



ACCELERATING TECHNOLOGY  
IN THE COMMONWEALTH

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im-per-a-tive \ im-per-at-iv \ : (1) impossible to deter or evade; URGENT (2) critical to Kentucky's economic success in the 21st century

### Kentucky's Information Technology Imperative

Information Technology (IT) provides advanced communications capabilities and improves productivity through the use of computers, software, the Internet and Internet-related applications and services. The Information Technology Imperative refers to the need to expand the use of technology throughout Kentucky for citizens, businesses, educational institutions, and government entities. The first step towards addressing this immediate need is to improve availability, affordability, and use of broadband connections to the Internet. Broadband Internet access is a high-speed, always-on connection to the Internet network. As explained in a recent Wall Street Journal article, a broadband connection makes the Internet like air; allowing it to become so intertwined in daily life that one forgets they are using it.

The internet can eliminate the constraints of location, connecting businesses in rural Kentucky to businesses, industry and consumers around the world.

Recent studies indicate that households are increasingly abandoning traditional home technology and media for the Internet. Teenagers may choose to chat online with ten friends at once, rather than calling each friend individually on the telephone. Much of today's younger population prefers to surf the Net than to watch television. Recent Nielsen Ratings show that men ages 18 to 24 (the group that drives advertising returns) are watching 12 percent less prime-time television than they did one year

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ago.

Likewise, the success of businesses of all shapes and sizes is increasingly dependent on the company's access to the Internet. For businesses that are beginning or growing, high-speed access to the Internet is critical to achieving a competitive advantage. In rural areas particularly, the use of the Internet for business operations allows entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles presented by their physical location. The Internet can eliminate the constraints of location, connecting businesses in rural Kentucky to industry and consumers around the world. Consider these following examples:



In **MAYSVILLE**, Carlson Software provides land surveyors and mining companies around the world with the technology to link up to satellite positioning systems for more accurate and precise readings. Carlson is hiring some of the brightest engineers in the country, allowing them to work from numerous locations while staying connected to Maysville via the Internet. Carlson also uses the Internet to increase its sales and to provide customer service and support.



In **CALLOWAY COUNTY**, a company called AgConnections provides software to farmers who are interested in implementing advanced farm and crop management technologies. Co-founder Pete Clark says that his company uses the Internet to connect to its customers everyday. In other words, his company could be located anywhere in the world, as long as it has a high-speed Internet connection linked to the business.



Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital in **ASHLAND** uses broadband Internet access to connect all of its rural healthcare providers. Five off-campus facilities use resources available through the Internet to manage their practices.



From her farm in **CASEY COUNTY**, Angela L. Allen, operates **Wicked WordCraft**, a professional writing and marketing consultation company. Her clients include entrepreneurs, real estate consultants, coaches, authors and industries worldwide. With today's technology her career and her business are enjoyable, portable, as well as profitable. "My career was selected to fit my dreams, my skills and my desired lifestyle," says Angela, "Most people select work first, and then mold their life around making a living. Modern technology means that is no longer necessary."



A young family eager to return to their native state from Washington, D.C., recently bought a farm in rural **WARREN COUNTY**. What was the first service they connected after electricity? Broadband Internet access – so they could continue running their small business from home.



Kentuckians in any part of the state can enroll in classes at a variety of educational institutions, including **KENTUCKY'S VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY**. The opportunity to take these classes is more feasible when a broadband connection to the Internet is available.



As an increasing number of **KENTUCKY FARMERS** transition out of tobacco, the Internet provides an opportunity to access resources about alternative crops, training for supplemental careers, as well as providing a means to communicate with farmers



across the country in a similar transition.

Clearly, broadband Internet access is the central theme of all these examples. The Internet, when widely available and affordable, can have a positive impact on the quality of life in Kentucky. The Internet is an enabling technology that can improve basic necessities for all Kentuckians, such as: the need for better jobs; the need for expanded education; the need for quality healthcare; and the need for better government.

Based upon the Commonwealth's response to the **Information Technology Imperative**, companies will decide whether or not to start-up and expand in Kentucky; students will decide how far they take their education; healthcare providers will decide what services they can offer and at what price they are available; and Kentuckians who have left home will decide whether or not to return. The **connectkentucky** partnership will continue to press this issue, to ensure the citizens, policy-makers, and businesses fully appreciate the level of importance and urgency for a proactive response to this imperative. The following pages present a data-based call-to-action that would improve the availability, affordability and use of the Internet and related technologies in Kentucky, thereby improving the Commonwealth's standing in the global economy.