

WinstonNet – General Information

WinstonNet is a non-profit community outreach endeavor with the goal of “bridging the digital divide” that currently exists in the Winston-Salem and Forsyth County communities. Created by !dealliance, WinstonNet serves as a partnership between many of the major academic, social, and corporate institutions in Winston-Salem. The current Board of Directors come from diverse areas including Wake Forest University Reynolda Campus, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Forsyth Technical Community College, Winston-Salem State University, Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce, !dealliance, Salem College, NC School of the Arts and the Forsyth County Public Library. With such strong backing and support, this partnership hopes to spawn a new era in Information Technology, while strengthening and connecting the community of Winston-Salem.

By reaching out primarily to non-profit agencies and the underserved population, WinstonNet wants to set the standard for ubiquitous computing. Connecting the community through a plethora of shared resources, community databases and other valuable common tools will be available to Winston-Salem residents in their philanthropic efforts to create a strong community network and build sound relationships. Striving to be a prototype for the nation, WinstonNet is employing cutting edge technology to accomplish these goals. The thin-client computing model affords WinstonNet participants great opportunities unparalleled by stand-alone machines. Since thin-client computing – Citrix especially (the WinstonNet software package) – is completely server-based, the computing power of the client machines is negligible. All files and programs are stored on centrally controlled servers. Therefore, the physical location of client machines is no longer important. Establishing a mobile environment enables a wider range of access for all users. This concept is best demonstrated within the standard classroom paradigm. Typically students may receive a few hours of computer time per week in their curriculum. Any work done by the students is storage dependent, meaning the students must always use the same machine or carry around portable storage (i.e. floppy disks), and must be completed in a short window of time. With WinstonNet, they are no longer tied to one machine, rather they can gain the same access to programs and files based on personalized logins and passwords. So when the students leave school for the day, they can go home, to a library, or to an after-school club and continue their educational pursuits in the same manner as they would at school. This increases the educational potential of the entire school system, as well as the individual student.