DIGITAL NAVIGATORS TOOLKIT

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ABSTRACT: DIGITAL NAVIGATORS PROGRAM AT SALT LAKE CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The pandemic put a spotlight on the massive public need for trustworthy digital inclusion services and drew much needed attention to digital inequities. At the same time, the pandemic response shut down or severely reduced the ability of libraries and other community organizations to offer their existing digital inclusion programs and services.

In order to serve thousands of people who are unconnected, but need to get connected as quickly as possible, the Salt Lake City Public Library (SLCPL) partnered with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to bridge the Digital Divide in Salt Lake City through the launch of a Digital Navigators pilot project in the Fall of 2020. The goal of the program model was to provide one-to-one basic digital inclusion services — connectivity assistance, device assistance, basic digital skills support — over the phone.

These services were delivered by Digital Navigators who respond to calls for support from community members, who may reach out via a "hotline" or be referred by community partner organizations. They established relationships of trust, determined what clients needed to meet their personal connectivity goals (reliable phone access, affordable internet accounts, devices, general or application-specific skills), gauged their motivation to participate, presented options and formulated a plan with each client. They then worked individually with the client toward the accomplishment of their plan.

The project sought to apply this approach to engage and assist a minimum of 450 low-income and/or older Salt Lake City residents to meet their connectivity and digital adoption needs over a six month timeframe. The demand for Digital Navigator services exceeded expectations and met target goals halfway through the project. SLCPL and its community partners provided Digital Navigator services to 585 community members over the 10-month pilot period. This work was also shared and coordinated nationwide, through NDIA and ULC.

NDIA is working with other organizations to launch Digital Navigator models in communities throughout the United States. The Digital Navigator program with SLCPL served as a pilot project to gather findings and best practices to strengthen a replicable open source model for other public libraries and community-based organizations.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE
DIGITAL NAVIGATOR MODEL

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the massive public need for trustworthy digital inclusion services. Millions of Americans need support from digital inclusion programs to get connected with affordable home internet, find low-cost computing devices, and learn basic digital skills. This need is particularly acute for the most economically vulnerable residents. In 2020, National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) developed the Digital Navigator model, an adaptation of traditional in-person digital inclusion programming, providing one-to-one dedicated support via phone, in collaboration with an affiliate network of more than 600 digital inclusion practitioners in 44 states, the District of Columbia, and the US Virgin Islands.

The Digital Navigator program model furthers digital inclusion efforts to ensure that more individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, can access affordable broadband, devices, and opportunities for digital skills training needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.

Historically, most individuals have had to navigate home access to the internet, devices, and technical support on their own, which leaves many people unable to fully participate in our society. Reliance on group access at anchor institutions, such as public libraries, should not be residents' only options. They should, instead, supplement personal, at-home connections and device ownership, which provide added convenience, privacy, equity, and accessibility. During the COVID pandemic, in-person services and support became unsafe and unavailable options.

Digital Navigators address the whole digital inclusion process — home connectivity, devices, and digital skills — with community members through repeated interactions. These hands-on guides are familiar with digital equity resources and can be volunteers or cross-trained staff who work at trusted community-based organizations such as social service agencies, libraries, or healthcare organizations.

Trained Digital Navigators can assess a community member's needs and competently guide them toward resources that are suitable for their skill level, needs, and lifestyle. As of summer 2021, Digital Navigators had served thousands of neighbors in communities throughout the United States who are unconnected and need to get connected as quickly as possible. They have provided one-to-one basic digital inclusion services — connectivity assistance, device assistance, and basic digital skills support — over the phone.

Taking into account social distancing, a Digital Navigator can reliably point a community member to online resources suitable to their needs, such as

Digital Equity is 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.

Digital Inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This includes five elements:

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.

Digital Inclusion must evolve as technology advances. Digital Inclusion requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional, and structural barriers to access and use technology.

online classes or self-guided tutorials. Digital Navigators are familiar with resources that relate to digital equity, and they also help residents learn to access critical services online, including food support, housing, education, employment, childcare, government benefits, and more. They recommend resources and check back with the client to see if additional support is needed.

The model begins with asset mapping, continues with the development of processes customized to each site, and results in local communities with stronger digital inclusion resources.

Libraries are uniquely positioned to implement a Digital Navigator program because of their ubiquity, relevance, and long-term investment in bridging the digital divide through access to computers, internet, electronic resources, and digital skills. Many libraries already offer similar services, including "Book-a-Librarian" services to assist patrons with device troubleshooting and regularly provide digital literacy classes. They loan devices, such as laptops, digital media equipment, and Wi-Fi hotspots. They also provide technology "petting zoos" to help patrons become familiar with new technology devices, and they assist patrons with signing up for state and federal assistance programs. Libraries are also strategic community partners, engaging organizations to work collaboratively to enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Digital Navigators embody the support services that libraries already offer in the form of a staff member placed at a neighborhood branch or partner community-based organizations that provide social services. Critically, they provide ongoing one-to-one technology support, rather than one-time interactions. These continued interactions establish trust and provide a foundation for continuing education, which is a pillar of public library services.

