



Family
Online Safety
Institute

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015

Panel Summary: Opportunities for Broadening Access

Moderator: Charita Johnson, Mattiossie Group

Panelists: Steve Black, TechBoomers; Henry Claypool, Claypool Consulting; Nicolas Jimenez, Comcast; Rosa Mendoza, Hispanic Technology and Telecommunications Partnership; Joycelyn Tate, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation & Black Women's Roundtable

Overview: A look at the different sectors of our communities that have issues accessing technology, and how we can improve accessibility for these groups.

Charita Johnson from the Mattiossie Group led an insightful discussion on the barriers that limit certain populations from the availability of technology. The panel highlighted the issues that limit the demographic populations they provide for, and gave suggestions on what changes could be made in order to broaden access.

Joycelyn Tate explained that an issue for both Black women and girls is how to provide them with access for things like entrepreneurship and education, to grant them a way to balance work and life, and to get more girls involved. In response to the effect of programs that directly assist those minorities, she stated that there has been an increase in computer literacy in participants - it has helped older women see how relevant technology is and has given them a reason to want access. Tate also shared how daunting the gender pay gap is for older black women, and that by understanding how to use the technology they are able to start business endeavors through the skills they've acquired from accessing technology.

Nicolas Jimenez, who works on the Internet Essentials Program at Comcast, told the audience how the program helps families with school-aged children, as well as senior citizens and community college students, get connected to the Internet at low costs. He stated that they've seen three main barriers to getting people online: the price of service and hardware, the relevance these programs have in benefits for people to inspire them to want to learn, and the emphasis on how the internet can be relevant to their daily lives. Jimenez explained that the program works against these barriers by offering service at a discounted rate with free Wi-Fi, discounts on computers, and training through a network of community partners at no cost. In response to the difference between internet access on a smartphone and on a computer, he admitted apps are great, but maintained that access to the internet at home on a computer allows folks to really experience the power behind it, especially with assignments like research for school and work.

Rosa Mendoza from HTTP informed the panel that her non-profit ensures all Latinos have the ability to fully benefit from and contribute to our innovative society. In response to issues first-generation Latino Americans have with Internet access and services, she described the family dynamic in most Latino families where the parents are undocumented residents who speak very little English and their child is a U.S. citizen who speaks little Spanish. Mendoza explained that these parents are too busy providing for their family to have a conversation with their kids on what they need to do in school. She added that there's a difference between the parents and kids in the education they received and how the kids have the responsibility of translating materials for the

family. She later explained that because of this, Latino children who go online are often unsupervised, which exposes them to problems that their parents don't know how to help with. Mendoza stated that this is important for companies to know in order to understand that they must educate the entire Latino family - in both English and Spanish - in order for their program to be effective and make a bigger impact.

Steve Black, Founder and CEO of TechBoomers, explained how his company has been helping older adults and those with limited computer skills learn how to use websites and apps, and how they've shifted their aim to also help libraries and other organizations that offer tech training by offering them their free material to use. In response to how he foresees education access in making sure that it is being maintained as well as enhanced, he explained that one factor is cost. As the other panelists had suggested, he agreed that relevancy is another factor. However, Black clarified that there are two aspects of relevancy: motivation and awareness. He claimed it's a continued stream of awareness and motivation that gets older adults to try new and different types of apps. Lastly, Black mentioned educational support as another important factor for users to know which sites are safe, what they do, and how much they cost.

Henry Claypool of Claypool Consulting described how a main issue important to people with disabilities is accessibility, specifically people with sensory disabilities who have issues interacting with devices that run on vision or hearing. He explained how they seek a way to utilize data innovation to enhance the lives of these individuals to increase their quality of living and hopefully deliver this service to them in a more efficient manner. In response to what he perceived to be the immediate technological need and affordability need for people with disabilities, he explained the historic struggles of people with sensory disabilities that add a great deal of difficulty interfacing and interacting with technology - whether it be mobile or online. He described the shift for people with disabilities from having to buy assistive technology along with the services to companies and organization having those technologies built into their products. Claypool stated that these types of innovations have emerged because tech companies are putting an emphasis on making sure their products are accessible and, due to increased awareness, companies now look more closely at how they can make sure that the space is easy to navigate for people with sensory disabilities. On affordability, he explained how people with the most significant disabilities often rely on programs like social security and supplemental income, and that they really look at the hard choices in how to get their needs met.