BTOP Narrative

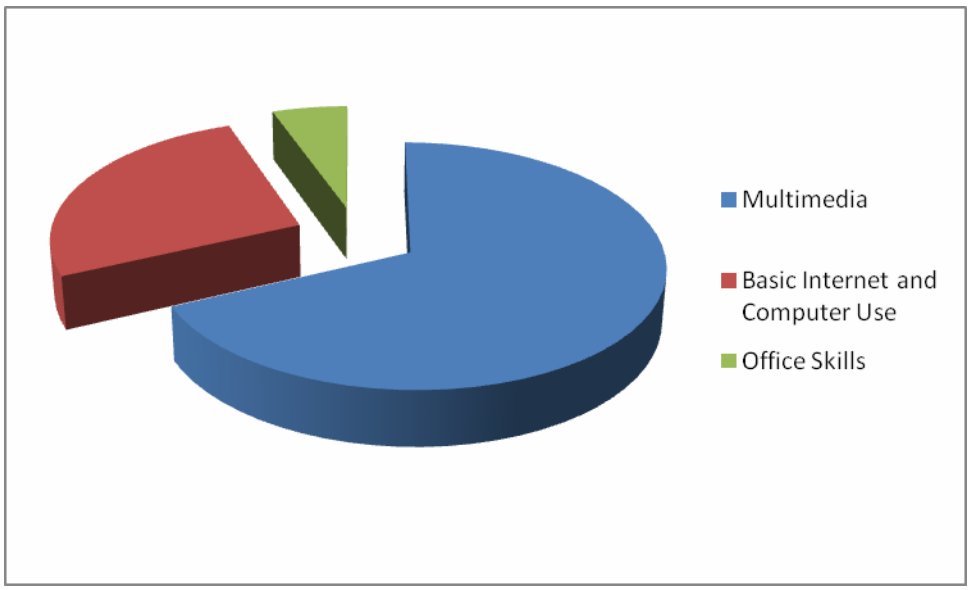
Over the course of the grant, the NCLS PCC has had the pleasure of helping patrons all over the North Country. Given our slight extension past the end of the grant, we've managed to be actively teaching for a total of 24 months. Now that we've reached the end of grant activities, we can offer a full interpretation of our findings and evaluations.

Interpretations and Findings

We saw much of the same results as our last period of analysis. However, some classes weren't created until much later than others. Now, were able to finally see some larger sample sizes in our later developed classes. We expected a modest to large acquisition of knowledge, which could be measured by our Confidence Surveys. Each class had its own Confidence Survey, and had 4-6 topics that participants rated their own knowledge on "Before" and "After". This was done with a 1-5 rating for each before and after, and gave us a quantitative value to measure the gain in knowledge. Our goal was that a participant moves up at least 1 number on each topic. As we saw previously, it was consistently exceeded on any topic.

It's worth noting that we've been providing classes for 2 years now and that we've had several people come to the same class to freshen up on a topic. Obviously, these people do not move up as much on our confidence surveys. It's worth mentioning however, that during the course of our 2 years, technology, especially with our **Multimedia** classes, has changed so much that repeat students are learning much more than just freshening up. Our multimedia classes are obviously the most requested and attended of any category and while a lot of patrons are obviously drawn to these types of classes, the high attendance is also a result of students repeating to keep up with the changes in the field.

The pie chart below demonstrates the attendance among **Multimedia** classes being compared to **Office Skills** and **Basic Internet and Computer Use**. As you can see, **Multimedia** was a much popular category of classes; counting as approximately 68% of the total attendance. **Basic Internet and Computer Use** classes counted as 26% and **Office Skills** as 5%. This pie chart is in reference to the OBE report regarding classes held more frequently and collected surveys for. I will touch on some of the classes not recorded on the OBE later on in this report.



As part of our final analysis, we took a deeper look at the achievement levels of our classes. Among the highest Confidence Survey levels were **Social Networking** and **Google Earth & Maps**. Remember, this is the "highest" given analysis of how much knowledge people indicated they gained from before the class. Social Networking had an average increase of **2.6**, while Google Earth & Maps had an increase of **2.8**. I would suspect that this is due to very specific subject matter that patrons seeking a class have very little prior knowledge on.