Beyond their utility in their communities, public libraries are trusted anchor institutions whose position at the intersection of media, information, and technology makes them reliable guides for the people they work with. Digital Navigators often come from the community they serve, which makes them well positioned to understand and address the technology-related concerns of their fellow community members. A public library embodies the innate trust that is critical to the role of a Digital Navigator.

Digital Navigators are trusted guides who assist community members in internet adoption and the use of computing devices. Digital navigation services include ongoing assistance with affordable internet access, device acquisition, technical skills, and application support.
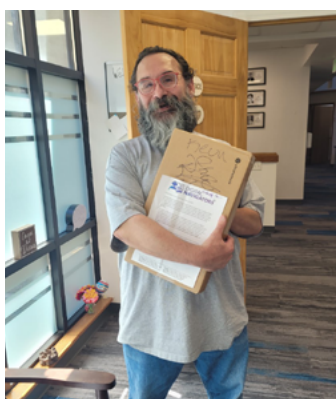
DETERMINING A FOCUS COMMUNITY

The SLCPL Digital Navigator project aimed to address the amplified need for emergency access to information communication technologies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, The City Library and other public computer labs in Salt Lake City closed indefinitely, and community members that lacked home internet or devices had nowhere to access these resources during a time when they were most needed. To better understand the community members that would most benefit from support for digital resources, SLCPL worked with NDIA to research the state of digital equity in Salt Lake City. The team looked at census data, state data, and local media to understand the rates of internet access, adoption, device access, and ownership in Salt Lake City and targeted neighborhoods most in need.

A survey made public in a report from the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs asked 93 professionals in human services, community-based organizations, and emergency outreach and preparedness serving marginalized and vulnerable Utahns: "What unique barriers do your clients and those you serve face in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?" Among 17 barriers named in response, the first and third most frequent were "Access to computers/technology" (75% of respondents) and "Access to internet services" (69% of respondents).

An April 10, 2020 article in the Salt Lake Tribune identified ZIP code 84116, along with 84104 just to its south, as among the hardest-hit areas of Salt Lake County. Glendale, Poplar Grove, and Rose Park include most of the households in 84116. The residents of these three neighborhoods experienced digital divides before the pandemic — especially lower-income and/or elderly residents. In these neighborhoods, 13% of households are below poverty level, 14% of households receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, and 6% of individuals between 20 to 64 years of age were unemployed prior to the pandemic. Then COVID-19 turned that problem into a crisis, with the West Side emerging as one of Salt Lake City's most intense COVID-19 hotspots.

Census data supports the need for digital inclusion actions in these three neighborhoods. The most recent Census data for the three neighborhoods showed a total of 14,451 households. Of these, 3,131 households (22%) had no home broadband subscriptions of any kind, and another 1,927 (13%) had home internet access only through mobile data plans. Nearly 39% of all households lacked cable, DSL, or fiber internet connections. More than

COMMUNITY DATA

8,716 individuals in Rose Park, Poplar Grove, and Glendale lived in households with a computer of some kind but no broadband connection, or with no computer. Of these unconnected individuals:

- 1,265 were aged 65 years or older (33% of all 65+ residents were in this group)

- 4,101 were Hispanic

- 412 were Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Out of 3,131 households with no home broadband of any kind, 1,715 (55%) had annual incomes below $35,000.

4,000 households had neither a desktop or laptop computer, and almost 1,200 did not own a computing device of any kind, including a smartphone.

These three neighborhoods have a strong culture of community support, and word of mouth is a primary method of communication. There are also many trusted and heavily utilized community-based organizations serving residents in these areas. Cooking and art are a large part of everyday life, and most residents are familiar with smartphones and apps. There are many bilingual and multilingual individuals and a high need for support in Spanish.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Library and their community partners saw an urgent need to reach out to the thousands of unconnected residents — many of whom were among the most isolated and vulnerable during the pandemic — with immediate digital inclusion solutions. Community partners play an essential role in reaching the project's focus communities. For the Digital Navigator project, SLCPL collaborated with three essential community organizations who each had one full-time Digital Navigator, many of whom were bilingual in English and Spanish.

The Library determined the following qualifiers for community-based organizations to form a mutually beneficial partnership with on this project: a trusted organization with deep roots in these three neighborhoods, currently offering bilingual or multilingual programs with a lens on digital equity, capacity to support a full-time digital navigator position, and a commitment to work remotely or in-person with community members during the pandemic. The three community-based organizations that partnered with the library were University Neighborhood Partners, Catholic Community Services, and Suazo Business Center.

University Neighborhood Partners
UNP aims to advance the priorities of west-side families in the areas of housing, health and wellness, employment, language acquisition, and digital equity. The UNP Hartland Partnership Center is based on a holistic model of family support, enhancing community capacity, resident leadership, and access to resources for people right where they live. The center has evolved over time into a home for over 30 partnerships addressing housing stability, employment pathways, healthcare, citizenship and language acquisition, and education from pre-K through adults.

Catholic Community Services of Utah
Since 1945, CCS of Utah has been empowering people in need along the Wasatch Front to reach self-sufficiency. Each year, CCS resettles hundreds of refugees in Utah and surrounds them with programs that help them become stable, healthy, and happy. CCS case managers conduct a needs assessment and connect clients with services that will help make their transition successful. Services include counseling, community orientation, an explanation of benefits, healthcare referrals, English language courses, and job development.

