

98013

**EBV Online
Formal Project Evaluation
NTIA Grant Number 17-60-98013**

Introduction: The purpose of the evaluation was to document the impact that WebTV was having in the lives of participants. By having access to technology, it was assumed that participants might use the WebTVs not only to impact health-related behaviors but also experience changes in their lives that relate to their attitudes towards technology, perceptions of crime in the community, sense of empowerment and sense of community. In addition, the evaluation was intended to document the implementation of the EBVO initiative. Specifically, how often were WebTVs used, for what purpose, and to search for what kinds of topics? To document the impact of WebTV both process measures as well as intermediate outcomes were collected. First, we analyzed process measures, then, looked at intermediate outcomes.

Project Evaluation

Process Evaluation: The purpose of process evaluation was to document the implementation of the WebTV initiative. Specifically, we documented the following evaluation questions:

- How many Citizen Leaders received training in using WebTV?
- How often did Citizen Leaders use their WebTVs?
- What did Citizen Leaders actually do with WebTVs?
- What topics were searched?
- How many success stories were documented and of what type?
- What types of emails were exchanged among members?

Research Design: To collect process information qualitative research methods were used including a phone interview once a month with the Citizen Leaders and a total of three focus groups during the duration of the project. In addition, the researchers tracked web stories during the monthly Every Block a Village meetings. These research methods allowed for gathering information about the experiences of Citizen Leaders with the new piece of technology.

Procedures and Samples: A purposive sampling procedure was used, based on the need for certain leadership characteristics and community relations that identified participants as appropriate for training. Each participant, or Citizen Leader (CL) who was selected to participate in the EBVO was either self-selected and/or selected by the staff of Westside Health Authority (WHA) because they were seen as leaders in the community who had the ability to connect with other residents in their area. Many Citizen leaders were already participating in various projects through Every Block a Village (EBV), a grass roots community-organizing group, prior to the addition of the Online component. Other potential leaders were selected based on active participation in the community, particularly on their neighborhood blocks. All Citizen Leaders were African American and lived in the Austin community for an average of 16 years. Participants were 76%

female and 24% male. Seventy-six percent were between the ages of 30 and 64 years old; 12% were over 65; and 12% were between 18 and 29 years old. Ninety-five percent had completed high school, and many had received at least some college education (74%). Seventy-four percent indicated that they had worked for pay in the past 12 months and 90% were involved in volunteer activities in their community.

After the initial WebTV training was conducted with each Citizen Leader, follow-up phone calls were conducted every two-to-three weeks initially, and then less frequently as use of WebTV became a less novel part of the CL's daily activities. During the follow-up phone calls, CLs were asked how often they used WebTV, the types of information they searched for and for whom they searched information. They were also invited to share stories of their experiences with WebTV. Citizen Leaders were invited to participate in three focus groups throughout the duration of the project. To supplement information gathered directly from the CLs, emails that were sent to the email distribution list were tracked by documenting and coding a sample of the types of information the CLs were communicating to one another and to the different partners. Two community members trained as interviewers, both African American females who had been trained in survey research and had previous experience with similar projects, and two evaluation researchers conducted all assessments and follow-up interviews with the CLs. Before any assessment was conducted, CLs were asked to initial a consent statement, which was kept separate from the assessment instrument.

Measures and Data Collection: The information collected on the phone interviews was content analyzed and classified according to a coding system created using pilot results. In addition, Citizen Leaders were asked to share successful attempts at obtaining the desired information and what actions resulted from those efforts. Web stories were then defined as successfully obtaining information that was used for oneself, shared with a family member, friend, or neighbor, or information that resulted in a specific action or community activity to address a social/community concern.

Results

A total of 42 Citizen Leaders received training on how to use WebTV, troubleshooting and individual assistance as needed. For the most part, Citizen Leaders used the WebTV on average three times a week. Although over 60 people were trained in the use of WebTV, including staff from public sites, we collected formal assessments only with the Citizen leaders and a group of residents.