We also looked at some of the lowest increases. **Computers for Beginners** was the least, at **1.7**. Through personal observation and Participant surveys, patrons were not dissatisfied with the class. We may assume however that a lot of people already have some computer experience, and therefore, learn "less" in this particular class. Several attendants to this class also expressed that while they were already familiar with some of the material, they did learn some basics that made the class worthwhile.

Now that we have multiple OBE reports from the course of the grant, we can also take note of any trends in increased knowledge, as measured by Confidence Surveys. The biggest increase across reports we found was **Social Networking**. The first report states an average increase of **2**, which manages to go up by **.6** by the last OBE report, to **2.6**. While I revamped many of my classes, I do recall adding much more to Social Networking on several occasions. This is obviously a very broad topic with extremely specific details for each network or service, and my original material benefited from having more added.

Computer Diagnostics and Troubleshooting was definitely one of the most helpful to patrons, based off observation. It only had an average **2** point increase for knowledge gained but the material was described as extremely useful by patrons. The point of the class was to demystify maintenance for Windows computers (*XP, Vista, and 7*). I could hypothesize that some users are indeed familiar with some aspects if the class, and therefore only learned an average of **2** points more; despite the actual learned information being so useful. This class included information and discussion on Windows updates, antivirus, defragging, disk cleanup, third party updates (*i.e. Java, Flash, Ninite for multiple updates*), uninstalling programs, and more. These are obviously issues that directly relate to computer performance that many patrons are unfamiliar with and in my opinion, prevent the user from learning other basic computer functions due to fear. If you know how to do some important car maintenance, you would be more inclined to not only drive it more but take it farther from home. I think this analogy also applies to computer users. Now that these patrons are more comfortable doing some maintenance and have some critical information that applies to their own computer's maintenance, they'll be more willing to go further with their computer use.

Another class that wasn't as requested but had very satisfied patrons was **Windows 7 and You: an Introduction to Windows 7**. Again, we have very technology deprived patrons in our geographic area. Most of our patrons have older versions of Windows and have just recently upgraded or are looking to upgrade from XP or Vista to 7. This class covers the differences from previous versions as well as new features. Evolving technology is a good thing, but has been known to leave less active users behind as it moves so far forward. Most users who took this class found it extremely useful. Given its low attendance and not being frequently held, we did not collect Confidence surveys for this.

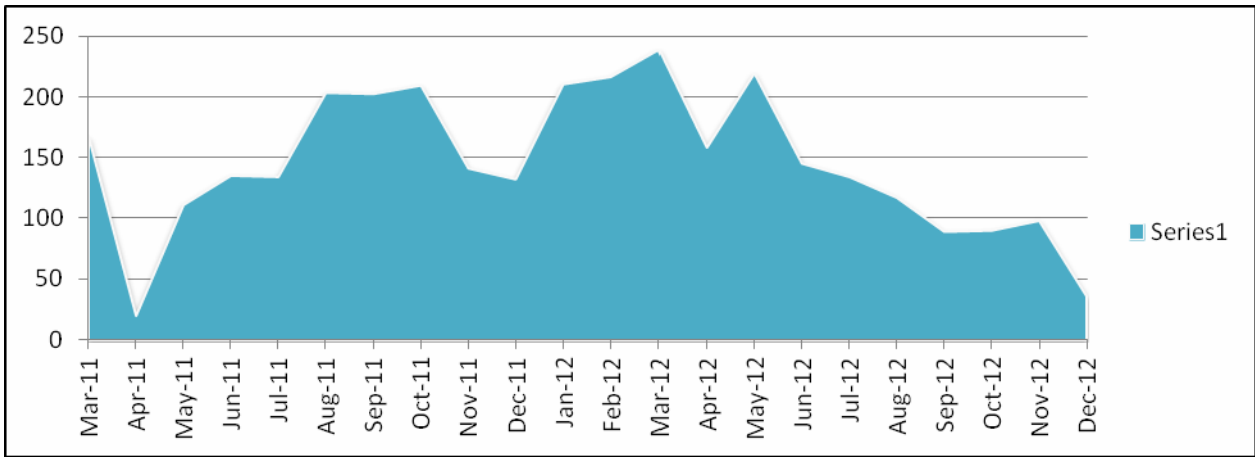
I mentioned earlier that not all the classes we held were recorded on the OBE. Some of these classes include Online Shopping, Picasa, Basic Email Skills, Entrepreneur Series: Using the Internet for Your Business (*as well as 2 other Entrepreneur classes specifically for Facebook and Social Networking*), Free Resources on the Internet, Skype, and Wix. The reasons they were not included on the OBE were inconsistency in scheduling as some of them weren't meant to be a frequently held class. Some of these classes had more total attendance than the ones in our OBE, but since they were never intended to be a frequent class, we never collected data on them. The Entrepreneur classes had over 100 attendants total and were extremely well liked, but weren't as popularized to and requested by libraries. We did

manage to successfully partner with the SUNY Canton Small Business Development Center to host 6 Entrepreneur classes.

Progress

At the end of the grant, the NCLS PCC completed **455 total classes**. We completed the majority of these classes at our public libraries with some exceptions in the 4 counties at we serve. In addition to this, we've also offered more video conference classes on campus. Obviously, as mentioned earlier, a large majority of these classes were Multimedia classes; as requested by both libraries and their patrons.

Towards the end of the grant, we lost an employee and also started to schedule less classes. While this made our attendance slightly dwindled towards the end, we still ended with a total of **3,204**. Below, you'll find a chart of the monthly attendance.



Although some winter months prevented travel for both us and patrons, it did not impact our scheduling all that much. However, our scheduling was affected somewhat though by the availability of our staff car. Sometimes the IT department has massive upgrades for several libraries, or there's training on new software. Internal rather than external factors affected our monthly total attendance the majority of the time. There is a noticeable drop around June of 2012. This is because one of our PCC staff left, and as a result, scheduled fewer classes.

Personally, I feel that the NCLS PCC made deep progress that, within other normal means, is otherwise unachievable. Public libraries are the hearts of so many of these small communities and for any educational service for a community, the perfect venue to bring technology education. We gave instruction that strengthened the digital literacy for so many peoples. This is not just evident in confidence surveys, but just post class discussions about particular problems and issues that would be resolved with the information given in class. Most of these small communities are both lacking in a younger demographic and also have no local support for technology; making our classes one of the only options for education.

Observations

As mentioned, we've found that digital literacy is a prominent need in our area. In both large and small towns, attendance and demand for classes that teach digital literacy are overwhelmingly greater than those for workforce development. A lot of our patrons have trouble with computer basics such as navigating Windows and creating a Microsoft Word document. Someone had come to a resume class before that had no computer skills and therefore, the class was not applicable since they had no

computer skills to type a resume using a word processor. They received one on one help afterwards but that's just one instance that highlights some basic needs of our patrons.

So many of our patrons are also moving past Windows based computing now and just using tablets. This is because using a finger or stylus is easier for some of them than using a mouse (although some find it much easier using a keyboard and mouse as well). Not only do motor skills factor in, but so do confusing messages and updates that are synonymous with Windows based computing. Patrons no longer have to worry about several messages such as Java and Adobe updates, their antivirus bugging them that a trial has run out, and while they may have to still do some app updating on their tablet; it's presented in a way that's less intimidating. Obviously these patrons miss out on a lot of what the Windows environment has to offer, but they also have little need for it. Some of our patrons are so much more familiar with tablets that they have tried to touch our laptop screens thinking it would respond the same way.

The main public need we found with workforce development though was helping small businesses. The entrepreneur class was very popular in which we expose business owners (and employees) to tools for creating a website and promoting their business online. We expanded these types of classes to other partnering organizations as mentioned before. These types of classes are vital to our businesses as there's currently no programs in place to really show business owners how to compete and advertise using resources available online; critical factors in today's modern business world. So many of our local businesses either don't or barely show up in an Internet search result.

Best Practices

In our experiences with this grant, one of the practices that we found most beneficial to patrons was to welcome and answer all questions. In topics of digital literacy, students may be experienced or familiar with one thing and not another, they may or may not be able to afford newer technology, or may or may not be able to obtain internet access. This results in a drastically uneven education level across our audience. To counter this, it is best to answer EVERY question as to not lose anyone and fill in these gaps of knowledge. When we give an extensive answer to a question to the class, were usually helping other patrons who may have had some questions but were either not asking, or didn't realize they didn't know something that we then hit on in our answers.

By answering every question, having open labs, and creating opportunities for people to ask whatever they want to know on any device (standard laptop/desktop or not), we've been successful in "demystifying" certain technology topics for several of our patrons. Through our progress, we've found that "demystifying" has made us extremely successful with the digital literacy of our patrons as it inspires them to further learn on their own.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

There were several challenges mentioned in previous narratives, and some new ones I'll also mention. To recap, we obviously ran into issues of pre-requisites. Since we traveled to most of our classes, it was hard to really put pre-requisites in place to ensure patrons had the necessary knowledge prior to specific classes. Obviously, pre-requisites can be a bit intimidating as well; especially when the potential students aren't familiar with the class format or instructor. Another previous issue to mention was to assume libraries (or any venue) would advertise. We did combat this with suggested minimum class attendance and provide flyers for libraries that we were uncertain would have good attendance.

In retrospect, I do wish we had gathered more demographic information with our participant surveys. As it stands, we have census information about the area we serve that we can use to make broad demographic assumptions about in relation to our students. However, obviously our patrons seeking classes may have some different and yet statistically relevant demographic information that differs from the broad census data. Specific classes may have different demographic data between types

of classes as well. Additional data I would have liked to collect would have been income level, age, and current or former occupation type. I could see this more specific information being useful to further identify vulnerable populations and possible identify other needs that our target audience may benefit from. Some PCCs may have actually taken deeper demographic information with their patrons than we did. If at all possible, I would like to suggest future grants of this sort put more emphasis on collecting demographic information, even if it's still optional.

Misc.

NCLS was obviously not a public facility and therefore needed to take our classes on the road. Although NCLS is not a public facility, we ran a very successful program. We obviously ran into several obstacles with this and going on the road with our classes between scheduling, travel time, and the number of uncertainties that could arise at any venue. Despite what affect these had we feel very strongly about the success and service we were able to provide our communities. We are going to continue some of the aspects of the grant, although not as frequently, as our libraries see it as an indispensible service.

Outcome/Class Offered	Target Audience	T. Audience Per Training	Data Source	Target Achievement Level	Actual Achievement Level
MULTIMEDIA	**700**	**10**			
Social Networking					
• Participants report increased knowledge of networking sites and uses	**78**	**5**	Confidence survey	60% of participants	100% (21 surveys) of participants reported an increase of knowledge (average of 2.6 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class
• Participants participate in some form of Social Networking site in the class			Trainer observation	60% of participants	100% (78) of participants created accounts/logged into existing accounts
• Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer			Participant survey	80% of participants	100% (33 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class 100% reported that they would refer others to take class
Downloading eBooks and Audiobooks	**861**	**7**			
• Participants report increased knowledge of eBooks/audiobooks			Confidence survey	60% of participants	100% (190 surveys) of participants reported an increase of knowledge (average of 2.2 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class
• Participants report increased knowledge of compatible devices			Confidence survey	60% of participants	100% (190 surveys) of participants reported an increase of knowledge (average of 2.0 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class
• Participants report increased knowledge of OverDrive service/website, how to navigate and download titles from			Confidence survey	60% of participants	100% (190 surveys) of participants reported an increase of knowledge (average of 2.3 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class
• Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer			Participant survey	80% of participants	96% (354 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class 100% reported that they would refer others to take class
Managing Your Digital Photos	**52**	**5**			
• Participants report increased			Confidence survey	60% of participants	100% (30 surveys) of participants reported an

knowledge of digital camera and photo basics (where pictures are stored, how to connect camera to computer, upload and transfer files, etc.) • Participants participate in exercises involving uploading pictures/transferring and moving files • Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer			Trainer observation Participant survey	60% of participants 80% of participants	increase of knowledge (average of 2.03 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class 100% (52) of participants practiced opening/transferring files and editing digital photos 100% (30 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class 97% reported that they would refer others to take class
BASIC INTERNET & COMPUTER USE	**310**	**6**			
Computers for Beginners • Participants demonstrate basic computer skills. • Participants report increased knowledge of computer basics. • Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer.	193	4	Trainer observation Confidence survey Participant survey	60% of participants 60% of participants 80% of participants	100% (193) of participants completed in-class exercises during instruction (mouse/saving files/making folders). 100% (42 surveys) of participants reported an increase of knowledge (average of 1.7 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class 100% (72 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class 96% reported that they would refer others to take this class
Windows 7 and You • Participants navigate and use Windows 7 in class during instruction • Participants report increased knowledge of using and	35	6	Trainer observation Confidence survey	60% of participants 60% of participants	100% (35) of participants completed in-class exercises during instruction None collected

navigating the newest operating system from Microsoft • Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer			Participation survey	80% of participants	100% (15 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class 93% reported that they would refer others to take this class
Google Earth/Maps • Participants demonstrate basic computer skills using the Google Earth and Maps applications. • Participants report increased knowledge of Google Earth and Maps basics, • Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer.	40	3	Trainer observation Confidence survey Participant survey	60% of participants 60% of participants 80% of participants	100% (40) of participants successfully navigated the globe and found directions using Google applications during instruction 100% (12 surveys) of participants reported an increase of knowledge (average of 2.8 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class 100% (16 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class. 88% reported that they would refer others to take class.
Computer Diagnostics & Troubleshooting • Participants demonstrate basic skills with the class material on laptops we/they provided. • Participants report increased knowledge of tools for maintenance. • Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer.	76	6	Trainer Observation Confidence Survey Participant Survey	60% of participants 60% of participants 80% of participants	100% (76) of participants successfully went to ninite, did windows updates, etc. during instruction. 100% (15 surveys) of participants reported an increase of knowledge (average of 2 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class 100% (7 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class. 100% reported that they would refer others to take class.
Ebay! • Participants demonstrate basic skills with site navigation, class participation.	41	6	Trainer Observation	60% of participants	100% (41) of participants completed in-class exercises during instruction

• Participants report increased knowledge of Ebay basics. • Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer.			Confidence Survey Participant Survey	60% of participants 80% of participants	100% (19 surveys) of participants reported an increase of knowledge (average of 1.7 level of increase based on scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) answered before and after class 100% (8 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class. 100% reported that they would refer others to take class.
OFFICE SKILLS	**325**	**6**			
Microsoft Word 2010 • Participants demonstrate basic word processing skills • Participants report increased knowledge of word processing • Participants report satisfaction with workshop/trainer	**30**	**6**	Trainer observation Confidence/Participant survey Participant survey	60% of participants 60% of participants 80% of participants	100% (30) of participants completed in-class exercises during instruction 80% (10 surveys) of participants reported an increase in knowledge, stating that they learned and could perform at least one new function of MS Word 100% (10 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class. 100% reported that they would refer others to take class.
Microsoft Excel 2010 • Participants demonstrate basic Excel /numbers processing skills • Participants report increased knowledge of Excel/numbers processing • Participants report satisfaction with workshop/trainer	**50**	**4**	Trainer observation Confidence/Participant survey Participant survey	60% of participants 60% of participants 80% of participants	100% (50) of participants completed in-class exercises during instruction 100% (28 surveys) of participants reported an increase in knowledge, stating that they learned and could perform at least one new function of MS Excel 100% (28 surveys) of participants reported satisfaction with the class. 100% reported that they would refer others to