Suazo Business Center
Incorporated in 2002, SBC is a non-profit business and economic resource center committed to the development and empowerment of Latino/Hispanic and other underserved communities. They assist minority entrepreneurs in succeeding and building wealth. SBC has assisted in the education, growth, and development of well over 9,600 clients. Since its inception, SBC has offered instructional training in Spanish with occasional courses offered in English. Suazo Business Center training focuses on financial literacy, computer literacy, and business courses.

HIRING A DIGITAL NAVIGATOR

In the Spring of 2020, NDIA convened a working group of digital literacy practitioners, researchers, and advocates that began meeting regularly to develop the programmatic scope of the Digital Navigator model. Resources, best practices, and the collective knowledge of this group was developed into several free, open, and reusable documents for organizations to replicate the Digital Navigator model for their own communities. The Digital Navigator baseline job description is a template that the working group developed collaboratively and is now publicly available on the NDIA Digital Navigator webpage.

The job description serves as the touchpoint for individuals and organizations to shape their understanding of who and what a Digital Navigator is and the required key competencies. Mapping the Digital Navigator's job overview and their daily responsibilities to the "three legs of the digital inclusion stool" — affordable broadband, affordable devices, and digital literacy training — the job description provides a field-tested framework for Digital Navigator services, while explicitly stating that interactions with community members will occur primarily over the phone, emphasizing the program's remote service delivery model.

The description's list of critical skills and aptitudes for a Digital Navigator reflect the collective expertise and background of the working group, which included a wide-variety of practitioners with backgrounds in social service, education, and public libraries. Given the rich cultural tableau of community members who contact a Digital Navigator with technology issues, the aptitudes included in the job description prioritize empathy, cultural sensitivity, and strong interpersonal skills since repeated interactions are expected and the development of a trusted relationship between the Digital Navigator and the client is critical.

A Digital Navigator needs a working comfort and familiarity with conducting internet research on behalf of a community member, but that is secondary to the service-oriented skill set necessary to working with community members at their various comfort levels. The ethos of Digital Navigators is couched more in social service than technical service, though it certainly blends both.

SLCPL is a key member of NDIA's Digital Navigator Working Group, and therefore adapted the baseline job description to suit the needs for this particular demonstration project. Beyond adding library-specific language such as "patron" throughout the job description, project management included Spanish language/non-English skills to reflect the communities that the project intended to serve and also the cultural diversity of Salt Lake City.

The City Library also created a further variation of the job description for its three community partners, UNP, CCS, and Suazo Business Center. Given the communities that each of these organizations serve, there was added emphasis on cultural aptitude and multilingual skills in the adapted job description. The flexibility of the baseline job description and its various applications represents the intention of replicability of the Digital Navigator model that has guided this project.

TRAINING

The training for Digital Navigators was co-delivered by SLCPL and NDIA project management teams over the course of four, one-hour online training sessions over Zoom video conferencing for the Digital Navigator cohort as well as their supervisors. Digital Navigator training covered four primary topics—an Introduction to Digital Inclusion and Equity, Understanding Learner Needs, Data Collection and Analysis, and Resource and Skill-Sharing—with scheduled break-out sessions to encourage discussion and interactivity.

The training opened with a round of introductions between the participating organizations and Digital Navigators followed by an introduction and discussion around the field of digital inclusion, and how and why the Digital Navigator program came to be. It was important for participants to have a grounding framework for this work and the role it plays in the larger mission of their respective organizations. So, the training began in earnest by defining foundational terms such as Digital Equity and Digital Inclusion, followed by break-out sessions facilitated by project leadership to reorient participants to recognize digital inclusion in their daily lives and among their fellow community members. **The goal was to define Digital Navigators as members of their own community — they are the people best-suited to address the needs of their communities because they know their communities best and have a foundational level of trust, since their organization is housed in the neighborhoods serviced by the program.**

The second primary topic of the training, Understanding Learner Needs, was the most interactive component of the training. After orienting participants as members of their community with the recognition of their technology needs and gaps, the training continued into emphasizing the cultural aptitude and social services backbone of the program. A group discussion on the technology needs of immediate social circles as things went virtual in COVID-19 grounded digital inclusion as a topic that affects all community members, even those that consider themselves technologically savvy.

A breakout room session then followed that was designed for participants to address hypothetical but common inquiries, mapped to the "three legs of the digital inclusion stool." Taking a note from user experience theory, the breakout room sessions featured different personas, each with a question relating to either home broadband connectivity, device acquisition, or digital skilling. Given the strong multilingual component of the program, this trait was explicitly stated for each persona. Participants were then tasked to talk among themselves to discuss how they would address each community member's technology need — what they could help the learner with immediately, and which digital inclusion resources they could direct the learner to, if necessary. Breakout rooms then reconvened for a facilitated share-out of their discussions.

Following the breakout room exercise, the training continued into formalizing interactions with community members by recording the exchange in a series of four intake forms. The facilitators described how the intake forms were developed, and the methodology of why Digital Navigators ask and complete these forms on behalf of the community members. The workflow with forms is: Intake Form to record basic information and technology needs, Skills Assessment Form to learn about community member confidence with

navigating the internet with an emphasis on privacy and security, Exit Survey to record completion of the interaction, and the Follow-up Survey to be completed after one month passed from the initial conversation to measure any growth in confidence in navigating the internet.

