



Skills for Working with Internet Beginners

Instructor Guide - 2012



Who Can Lead an iConnect Training?

The short answer is anybody – the materials provided at e4vt.org/iconnect and the instructions in this manual are designed to let anyone offer an iConnect training. We do assume that instructors are comfortable leading workshops in general and simply need help with content. If you have questions about these materials please contact Helen Labun Jordan at Helen@vtrural.org or (802) 225-6091.

Modifying iConnect Materials

All of the iConnect materials are designed to be modified to meet your particular needs. We offer them as a starting base. The handouts have a PDF *and* a Word version for making adjustments. The Creative Commons license link found with the materials at e4vt.org/iconnect provides more details.

The training as outlined here is a 3-hour workshop with resources for participants to take home and explore further. However, there are many ways to configure this training depending on the context in which it is used. For example:

- Break the workshop up into a series of one-hour sessions
- Offer the workshop as part of a larger series of trainings on using a particular website, trainings on customer service, trainings on skills for library volunteers, etc.
- Use the handouts and manuals at e4vt.org/iconnect to create a series of study-at-home requirements and use workshop time to focus on the role playing exercise
- Highlight particular concepts from iConnect as part of a conference
- Cover the technical components in a webinar with the role play exercise done in-person

Go ahead and experiment. The one caveat is that the Community College of Vermont developed the iConnect program using the 3-hour workshop concept contained in this instructor's guide, so we can't guarantee how other approaches will work in practice. We also strongly recommend an in-person component where participants can practice instructing each other – this component doesn't only put the workshop skills into practice, it also encourages participants to see websites through a beginner's eyes.

Target Audience for iConnect Trainings

Every instructor will have a particular audience in mind when designing an iConnect training. Please be sure to review the Introduction to iConnect (at e4vt.org/iconnect) to ensure that this model meets your needs.

iConnect is geared towards a particular type of Internet helper. Most iConnect participants are people who are *not* digital literacy instructors in the traditional sense of running classes or workshops; they are people who are helping Internet beginners with particular tasks for which digital literacy is a barrier. For example, helping someone file for unemployment benefits or apply to a job, helping someone find information about human and government services, talking customers through navigating a business' website, etc.

The iConnect training can also be useful for people who interact with Internet beginners as part of their daily routine. For example, volunteering at a library that provides public Internet access or answering questions from a family member who is getting online for the first time.

The Internet basics targeted by iConnect are *not* the full range of skills a beginner can learn. Our materials are designed to give participants the tools they need to effectively and efficiently walk beginners through an online task. We believe that effective communication skills include:

- Assessing the level of Internet knowledge of the learner
- Knowing Internet terms and using the correct ones
- Providing handouts and other visuals that can be used to illustrate key concepts
- Practicing how to see a website through a beginner's eyes
- Creating a bridge from the help provided in the moment to resources that beginners can use to learn more about computers and the Internet. There are many great online resources for teaching yourself how to use the Internet and the many tools found there. The trick is getting beginners enough information to be comfortable reaching those online resources.

While elements of this training can help in many different situations, it is not intended to address working with:

- Children – this training is for adult learners
- Learners with underlying basic literacy issues
- Learners who are not fluent in English
- Learners who are interested in more advanced Internet skills, although the resources for learning more included in the iConnect materials can help with these skills

The instructors guide section of e4vt.org/iconnect provides links to other programs that *can* help in working with Internet beginners not covered by iConnect.

Presenting the iConnect Workshop - Overview

Overview

The iConnect workshop is a three-hour training for state agencies, community organizations, town libraries, senior centers and anyone else working with clientele who need to develop the basic computer and Internet skills necessary to access resources and services online. It is designed to help training participants both practice skills for effectively answering particular questions and for imparting the information Internet beginners need to continue learning basic skills on their own.

