is a time to rethink the management of the network. It is not mandated in legislation that DOIT run it, but that has occurred defacto.

There was discussion of e-rate. A council member mentioned the goal of getting municipalities on the state fiber network and the governance issues that need to be worked out. He noted that the CEN is a "big pipe" but lacks coordination.

Wiggin noted that the new Commissioner of Education is going to have to be challenged on that. Leadership will be key. The original vision was to have a lot more sharing. He cited New Canaan and the trust level that is given to students. There are rules but students are not filtered. It's a leadership issue in schools. Other issues: parochialism; students having more knowledge than teachers, union issues.

How are libraries responding to needs and approaching differently the technology issues in cities, suburbs, small towns? What are your observations?

Hartford has a large immigrant population and a large low-income population. There are excellent programs in those libraries, with internet access and training. There is a great deal of collaboration with schools. The libraries have mixed users on a daily basis with people of all socioeconomic levels. They're going to do a teen center based on the Chicago model with interactions between kids and technology like YouTube. City libraries tend to have to provide more public access computing. A lot of the kids do have cell phones and can use those for access as well.

Miller asked about the State Library Strategic Plan. Wiggin said he would get some portion of that to the BICC and noted that it is more based in visioning.