The training continued with a demonstration of the Internet as Infrastructure tool (I3), which is a free website that visualizes data from the American Community Survey on internet adoption and device ownership, by demographic, within any selected municipality. The purpose of this demonstration was two-fold — to show the visual impact of the digital divide in Salt Lake City and also to serve as a skill share learning opportunity for participants to use the tool themselves for future use and reference.

The training closed with a resource-sharing module. By introducing participants to additional learning resources, the facilitator's goal was to encourage Digital Navigators to be active members of the larger digital inclusion community. The trainer shared free, open curriculum resources from established programs like Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment and Goodwill's GCF Learn Free, which help community members to improve their digital literacy and engagement.

The training also included a day to review organizational onboarding. This day included setting communication standards, reporting deadlines, an orientation to the project management software, and a meeting schedule for regular touch points and communication.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

For a project of this size, it's important to have strong coordination with the participating organizations and their Digital Navigators and to use a flexible management style. The approach recommended below provides the user an organized structure to work from, outlines an overview of the big picture, and allows the user to keep track of goals and tasks. It will also make it easier to maintain the expenses for a large budget, as well as save all of the important files and digital activity in one work space for participants to have access to and for broader oversight and reporting needs.

WHERE TO START

Determine organizational responsibility. This will help with the flow of responsibilities and information between multiple organizations.

Determine the project completion timeline and work-flow. Having this information planned out in advance will help when building out the Project Management software. It's recommended to be flexible with changes to your workflow.

Plan out the client flow. *(Ex. 1 & 2 Digital Navigator Client Flow, Ex. 3 Digital Navigator Service Walk-through)* Drafting this process will alleviate troubleshooting once direct service begins. Here are a few questions to contemplate to assist you in setting up the program management workflows:

1. How will a client gain access to the program?
2. What does the whole process look like from a client's point of view?
3. What barriers might get in the way of helping people and how can you reduce barriers to these services?
4. What criteria will determine the type of help a person might receive? For example, we decided that basic technology help would be referred to the SLCPL tech access and phone teams, and more complex help that required over 30 minutes of support would be referred to a trained Digital Navigator.

Create a payment/reimbursement process and proce-dure. *(Sample in the appendix)*: It's much easier to keep track of a budget if this process is already planned out. Details to highlight:

- Invoice submission schedule. When does an invoice need to be submitted and when can one expect payment? Check with your finance department for best practices.
- Schedule and track monthly reminders.
- Keep relevant files (e.g. W9s, contracts) in a safe and accessible place. You may need to refer to them periodically.
- Procedures may vary between types of invoicing, (e.g. partner invoices, payroll, general ledgers, grant reimbursements).

SOFTWARE NEEDS

When selecting project management software, the following features are recommended. After reviewing many platforms, we selected Monday.com, which provided everything we needed in one place and was one of the few project management platforms that included budget management capabilities. In summary, it's important to choose the right software that meets your organization's needs for your project.

- Project Management
- Customer Relationship Management
- Budget Tracking
- Data Collection & Analysis
- Suggested Features:
  - Automations
  - Software Integrations
  - File Storage & File Share

See Digital Navigator Project Management Supplement for a more detailed structural breakdown.

MARKETING

The marketing campaign for this project was centered around the three focus neighborhoods in Salt Lake City. All of the project materials were bilingual and supported in-person communication and information sharing.

Hard copy materials. Marketing has shifted to online spaces over the past several years. It can be challenging to raise awareness of services available to people that do not have access to technology or who chose not to participate in digital spaces. We also know that many of the individuals in our focus audience speak Spanish and outreach materials needed to be bilingual.

To reach individuals using non-digital methods, we created:

- Yard signs to be displayed at our branches and community-based organizations;
- Bookmarks to be distributed via Holds-To-Go while locations were closed; and
- Door hangers and a foot campaign to reach individual households in our focus audience communities.

Social media. Many individuals in our focus audience regularly use Facebook and other social media on their smartphones. We regularly promoted the Digital Navigator program through sponsored ads as well as the library's social media accounts.

Word of Mouth. Individuals in our focus audiences have strong social networks, and news about the Digital Navigator program spread rapidly by word of mouth.

- CBOs included foodbanks, counseling services, school districts, and refugee service providers.
- Community members learned about the program through conversations on public transportation, while receiving medical treatments and other gathering spaces.

Examples of the marketing materials: a Bookmark (left) and a Yard Sign (right). These materials were also distributed in Spanish

MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT

Success for the project was measured by supporting a minimum of 450 individuals in meeting their personal connectivity and digital adoption goals. This was measured with surveys the participants completed while working with their Digital Navigator.

Was the participant able to:

- Get a home internet connection, if needed?
- Carry out schoolwork online?
- Submit unemployment compensation reports?
- Schedule and complete an online healthcare appointment?
- Bank online?
- Attend a live streamed church service?

SURVEY TOOLS

With the collective knowledge and expertise of NDIA's Digital Navigator Working Group, program management developed four survey tools designed to collect meaningful data about community members, their technology needs, and any growth in digital literacy as a result of their participation in the program. The working group, which comprised researchers from organizations such as National Skills Coalition and practitioners representing municipalities and library systems vetted the development of these survey tools over the course of several weeks. Salt Lake City Public Library adjusted the survey tools for language unique to the project, while NDIA shared template versions of the surveys to its website to encourage reproducibility among others in the community.