Objectives

Workshop participants will:

- Describe characteristics of adult learners that may help or hinder acquisition of basic computer and Internet skills
- Evaluate the computer and Internet skills of clients or learners whom they are assisting;
- Demonstrate the skills necessary to use a computer to access the Internet, find desired information, and use Internet resources, such as email, online applications, and social media
- Explain the security precautions that all Internet users must observe to protect their personal and financial information
- Locate resources on the Internet that can assist clients or learners with developing self-sufficiency and additional skills in using the Internet to meet recreational, educational, and career goals

Materials Needed for the Workshop

- iConnect Packet (packet contents list is at e4vt.org/iconnect)
- iConnect Handouts to Use with Beginners (at e4vt.org/iconnect)
- 8-16 computers (one per participant) with Internet access
- Instructor computer with projector

Advance Preparation for the Workshop

- Send confirmation e-mail with any resources participants should review ahead of the workshop, see sample e-mail on next page
- Set up snacks and drinks outside of classroom (if possible), in an area for participants to arrive and greet each other
- Set up computer lab with working login code displayed in classroom for participants
- Set up overhead projector with links to iConnect materials ready to display

Sample Confirmation E-mail

Thank you for registering to participate in the iConnect training in skills for working with Internet beginners. Your session will take place:

[DATE & TIME]

[LOCATION]

[ANY PARTICULAR PARKING / DRIVING INSTRUCTIONS]

A packet of supporting materials will be provided at the training. We recommend taking some time before the training to explore resources online for learning basic computer and Internet concepts. These tutorials can give you a sense approaches to teaching the fundamental skills in digital literacy. Some sample resources are found here:

<http://e4vt.org/intro-to-the-web>

Note that this iConnect training has a limited number of spaces. If you will not be able to join us, please let us know so that we can allow someone else to take your place.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at:

[CONTACT INFORMATION]

Agenda at a Glance

The annotated agenda with instructions follows

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 10 Minutes | Greeting & Coffee |
| 10 Minutes | Introduction
Overview of agenda & workshop goals |
| 20 Minutes | Participant introductions & identification of particular questions they may bring to the workshop. |
| 20 Minutes | Discussion of Pedagogy of Working with Adult Learners
Skills & principles of effective engagement
Effective strategies for helping adult learners begin to learn computer skills on their own. |
| 20 Minutes | Resources and Materials
Tools to improve effectiveness <i>and</i> efficiency in working with online beginners – see following materials list |
| 40 Minutes | Role Play Using Discussed Principles & Resources
Particular scenario will depend on workshop audience |
| 30 Minutes | Role Play Debrief |
| 20+ Minutes | Additional Resources & Conclusion |

Workshop Agenda

Total Time: 3 hours

Greeting and Coffee & Snacks (10 minutes)

Provide light snacks for workshop participants

Introduction and Framing of Workshop (10 minutes)

- Set context for workshop with a brief presentation of objectives, clearly describing skills participants will gain with successful completion of workshop – see page 3 of this manual on the iConnect audience
- Explain why this particular audience has been recruited for an iConnect training and general goals for applying the skills to their work / daily life
- Review agenda (Agenda at a Glance is included in packet materials)
- Encourage participants to place themselves in a beginner's mindset, clearing away all assumptions about what their clients may or may not know about computer and Internet usage

Introductions of Workshop Participants (20 minutes)

Ask each participant to introduce him/herself, including:

- Agency / organization / business where participant works
- Brief description of a challenge that the participant faces when assisting with computer and/or Internet tasks

Identifying specific applications of the skills learned in iConnect will help set a framework and provide examples for the following group discussion and the role play.

Group Discussion of Strategies for Working with Adult Learners (20 Minutes)

- Discuss learning styles, encouraging participants to share experiences and insights from their work with Internet beginners
- Discuss iConnect handout, *Tips for Working with Adult Learners*, emphasizing benefits of positive exposures to new learning opportunities for adults

The Tips for Working with Adult Learners sheet provides a structure for thinking about approaches to instruction – many participants will be implementing some of these techniques already and the opening discussion allows them to identify these strategies by reflecting on their current work before referring to the handout.