Analysis of Web Stories

Over the three years of the project, a total of 450 stories were documented. Many of which illustrate collective and individual efforts to take actions to improve their communities. We assume that many more stories happened but were not necessarily shared with the researchers. Table 1 illustrates the content area of the web stories.

Table 1

Percent Content Area of WebTV Stories

Content Area	N = 450 Percent
Networking	16%
Entertainment	16%
Health	14%
Community events	13%
Education	10%
Employment	6%
Safety	4%
Religion	4%
Other (e.g., housing, shopping, hobbies)	17%

Web stories were also content analyzed to identify who benefited from the information obtained from the EBVO webpage or directly from the Internet. Several individuals benefited from the information obtained through the WebTV. In 43% of the stories, the information was for the Citizen Leader; in 29% of the stories family members and relatives benefited; in 15% neighbors benefited and in 13% of the stories the community benefited from the information or action. Although we documented Web stories as part of the process evaluation, a total of 57 stories documented dealt specifically with actions taken to address a community concern. An analysis of the topics addressed by these actions illustrated the following topic areas:

Topic/Area	Examples
Public participation	Organizing a voter registration drive. Driving people to the polls to vote. Organizing the community to meet with a local Alderman to discuss gang and drug-related problems.

Ecological Issues	Organizing a community garden. Cleaning a vacant lot. Getting the city to remove an abandoned trailer off a block.
Economic Security	Organizing a community job fair. Disseminating information about job openings, free services for seniors and tax reductions.
Quality of Life Issues	Health: Calling "Ask a Doc" to save the life of a neighbor. Childcare: Obtaining information about child care guidelines for a child care operation at home. Youth: Organizing a youth computer club.

In all the examples, WebTVs were used to obtain information, find resources, and mobilize the community by facilitating communication and dissemination of information.

Analysis of Email Exchanged on the Listserve

Similarly, we content-analyzed the emails that made it into the listserv. We classified a total of 577 emails shared among Citizen Leaders. Table 2 illustrates the type of emails according to its purpose.

Table 2

Percent of email type by purpose

Type of email	N = 577 Percent
Information/announcement	42%
Spiritual/life lessons	29%
Encouragement	12%
Request for participation/information	8%
Reminder	6%
Action taken	3%

Most of the emails that were classified as announcements and information provided over the Internet including the dissemination of information about community events (e.g., announcing a meeting or other community activity) and the dissemination of health-related information (e.g., schedule of mobile clinic, application information for a free vision exam, information about free medical assistance).

II. Intermediate Outcome Evaluation

The WebTV initiative was also expected to impact Citizen Leaders' sense of community and sense of empowerment. It was expected that by facilitating communication among residents and facilitating access to information and resources, Citizen Leaders would take an active part in their communities. Residents who felt empowered to work towards improving their communities had a significant impact and experienced neighborhood cohesion and a greater sense of community (see Florin & Wandersman, 2000).

Specifically, we were interested in the following research questions:

- Were there differences in Citizen Leaders and Residents perceived sense of community at Time 1 and Time 2?
- Were there differences in Citizen Leaders and Residents perceived sense of empowerment at Time 1 and Time 2?
- Were there differences in Citizen Leaders and Residents attitudes toward technology at Time 1 and Time 2?
- Were there differences in Citizen Leaders' and Residents perceptions of neighborhood safety and crime at Time 1 and Time 2?
- In what ways the life of Citizen Leaders changed as a result of the WebTV innovation?

Research Design. A pre-test post-test design with a non-equivalent comparison group was used. The comparison group was defined as non-equivalent because in some characteristics, they were somewhat different from the group of Citizen Leaders but at the same time, they shared some common characteristics. All participants (Citizen Leaders and Residents) came from the same neighborhood, were African American, each group had similar number of females and males and similar number owned their homes.

Procedures and Sample. A community questionnaire was developed to assess several constructs using adaptations of existing instruments. These included the Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument (which measures sense of community, Buckner, 1988) and Israel's (1994) empowerment scale. A short survey about attitudes toward technology and perceptions of community safety was also used. Citizen Leaders were asked to complete the assessment questionnaire before they received training on how to use WebTV. The first assessment was defined as Time 1. The assessment and subsequent training was conducted individually and was scattered across the duration of the project when CLs became available. Time 2 was defined as the second assessment 12 months after the first assessment. A total of 42 Citizen Leaders received training on how to use the WebTV. Twenty-five pre and post assessments were collected from this sample.

To obtain a comparison group, a random sample of residents was asked to complete the assessment at time 1 and Time 2. A total of 90 residents were interviewed at Time 1 and 35 were interviewed at Time 2. Table 3 compares the demographic characteristics for the two groups.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Citizen Leaders and Residents

Characteristics	Citizen Leaders N = 25	Residents N = 35
African American	100%	100%
Female	76%	82%
Male	24%	18%
Age: 18 – 29	12%	12%
30 – 64	76%	59%
65 and over	12%	29%
Education		
Middle School	N/A	15%
High School	21%	44%
Some College	74%	26%
Worked for pay	74%	62%
Volunteered in the community	90%	55%
Own their homes	77%	73%
Have health insurance for self	87%	76%

- Overall, Citizen Leaders tended to be a somewhat younger group, had more education, and volunteered more in their community. Both groups tended to have similar number of females and males and similar number of homeowners.

Sense of community

Citizen Leaders and residents were asked to complete an adapted version of Buckner's (1988) sense of community scale. Participants were asked to rate 12 items in a 4-point Likert-type scale; ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 4 = strongly disagree. Table 4 illustrates the means at Time 1 and Time 2 for both Citizen Leaders (N = 25) and residents (N = 35).

Table 4

Means for Sense of Community for Citizen Leaders and Residents at Time 1 and Time 2

Sense of Community	Time 1 Means		Time 2 Means	
	<u>CL</u>	<u>Residents</u>	<u>CL</u>	<u>Residents</u>
1. Overall, I am very attracted to living on on this block.	1.68	2.12	1.56	1.88
2. I feel like I belong to this block.	1.48	2.09	1.44	1.91
3. The friendships and associations I have with other people on my block mean a lot to me.	1.52	2.03	1.32	1.82
4. If I need advice about something, I could go to someone on my block.	1.96	2.00	1.88	1.91
5. I believe my neighbors will help me in an emergency.	1.68	1.97	1.28*	1.85
6. I have a deep feeling of fellowship between me and other people on my block	1.72	2.29	1.52	1.73*
7. I feel loyal to the people on my block.	1.60	2.00	1.40	2.35
8. Living on this block gives me a sense of community.	1.56	2.15	1.44	2.11
9. I borrow things and exchange favors with my neighbors.	2.29	2.48	2.04	1.66
10. I would be willing to work together with others to improve my block.	1.32	1.73	1.12	2.00
11. I regularly stop and talk with people on my block.	1.64	2.06	1.40	1.94
12. Living on this block gives me a sense of community.	1.56	2.15	1.44	2.11

* $p < .001$ Sig. (2-tailed)

Note: The lower the score the greater the attribution

- Although the difference between items at Time 1 and Time 2 was statistically significant only for one item, all items for CLs moved toward the desired direction. In other words, Citizen Leaders rated higher sense of community at Time 2.
- The overall average mean difference at Time 1 and Time 2 for Citizen Leaders and Residents was statistically significant. In other words, Citizen Leaders perceived significantly more sense of community than the residents.

Sense of Empowerment

Sense of empowerment was measured using an adapted version of Israel's (1994) empowerment scale. A 4-point Likert type scale was used in which 1 was strongly agreed and 4 was strongly disagreeing. As with the sense of community scale, the lower the score the greater the attribution.

Table 5

Means for Sense of Empowerment for Citizen Leaders and Residents at Time 1 and Time 2

Survey items	Time 1 Means		Time 2 Means	
	<u>CLs</u>	<u>Residents</u>	<u>CLs</u>	<u>Residents</u>
1. I believe people on my block appreciate me as an important person in this neighborhood.	1.72	2.27	1.64	2.39
2. I can influence the decisions that my neighbors make regarding health issues.	2.08	2.41	1.96	1.73
3. I have control over decisions that affect my health and family's health.	1.56	1.85	1.08*	1.82
4. I am satisfied with the amount of control I have over decisions that affect my health and my family's health.	1.56	1.82	1.44	2.17*
5. By working together, people on my block can influence decisions that affect our health.	1.88	2.15	1.68	2.63*
6. I am satisfied with the amount of influence I have over health decisions that affect my block.	2.70	2.93	2.12*	2.98

* $p < .001$ Sig. (2-tailed).

Note: The lower the score the greater the attribution

- For residents, the difference between Time 1 and Time 2 for questions 4 and 5 was statistically significant but in the opposite direction.
- Although the difference between items at Time 1 and Time 2 was statistically significant only for a few items, all items for CLs moved towards the desired direction. In other words, Citizen Leaders rated higher sense of empowerment at

time 2. In addition, at Time 1 ratings of sense of community were correlated with sense of empowerment for Citizen Leaders. In other words, Citizen leaders with high sense of community were also likely to have high sense of empowerment, which is consistent with what other researchers have found pertinent to active community leaders (Florin & Wandersman, 2000).

- The overall average mean difference at Time 1 and Time 2 for Citizen Leaders and residents was statistically significant. In other words, Citizen Leaders perceived significantly more sense of empowerment than residents.

Attitudes Toward Technology

Attitudes toward technology were measured using 10 items in a 4-point Likert-type scale.

Table 6

Percent agreement for Citizen Leaders and Residents at Time 1 and Time 2

Item	Time 1		Time 2	
	<u>CLs</u>	<u>Residents</u>	<u>CLs</u>	<u>Residents</u>
1. Have use for computers on a day-to-day basis.	76%	51%	74%	54%
2. Using computer technology to communicate with others can help me to be more effective in my neighborhood.	88%	86%	96%	87%
3. I feel at ease learning about computers or technology.	100%	86%	100%	91%
4. With the use of technology, I can find information to improve my health.	100%	93%	100%	94%
5. I am the type that can do well with computers, email, WebTV or other technology.	76%	72%	96%	46%
6. The thought of using technology doesn't frighten me.	72%	89%	96%	88%

7. Computers and other technology are not confusing to me.	80%	68%	85%	57%
8. I see how I can use technology to learn new skills.	88%	86%	100%	86%
9. I feel comfortable with my ability to work with new technology.	84%	82%	100%	86%
10. I am satisfied with the information/knowledge I have about health resources.	68%	74%	78%	74%

- At Time 1, the majority of both Citizen Leaders and residents felt very positive about technology and computers. It is possible to assume that to some degree respondents provided socially desirable answers as these answers were not consistent with what participants expressed during personal interviews.
- The percent of Citizen Leaders agreeing with the above attitude statements about technology increased at Time 2 for all items.
- At Time 2, between 95% and 100% of Citizen Leaders felt positive about the following specific areas: use of email, learning new skills through technology, feeling comfortable using technology, and using technology to find information about health.

Neighborhood Safety

Perceptions of safety were measured with three questions:

Overall how safe is your block? how do you think that the overall safety of your neighborhood has changed in the last 6 months? and how do you think that crime in your neighborhood has changed in the last 6 months? We used a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Table 7

Percent of Citizen Leaders and Residents at Time 1 and Time 2 Rating Safety and Crime in the Neighborhood

Item	Time 1		Time 2	
	<u>CLs</u>	<u>Residents</u>	<u>CLs</u>	<u>Residents</u>
How safe is your block? Very safe to safe	78%	76%	87%	72%

Has safety changed in your neighborhood in the last 6 months?

Much better or better	37%	18%	31%	36%
Same	54%	47%	41%	44%
Worse	9%	35%	27%	28%

How crime has changed in The last 6 months?

Much better or better	32%	20%	27%	33%
Same	59%	47%	54%	36%
Worse	9%	35%	18%	33%

- The majority of Citizen Leaders and residents believe that crime and safety are still the same compared with 6-months prior.
- More Citizen Leaders rated safety and crime worst at Time 2 than Time 1.
- The differences in ratings at Time 1 and Time 2 might be explained by Citizen Leaders becoming more aware and sensitive to what was going on on their blocks. Citizen leaders had access to their own blocks crime mapping and these data might have made them more sensitive and aware of crime and safety concerns.
- Higher percent of residents rated safety and crime much better or better at Time 2.

Overall Comments from Citizen Leaders at Time 2

These comments were obtained from Citizen Leaders during an individual interview at Time 2.

How has your life changed as a result of having the unit in the home?

- "Being able to maintain communication with family, friends and neighbors"
- "Has open awareness about new information, given me easy access to information"
- "With WebTV I can help my community better"
- "I feel a tremendous pride in my new skill, I have access to something I did not have before, and thought it was not for me"
- "easy access to health information when I can't reach a health provider"
- "It has impacted my life a lot, my family's and my sister's life"
- "At the beginning technology was too overwhelming, now I feel very comfortable"
- "It has helped me with information like grand parents raising kids"
- "Now I know what email is and I used it a lot"
- "My health is much better now that I use WebTV"

- "It make you feel better because you can organize your block by sharing information"
- "It has changed my life a lot, I have anew way of gaining information"
- "It helped empowered me"
- "I'm better informed, connecting with my neighbors"
- " I have more opportunities and resources now"
- "I love having the Web at my fingertips, it's easy to stay on it all night"
- "It allows you to help other"
- "I'm more informed of what is going on"
- " I'm able to help people and children, and pass information out"
- "The Web is a useful tool"
- "It has enable me to gain knowledge"
- "I became more knowledgeable, more educated, came in contact with things I never thought about"
- "I have had more easy and inexpensive access to health resources and advice"
- "It brings comfort to your life because you can get answers –freedom- it saves money over time"
- "Now I feel empowered because I have a sense of what is really happening in the world"
- Most Citizen Leaders mentioned using emails and "Ask a Doc" to communicate with health providers
- Most Citizen Leaders felt more satisfied with the relationships with health providers at the time of the final interview.
- Most Citizen Leaders felt more satisfied with the relationships they had with people on their block at the time of the final interview.
- Citizen Leaders were also asked to rate their relationships with health providers. Statistically significant differences were observed between Time 1 and Time 2 for Citizen Leaders in the following items: knowing how to get information about health services in the community, staying in regular contact with health providers, and knowing most of the people on the block.

Conclusions

- Citizen Leaders used WebTV on average of three times a week. In addition, relatives, friends and neighbors also used the Citizen Leaders WebTV about once a week.
- A total of 450 WebTVs were documented in which the Citizen Leader successfully obtained information for self, relatives, friends or neighbors. Most commonly, Web stories illustrated the use of technology for networking, entertainment, health information, community events and education.
- A total of 57 Web stories illustrated efforts to address a community/social concern by Citizen Leaders.

- WebTVs became a tool for Citizen Leaders to communicate with each other, disseminate information, obtain resources and information, and become aware of what was going on in their community and also as a tool for action.
- Compared with residents, Citizen Leaders were a more educated group with more experience as volunteers with higher score in sense of community, sense of empowerment and attitudes toward technology.
- Citizen Leader's ratings of sense of community, sense of empowerment and attitudes toward technology increased. for all items, in a positive direction. In other words, at Time 2 Citizen Leaders felt more empowered, with higher sense of community and more comfortable using technology such as WebTVs and using email.
- All Citizen Leaders expressed their satisfaction with the innovation. They all thought they had benefited from using WebTVs, their families and also their communities have benefited.