The survey tools are designed to map the reference interview[1], which is a phrase describing the conversation between a librarian and a patron who asks for guidance towards resources. A classic analog example of a reference interview is a patron asking if the library carries a certain book, but they are vague on the details. Maybe the book cover was red? The author's last name began with a J, the book had talking animals and warrior mice? The librarian's role in this case is to ask a series of questions, without judgment, to guide the patron

towards the correct book. This conversation requires a combination of patience, empathy, and research skills on the part of the librarian. They are not walking tomes of knowledge but rather deft instructors with a working subject knowledge of available resources. The reference interview subject translates from the analog to the digital whenever a Digital Navigator works with a community member. Rather than guiding towards a particular book, the Digital Navigator guides learners towards appropriate resources based on their understanding of the learner's comfort and familiarity with technology. Therefore, the four survey tools — intake, skills assessment, exit, and follow-up surveys — map to the traditional reference interview conversation. They act as data collection points, but also scripts to guide Digital Navigators, who may not be traditionally trained librarians, throughout the process of working with their learners.

INTAKE FORM

The intake form is the first data collection point and script for a Digital Navigator to follow when they first interact with a community member. It asks general questions beginning with fields for name and best point of contact. The survey continues with questions asking what type of device (if any) the learner is using, followed by a field for the Digital Navigator to record

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1   Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers, American Library Association,
https://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesbehavioral

what type of technology issue they have. We designed this question to map to the "three legs" of the digital inclusion stool — internet connectivity, devices, and digital skills — to guide measurement by types of technology inquiries that participants had over the course of the program. For this project, program management at Salt Lake City Public Library added a question about zip code to provide geographic information to the program.

The Digital Navigator Working Group's input was critical in the creation of this form, particularly in regard to preserving patron privacy and dictating guidelines for Digital Navigators to describe why they're asking these questions at their first contact with the community member.

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

The skills assessment survey is a series of questions on the Likert scale (i.e. strongly disagree to strongly agree) that are intended for the Digital Navigator to grasp an understanding of their learner's comfort and confidence with technology. Once again, the collective expertise of the working group was critical in developing this survey. Rather than ask outright, "How confident are you with a computer?," which would yield oversimplified results, the skills assessment asks several questions about common types of activities on the internet. The survey asks questions like frequency of checking email, searching for jobs online, privacy and security concerns, and more.

The purpose, then, is to place digital tasks into different categories and to assist the Digital Navigator in learning about the patron's comfort level with digital skills, while asking unobtrusive, non-judgmental questions. This technique maps to the proper cadence of a traditional reference interview. The goal is not to make the learner feel embarrassed of their knowledge gaps, but rather to empower them for taking active steps in improving their skills.

EXIT SURVEY

The exit survey is a form for the Digital Navigator to complete upon finishing the interaction with the community member. By far the briefest form, the exit survey simply records the interaction as being successful or not. "Success" is measured by whether or not the Digital Navigator was able to satisfy the stated technology needs of the learner. For instance, if a community member asks how to find affordable home Internet options — a connectivity check from the intake form — was the Digital Navigator able to pull a list of available Internet Service Providers in the community member's zip code and their respective costs? If so, this would be recorded as a successful interaction. An unsuccessful interaction would warrant a scheduled follow-up call.

This survey also records information based on the estimated length of the interaction, which has proven to be a useful datapoint as program management grasps the scope and potential limits of the Digital Navigator program.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

The follow-up survey is the longitudinal component of the data collection for Digital Navigators. Digital Navigators intends to measure any growth in digital skills as a result of program participation. As a matter of measurement, the follow-up survey asks many of the same activity-based questions found in the skills assessment survey. It was especially important for program management to include online privacy and security as an item to measure over time.

DATA ANALYSIS

Upon completion of direct service in mid-July 2021, the Salt Lake City Digital Navigator program reached a total of 585 individuals over the course of its 10-month program[2], far surpassing the initial goal of reaching 450 people. Bearing in mind that each Digital Navigator reported repeated interactions with many of their clients, this dramatic overshoot of the initial program goal represents successful program implementation. This is largely due to the City Library's intentional outreach to specific neighborhoods most affected by the pandemic, and its partnership with community-based organizations serving those neighborhoods. Additional indicators of program success are represented by the frequency of interactions in target neighborhoods, and participant's accomplishments of their digital literacy goals.

Program leadership identified two zip codes in the city to focus its efforts for this pilot project, 84116 and 84104. The City Library selected library branches in those neighborhoods, and partner organizations that serve those neighborhoods. As of program completion, the project recorded interactions from 54 zip codes across Salt Lake City (including a handful of calls from Orem and Colorado zip codes). Significantly, one-third (33.76%) of all Digital Navigator interactions came from just the two target zip codes of 84116 and 84104. Further, when asked how they heard about the program, 53.29% of respondents said that they heard of the program via word of mouth from their friends or family, while 27.46% of these respondents said that they heard of the program from a worker at one of the library branches or partner organizations. These figures demonstrate successful implementation of direct outreach to intended neighborhoods across the city.

Another measure of success for this program was addressing home connectivity for communities across Salt Lake City. Data from the Intake Form reveals that 9.37% of respondents were seeking guidance related to internet connectivity in their home. Of these respondents, the Exit Survey reveals that Digital Navigators were able to address their home connectivity issues, whether it was a problem connecting to Wi-Fi, or, in some cases, finding an appropriate provider. From data gathered in the Exit Survey, Digital Navigators were able to connect 16.92% of respondents with either Comcast Internet Essentials, or Lifeline.

Other measures of success were the impact of the program on participant's digital skills, their confidence and understanding of using the internet, and whether or not they were able to accomplish their digital literacy goals as defined in the initial Skills Assessment. These questions were asked again in the Follow-Up Survey, which was conducted by Digital Navigators about one

DIGITAL LITERACY

HOME CONNECTIVITY

I NEED A COMPUTER

month after initial Intake. As of program completion, 86.67% of respondents to the Follow-Up Survey reported that they were able to accomplish their digital literacy goals, 80% of respondents said that they "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to a question asking if they feel confident using the internet, and 84.44% of respondents reported "Yes" to a question that asked if they know how to keep their information safe and secure online.

Compared with data collected from the initial contact in the Skills Assessment form, which asks these same questions, 77.88% of respondents said that they "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to a question asking if they feel confident using the Internet, and 75.35% of respondents reported "Yes" to a question that asked if they know how to keep their information safe and secure online.

These jumps in measured data demonstrate a relationship between program participation and community member self-assessment of their confidence and understanding of navigating online. By providing not only access but ownership over one's Internet experience, along with steady guidance from a dedicated Digital Navigator, this program has yielded positive impacts on the lives of the communities that it set out to serve.

On the topic of dedicated human touch of this program, another point of interest is the length of interactions that Digital Navigators recorded in the Exit Survey form. Upon program completion, 75.12% of interactions were recorded as taking 15 minutes or longer. Significantly, over half (51.24%) of interactions were recorded as "More than 30 minutes." What this data indicates is that community members are in need of longer consultations with their Digital Navigator as opposed to short one-off interactions. **This datapoint pins down the need for a Digital Navigator or similar program in communities, because the framing, outreach, and execution of this program has emphasized the importance of patience and empathy on behalf of the Digital Navigator. From the onset, program leadership has emphasized that while technical expertise is important, it is secondary to soft-touch, compassionate communication skills.**

INTERACTION LENGTH

MINUTES	PERCENTAGE
0-15	8.46%
6-15	15.42%
16-30	23.88%
30+	51.24%

SALT LAKE CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM PRIORITIES

The City Library wanted to gain a better understanding of how we can use technology and access to digital devices and skills as part of the strategic roadmap and expand digital equity in our community. To do this, the library analyzed data from the Digital Skills Assessment form participants filled out while working with their Digital Navigators. Participants were asked to state a digital literacy goal they would like to achieve with their Digital Navigator. The library received 296 responses to this question. The responses were coded to the Library Strategic Framework.

In 2017, a group of Salt Lake City Public Library leadership and staff conducted a series of community engagement sessions and focus groups with a diverse cross section of community leaders, community organizations, and individuals. The purpose of the work was to develop a Strategic Framework to establish guiding priorities and a service roadmap. Incorporating the results of five workshops and employing service design techniques, the group generated the Salt Lake City Public Library Strategic Framework.

Within this Framework, The City Library has chosen six Strategic Areas of Focus to provide a lens through which to view the design and delivery of existing and future programs of the Library and organizational partners. The Strategic Areas of Focus will help the Library breathe life into our mission and values by operationalizing them. The six Strategic Areas of Focus are Arts & Creativity, Civic Engagement, Critical Literacies, Economic Success, Healthy Together, and Inclusion & Belonging.

CRITICAL LITERACIES

Focuses on the critical role The City Library plays in fostering literacies as the basis of an individual's ability to participate fully in a free society.

Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. 135 responses mentioned critical literacy as all or part of their digital literacy goal. The responses varied from foundational computer skills to access to an appropriate device.

Lifelong learning is a key outcome of Critical Literacies. 98 respondents included a component of Lifelong Learning as all or part of their stated digital literacy goal.

ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Focuses on assisting individuals to meet their economic, financial, and career goals. Also includes assisting the Salt Lake City business community to achieve success.
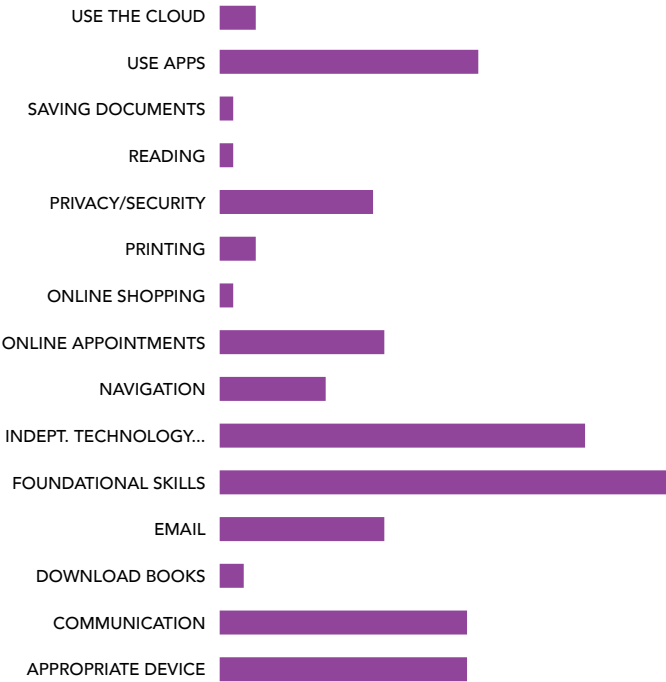
Public libraries build a community's capacity for economic activity and resiliency. Public libraries are critical partners for local economic development initiatives that focus on people and quality of life. 107 included Economic Success as all or part of their stated digital literacy goal.