- Emphasize the role of self-directed learning. Adult learners *can* be self-directed in learning Internet skills and iConnect participants can get them started on that path.
- Discuss what hooks might draw the beginners that participants work with into learning more on their own, and what some of the barriers may be.
- A note on barriers to self-teaching – review some of the resources available at e4vt.org/intro-to-the-web ahead of time. This section includes links to classes (for learners who prefer more structure) and information on finding public Internet access (for learners who don't have easy access to computers). The Instructors section of e4vt.org/iconnect also contains information on programs to help with English as a second language and basic literacy skills.

Resources & Materials (20 minutes)

See e4vt.org/iconnect for a link to the packet materials to review. Some points to discuss during the review:

- Basics Manual – This manual is designed to be used to help instructors explain basic concepts. There are also the stand alone handouts that add detail to particular aspects of the manual, such as Internet security and how to reach a website.
- Remember that the basics are being delivered so that learners can feel comfortable enough online to begin to explore on their own and learn from online tutorials.
- Glossary of Terms – This information is not just for the beginner; if you are comfortable with using a computer and work mostly with other people who are comfortable using a computer then it's likely you aren't very precise with vocabulary terms.
- Accessibility – Participants interested in the learning environment might also be interested in the toolkit on building beginner friendly websites that is available at e4vt.org (toolkits section). For audiences that have input into website design, the tips found there can be a relevant addition to the basic iConnect training.

Role Play (40 minutes)

This active learning exercise provides an experiential understanding of the iConnect material. Participants don't only practice instruction, but also practice seeing the Internet through the eyes of a beginner. Prior to the workshop, the instructor should decide on what website to explore based on the particular needs of the audience participating.

- Break participants into pairs, with one participant playing the role of helper and one playing the role of an Internet beginner
- Have the pairs understand the checklist for assessing digital literacy skills and be prepared to incorporate that into initial interaction
- Direct participants to the preselected website and provide a task to complete there
- In each pair, participants complete their online task while role-playing a likely dynamic between the helper and an Internet beginner struggling to use the computer in this context

- Encourage participants to use iConnect materials during the role-play to demonstrate key concepts, such as filling out a password
- For some participant groups it might make sense to set up a telephone simulation with each participant in front of a separate computer

Role Play Debrief (30 minutes)

The workshop instructor will conduct a group discussion debriefing of the computer role play. Some questions for group discussion:

- How did the role play compare with your experience of working with Internet beginners?
- How long did this exercise take, compared to how long helpers would normally have to provide assistance?
- What tasks gave Internet beginners the most difficulty?
- In what ways were you able to utilize iConnect materials? How were they helpful?

For some participant groups it may be relevant to also discuss how they can help Internet beginners continue to practice and work on their own.

Additional Resources & Conclusion (20-30 Minutes)

Instructor will display some of the recommended tutorials for adult learners to develop their Internet skills, and ask participants to access and briefly explore these resources. Participants should have had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with resources beforehand through e4vt.org/intro-to-the-web.

In conclusion, the instructor encourages participants to practice skills learned during the workshop in a comfortable environment by working with a family member or friend who would benefit from increased digital literacy skills.

Workshop Evaluation

We value your input! Please help us improve this workshop by completing this evaluation form and leaving it in the training room at the end of the session. Thank you!

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The workshop was well-organized.					
Workshop handouts and other materials were useful.					
Workshop activities were helpful and relevant to workshop objectives.					
There was adequate time for discussion and questions.					
The training room or computer lab was comfortable and well-suited to workshop activities.					
The workshop presenter delivered clear explanations and instructions.					
My learning in the workshop will help me in my interactions with Internet beginners.					
Overall, the workshop met my expectations.					
I would recommend this workshop to others who help Internet beginners.					

Please add any other comments that will help us improve the workshop: