Cloud Computing for the Grassroots

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What is Cloud Computing?

- Refers to distributed computing, multiple devices
- Supports accessing the Internet, data, documents, communications through "hertzian space"
- Real time, synchronous communications
- Embeds information into daily rounds
- Creates dynamic networks untethered from offices, buildings, spaces

Why is Cloud Computing important for the Grassroots?

- Participation into systems can be with smaller, less expensive devices (such as cell phones)
- Participation does not depend on physical infrastructure
- Lower cost investments in data storage
- Use of applications found on the Internet saves costs for software purchases and maintenance contracts
- Cloud computing supports dynamic program models

Challenges for Cloud Computing in the Non-profit world

- Digital Skills Divide presents barriers to create skills efficacy
- Need for metaphors that help users scaffold knowledge of changes in computing platforms to older technologies
- Need to develop plans for accessing and managing information and processes that account for applications and systems that are constantly changing
- Privacy protections and concerns

Strategies for Grass Roots Use of Cloud Computing Technologies

- Leverage decentralized capacity of the Cloud-Supports engagement of the base
- Lower cost permits broader participation
- Dissemination advantages through online applications
- Citizens as monitors, observers, informal educators, conduits of information

Example of possibility of Cloud Computing and the Digital City

Visit, use, explore places

Learn about, review urban settings using online resources

Place observation and mapping

Coding and placing mobile barcodes with embed data, media in urban settings

Access information about places embedded in landscape from remote locations

Digital city as a platform supported by cloud computing enables iterative use of data to examine, interact with and depict places, services, functions of city. Digital technologies mitigate, shape, represent, transform place experiences and generate data.