HEALTHY TOGETHER

Focuses on supporting pathways to a healthy community (specifically physical, mental, and emotional health) and facilitating solutions to our city's health concerns.

The City Library will embrace its role in fostering health and wellness as a foundation to learning, full participation in society, and quality of life. 43 respondents mentioned components of Healthy Together as all or part of their stated digital literacy goal. In addition, 21 individuals specifically identified social connectedness as all or part of their stated digital literacy goal.
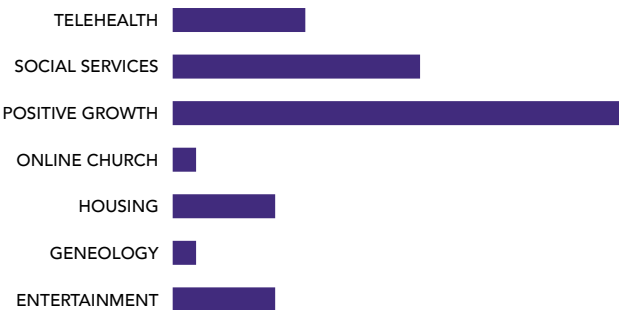
CRITICAL LITERACIES

USE THE CLOUD	
USE APPS	
SAVING DOCUMENTS	
READING	
PRIVACY/SECURITY	
PRINTING	
ONLINE SHOPPING	
ONLINE APPOINTMENTS	
NAVIGATION	
INDEPT. TECHNOLOGY...	
FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS	
EMAIL	
DOWNLOAD BOOKS	
COMMUNICATION	
APPROPRIATE DEVICE	

LIFELONG LEARNING

ONLINE TRAINING	
LANGUAGE LEARNING	
PARENT-TEACHER CONF.	
GED/EDUCATION	

ECONOMIC SUCCESS

WORK SKILLS	
WORK FROM HOME	
FINANCES	
ENTREPRENEUR	
CAREER SERVICES	

HEALTHY TOGETHER

TELEHEALTH	
SOCIAL SERVICES	
POSITIVE GROWTH	
ONLINE CHURCH	
HOUSING	
GENEOLOGY	
ENTERTAINMENT	

IMPACT FROM DIGITAL NAVIGATOR SERVICES

Interviews with a handful of program participants further demonstrate the impact of Digital Navigators on communities. Nathan Manuel, a community organizer, was using his smartphone as his main device. He heard about the Digital Navigator program from a worker at the Main branch of the City Library, and then connected with Amanda Perry, the Digital Navigator at the library's Marmalade Branch. He hadn't had a laptop since 2008, and Amanda helped him get set up with his own device, a Google Chromebook.

"I sat down with (Amanda) for about an hour where she showed me about what I can do with Chromebooks," Manuel said. "The biggest thing was getting Google Drive on my phone connected to Google Drive on the Chromebook. I'm a community organizer and this is so much more convenient."

Manuel said that being reliant on his phone for so many years made him work slower, and he'd felt disorganized. He said that he and Amanda stay in touch via text and the occasional phone call.

"(Having a Chromebook) is benefiting me and making me happier. It's definitely been a huge, positive thing in my life," Manuel said. Now with a device of his own, he's excited to help his neighbors access the online resources they need. "Digital Navigators benefit everybody, but especially this neighborhood. A lot of us here don't have the privilege to buy a laptop," Manuel said.

"I want to send a lot of gratitude. In a way, I think it was meant to find me."

From her perspective, Amanda Perry joined the program as an Associate Librarian with The City Library, so she already had the experience and understanding of Digital Navigators and the impact it has on communities. A program partner on this project, Urban Libraries Council, *interviewed several of the Digital Navigators* to get insight on their unique viewpoints on the project.

"Being involved in this project has affirmed and personalized the digital needs of our communities. I was aware of the need for services before simply by observing it in-person, but now I have a story attached to each individual with whom I speak," Perry said. "Being able to provide devices and the internet and hear about the impact it is making to people's lives is remarkable, and it feels like we're giving people a needed helping hand."

Perry notes the unique impression that each individual leaves on her, a result of the dedicated, longer interactions that the Digital Navigator program affords. "I can tell that they are surprised at the prospect that someone is reaching out and willing to help them get resources they've desperately needed," Perry said.

"One of the very first individuals I helped was living without internet or a device and couldn't afford to buy one, and when he received both a Chromebook and a library hotspot he told me that, 'You'll never know how much I appreciate this. You have opened up the world to me.'"

