Infopoverty Institute

Vision

Information Access, Improved Lives

Mission

The mission of the Infopoverty Institute at The University of Oklahoma is to facilitate the use of connectivity to support effective access to and use of information that will improve life conditions in impoverished communities around the world.

Goals

1. Connecting the unconnected world.
2. Eradicating poverty and its negative effects through sustainable development.

What is Infopoverty?

Just as poverty is defined as the lack of sufficient funds or material possessions necessary to provide the basic necessities (food, clothing, shelter) required to live a healthful life, so infopoverty is the lack of access to basic information that will empower individuals and communities to improve their circumstances. When the lack of connectivity prevents individuals and communities from accessing information necessary to provide safety and a sense of belonging to the world, infopoverty is present.

The Infopoverty Institute at The University of Oklahoma is established to serve as an ongoing program support unit for information, training and technical assistance, and outreach. The Infopoverty Institute coordinates with the Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication (OCCAM) and collaborates with the international community in applying these services especially to impoverished communities around the world. It is further designed to facilitate the implementation and application of resources (human, technological and fiscal) to programs and services delivering high impact results.

The Infopoverty Institute strives to work with OCCAM to provide the leading source for information on trends, best practices, and field application on connectivity and information access that address the issue of infopoverty.
What does the Infopoverty Institute do?

The University has traditionally played a “filtering down” role in transmitting research to corporations, organizations, and agencies—both private and public—and continuing down to the grass roots of society. The Infopoverty Institute aims to serve in this traditional role of the university by promoting a level of understanding and personal connections—a sort of programmatic and societal “glue”—among four equally important roles in conquering the digital divide around the world:

- those in policy-making positions,
- those who command funding sources
- those who are “in the trenches” installing hardware and software in remote areas around the world, and
- those who are “in the trenches” implementing programs and supporting social change – the largest percentage of whom must be representative of empowered by country and local governments.

The operational plan of the Infopoverty Institute includes the following activities:

1. A web site intended to collect and disseminate information about the efforts toward relieving infopoverty around the world. This includes video presentations and handouts from the Infopoverty World Conference web cast sessions, links to other organizations, and a reference library for a growing body of information on the topic of infopoverty.
2. Hosts and facilitates think tanks, symposia, and seminars related to strategic actions to implement site-based programs in content-specific and culture-specific areas.
3. Training programs for person(s) "in the trenches" who are implementing programs affecting infopoverty.
4. Public relations efforts intended to build public awareness of the need related to infopoverty and opportunities to get involved as part of the solution.