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Closing Gap in Digital Divide of the Vulnerable Women in the Community via Assistive

Technology: The Chromebook

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Overview

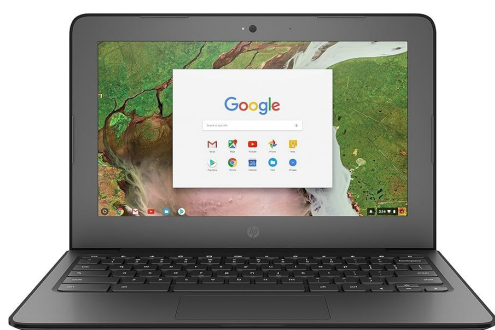
- Aims to address the gap in digital division by providing low-income individuals with essential computer skills.
- These individuals are currently facing health challenges due to economic constraints, limited access to healthcare services, and overall lack of familiarity in digital literacy.
- At Wellspring Women's Center, nearly 200 individuals are affected by this issue.
- The Chromebook could be delivered in a flexible model such as in-person workshops, online tutorials, and 1:1 mentoring.
- This approach ensures accessibility and empowerment of the participants to develop essential digital literacy skills to promote independence in their own health management.
- The Chromebook can open gates to enhancing digital health literacy and access to health care.
- Additionally, to achieve overall quality of life and well-being of the underserved communities while fostering a sense of self-sufficiency, digital empowerment, and inclusivity.

Access and Cost

- Affordable and ease of use
- Operates on cloud storage, eliminating the need for manual updates and additional software downloads, therefore simplifying the software deployment and management making it accessible for both users and administrators.
- Low cost of Chromebooks allows for the solicitation of donations from various sources to support this endeavor.
- For example, applying through Google Grant can provide eligibility to accessing Chromebooks at the facility (Google Grant Application Eligibility - Google for Nonprofits, n.d.)

Community Implications

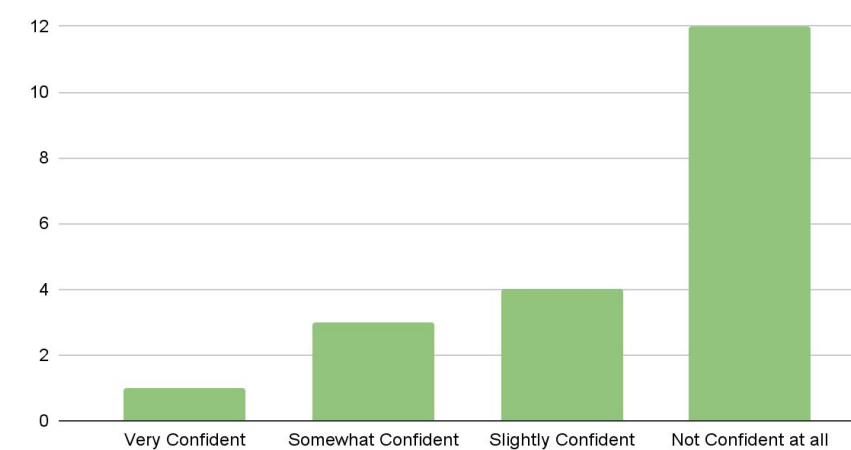
- By offering computer skills and access to technology, this reduces the digital divide and ensuring that all members, regardless of economic status, have the tools and knowledge to participate.
- As individuals gain access to health information online, there is a potential for healthier lifestyles, preventative measures, and increased awareness of available healthcare services.
- Enable the creation of online community support networks and strengthening the sense of community, solidarity, and inclusivity.
- A digitally literate community can enhance their resilience in the face of various health disparities.



Problem Statement

- The level of digital health literacy and limitations to accessing digital technology in this population is an ongoing challenge.
- Physiological and socioeconomic factors play a role in access to digital tools when navigating health related information.
- As simple as lacking access to a device, contextual factors such as high internet bills, data plans and wifi can be limiting elements.
- Factors such as language barrier further challenges accessing health related resources when using digital technology.
- Another prevalent concern within this vulnerable population when using digital tools pertains to mental health challenges such as anxiety and digital paranoia.
- Individual's level of digital health literacy is multifactorial and are influenced by cultural, socioeconomic, and contextual factors, addressing the importance of access and needs for closing gaps in digital division in this population (Estrela et al., 2023).

Informal Interviews on Confidence with Digital Literacy



Solution/Technology

- The Chromebook, which is a great alternative to personal computer (PC), is used for light web browsing, accessing email, watching media, and accessing documents
- Assist in navigating the labyrinth of available social services, facilitating access to shelters, and food banks. Other critical support programs include offering a pathway to social engagement, entertainment, and improved mental health, fostering a sense of independence, and inclusion in the digital age.
- Expected to yield immediate benefits and short-term goals.
- Immediate access to health information, resources and communication platforms will be established, increasing capability in accessing health care services and knowledge, thereby improving independent healthcare management.
- For unemployed women, the initiative will facilitate resume building, enhancing employability and setting the stage for regular income which further connects back to socioeconomic factors that impact low digital health literacy and access to healthcare.
- Homeless women and the target demographic will quickly acquire digital literacy skills, including email usage, bill management, and navigation of essential websites.

Occupational Impact

- The OT can direct digital training tailored to ensure effective utilization, web navigation, email access and health professional connections. For individuals with cognitive challenges such as cyber-paranoia, it is an increasingly common challenge when using technology to access health informations.
- The OT can educate on simplicity and provision to ease the technology related fear and aid in technological proficiency to increase participation in mentoring sessions (Mason et al., 2014).
- Provide to alleviate anxiety related to technology use, particularly for seniors who are unfamiliar with this AT, by introducing additional adaptive technologies such as chrome extensions for translation to make Chromebook usage more accessible for those who are experiencing language barriers.
- Occupational therapists continuously monitor progress and adjust training plans as needed to ensure that women become confident and independent in technology usage.

Social Impact

- The OT can empower individuals to independently manage their health, foster a sense of control, and self-efficacy.
- Guidance through OTs can enhance the individual's ability to navigate through online health information, access telehealth services, and utilize digital resources to make informed decision about their health.
- The OT can foster a supportive community environment where individuals can share health goals, challenges, experiences, provide mutual support, and promote social resilience.
- The holistic approach of OT, computer skills, and technology access helps individuals to be better equipped to manage their chronic conditions adhere to treatment plans which leads to positive impacts on their health and well-being.
- Integration of OT and digital literacy can ensure that individuals with diverse health needs receive personalized support, ultimately reducing gaps in health care support.
- Individuals can stay informed about health advancements and culture of continuous learning.
- OT, coupled with digital skills, provides avenues for online engagement, social interaction, reduction in social isolation, and promoting a more connected community.

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