"Being involved in this project has affirmed and personalized the digital needs of our communities. I was aware of the need for services before simply by observing it in-person, but now I have a story attached to each individual with whom I speak."

Amanda Perry, Digital Navigator

LESSONS LEARNED

ONGOING SUPPORT AND RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

Digital Navigators serve as a type of technology case-worker to help people find solutions to their internet and technology needs. Many people struggle to find adequate resources to keep up with life demands and are often not aware of how learning digital literacy skills to complete online activities can make their life easier. Digital Navigators serve as trusted guides to their community with people reaching out from a vulnerable place for help and will come back with additional inquiries if they feel supported. When recruiting Digital Navigators, it's important to look for people who have strong relationship skills, can communicate with empathy and really listen to identify solutions to problems being presented that aren't being clearly expressed by the community member.

BLOCKING TIME FOR APPOINTMENTS

With the data showing that 75.12% of Digital Navigator interactions take 15 minutes or more, there is evidence that learners in the community are in need of direct, sustained, and repeated one-to-one interactions with their Digital Navigator. Before the pandemic, a reference librarian or technical library worker may be able to assist a higher volume of community members through shorter interactions; this program presented an opportunity to block time for longer appointments. Participant feedback gathered from interviews, and outcomes from survey results reveal that community members are more confident in their understanding of their devices and internet browsing after longer interactions with their Digital Navigator as opposed to one-off consultations.

DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS REQUIRED FOR USING A SMARTPHONE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE NEEDED WHEN USING A LAPTOP OR DESKTOP COMPUTER

Even if people have access to a Smartphone and use it regularly, they often have fragmented knowledge and digital literacy skills and are unable to navigate the internet and complete tasks on a computer. People still need help learning key digital literacy skills for making the most out of digital resources. Common personal goals of community members seeking support from Digital Navigators include seeking employment, getting comfortable with online banking, accessing online information regarding employment, engaging in online schooling, and navigating government benefit websites.

REMOTE SERVICES REACH INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT ABLE TO ACCESS IN-PERSON SERVICES

Consider continuing a form of remote services even after in-person library services resume. Some of the same challenges faced by in-person library patrons are still factors that need to be addressed when implementing the Digital Navigator model. These challenges may include difficulty with accessing transportation to get to the library, non-traditional work schedules that do not sync with library branch hours, and hesitancy in asking for help in person.

THERE IS A HIGH NEED FOR DEVICES AND AFFORDABLE HOME BROADBAND SERVICE

Most people in our focus communities need computer devices that meet their personal needs — 76.25% of individuals requested a device on their intake form. We saw a rise in people requesting support for in-home broadband after our door hanger campaign in our focus communities.

"This is not the moment to make people justify getting help, but to simply help them."
Javier de Juan Prado, Digital Navigator

THERE WAS EXPANDED AWARENESS OF LIBRARY SERVICES AND LIBRARY CARD SIGN-UPS WHEN COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Many of the community-based organizations we reached out to through this program were unaware of the myriad services offered by the library. In turn, these organizations educated their clients about the resources available to them with a library card, and even brought their clients in to make sure they were all set to get a card and access resources. This type of in-person inter-action, a warm handoff, ensures community members are fully supported in accessing library services.

GET OUT IN THE COMMUNITY!

The best way to let people know about services available to them is to talk with them in person. Often, this means leaving our buildings and canvassing, participating in community events, and partnering with organizations outside of the library. Krista Nabaum provided the following story about participating in a door hanger campaign:

While out working the Digital Navigator campaign, Mandy Cheang and I met a retired couple on their porch in the Rose Park neighborhood. While we were talking to them about the library's resources and tech help options, they asked if we knew anything about phones. He had a new smartphone but was unable to use the voicemail since he didn't have any idea how to set it up. He said that he had gone to the Cricket store several times and it was either closed or he wasn't able to get the help he needed. We helped him record a voicemail message, set up a password, and clean up the apps on his phone. After we practiced how to access his voicemail, he was so excited that he could finally receive voicemails and more importantly use his phone on his own. They were incredibly grateful for our help — so much so that they insisted on giving us ice cold Dr. Peppers! They were calling us their angels and couldn't believe that we had just showed up on their porch and were able to help them. It felt pretty amazing to go out into our community and connect in a way that made such an immediate difference to this couple. Plus, I'm not going to lie, it feels pretty awesome to be considered a "Library Angel."

APPENDIX/ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Program Management:

Digital Navigator Project Management Supplement
Salt Lake City Public Library Digital Navigator Client Flow
Salt Lake City Public Library Digital Navigator Service Walkthrough

Digital Navigator Job Descriptions:

Job Description

Salt Lake City Public Library Digital Navigator Job Description

Training Materials:

Training Outline

Day One Training Slideshow

Day Two Training Slideshow

Digital Inclusion Resource Document

Forms for Digital Navigator Services:

Intake Form   *Skills Assessment*

Exit Survey   *Follow-Up Survey*

Other Resources:

Video: *The City Library's Digital Navigator Program*

ULC Webinars: *Connecting Communities with Teleservices: Learning from the Digital Navigators* and *Adopting a People-First Approach to Digital Access and Equity*

Urban Libraries Council's Digital Navigators profiles

NDIA Digital Navigator webpage