High Tech/High Touch

**Merging New Technologies
and Traditional Principles
to Gather Feedback
and Build Consensus**

Paul Tandy, APR
Director of Communications
Parkway School District
ptandy@parkwayschools.net

Chris Tennill, APR
Chief Communications Officer
School District of Clayton
christennill@claytonschools.net

Today's Presentation

Digital handouts and notes:
www.claytonschools.net/DESE2014

What is Engagement?

- Process ... Not an action step
- Encourages multiple points of view
- Builds legitimacy and shared responsibility
- Involves diverse stakeholders in shaping the future
- Creates allies and encouraging collaboration
- Raising awareness and momentum for change

Why is it important?

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

To Engage or Not To Engage?

- That is the question!

- Don't ask unless you plan to honor the input and the relationship.

Questions to Ask ...

1. Are the decision makers willing to accept stakeholder input?
2. Do your stakeholders care?
3. What is your intended outcome?
4. Is there time to do it right?

Are you willing to accept stakeholder input?

- Don't ask ... If you already know what you want to do.
- Define the level of influence

Do your stakeholders care?

- Focus on issues that generate interest
- Investment of human capital (time and resources) will be tremendous
  ◦ Make sure people care!
- Use research to answer this question

What is your intended outcome?

- Convincing/Selling ≠ Engaging

- Are you looking to build understanding of the problem or just support for your solution?

Is there time to do it right?

- Think of the good relationships you have in your life ...
  - How quickly were they built?

Why Public Engagement Works

- Public permission is needed for meaningful change
- People won't support what they don't understand
- Public is resistant to top-down approach
- Discovery is more powerful than persuasion
- It is a powerful communication tool
- Builds an army for implementation

10 Core Principles of Public Engagement

1. Begin by Listening
2. Attend to People's Concerns
3. Get Beyond the "Usual Suspects"
4. Frame the Issues for Discussion
5. Provide the "Right" Information
6. Move Beyond Wishful Thinking
7. Expect Obstacles and Resistance
8. Provide Variety of Dialogue
9. Respond Thoughtfully and Conscientiously
10. Build Long-term Capacity

Begin By Listening

- Do your homework
  - Use research
- Develop an understanding of
  - "Where" the non-experts are
  - Common language
  - Initial direction
- Avoid
  - Starting w/faulty assumptions
  - Jargon and "education-ese"

Attend to People's Leading Concerns

- Need to reconcile
  - What "they're" worried about
  - What "you're" worried about
- Where are the gaps?
- What do you have to acknowledge in order to begin moving forward?

Get Beyond the "Usual Suspects"

- Satisfaction/support are a bell curve
  - Reach out to the people in the middle
- Include the raving fans and the raving lunatics
- Don't forget the CAVE people
- An invitation to everyone is an invitation to no one.

Frame Issues For Deliberation

- Begin with a clear purpose
- Focus on conflicts and strategies
- Account for varying expertise
- Avoid tactical details and technical minutiae
- Manage people's expectations
- Don't ask questions unless you are completely prepared for answers!

Provide the "Right" Information

- Right Type
- Right Amount
- At the Right Time
- Ask people what they need to know
- Avoid shotgun dissemination
  - Present concise, thoughtful information
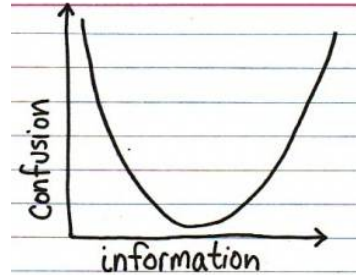
Move Beyond Wishful Thinking

- Focus on real solutions
- Manage expectations
- Watch for the knee-jerk reactions
  - Be able to provide corrective info if appropriate

Expect Obstacles and Resistance

- It it's not messy, it's not working
- True engagement may
  - Threaten identities
  - Challenge perceived interests
  - Ask tough questions
  - Provide difficult answers
- Common ground is often found at the end of a bumpy road

Variety of Deliberation and Dialogue

- People learn, think, talk and act differently
- Inclusive, instructive and iterative
- Consider media and medium
  - Conversations
  - Study groups
  - Online surveys
  - