



eBlack Champaign-Urbana event talks jobs, technology

With the current slow economic recovery and lingering unemployment, jobs are a major topic of concern across the country.

The eBlack Champaign-Urbana project held an event Saturday at the Champaign Public Library to discuss how the Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband initiative will affect the local job market and what job-seekers can do to be prepared.

The morning began with a panel discussion featuring Craig Rost, Champaign's deputy city manager for economic development; Tom Carrino, Urbana's economic development manager; Minor Jackson, executive director of workforce development at Parkland College; and Otis Noble of the University of Illinois Office of Equal Opportunity and Access.

Among the panelist, the general consensus was that employers of all kinds will need employees who are prepared for the technological demands of the current job market.

As an example, Carrino cited an Urbana food distribution company. Not only does that company need workers to stock shelves and drive forklifts, but also to use the technology needed to track inventory and shipments.

Another interesting point of discussion was a green-jobs training program at Parkland College, which you can read more about [here](#).

After about an hour of discussion, the group broke out into three smaller sessions. One discussion focused on youth and technology and another continued the discussion on jobs.

I sat in on a discussion about religious institutions and technology. This groups had a lively discussion about the role of churches in familiarizing their members with the technology needed in today's job market.

During the discussion, several participants brought up the idea that by setting up computer labs, churches can educate church members and also reach out to the wider community.

Members of [Salem Baptist Church](#), which has an active computer lab and cyber committee, recommended setting up a committee within each church to work on these issues.

The discussion ended with participants planning to meet early next month to continue talking about how churches can work together to connect their communities to technology.

The morning ended with an open discussion and question-and-answer session covering all the topics of the day.

[Abdul Alkalimat](#) of the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science summed things up by saying that UC2B provides an opportunity for members of the black community to gain equal footing in the job market because everyone, regardless of race, is struggling to keep up with the current shifts in technology.

To see a running summary of the day's discussions, you can search for #eBlackCU on [Twitter](#).

The next eBlackCU event will be held in early March.

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Tuesday, December 21, 2010 - 19:51



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Tuesday, December 21, 2010 - 18:47



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Monday, December 20, 2010 - 14:27



The Odyssey Project: A history
Monday, December 20, 2010 - 11:17



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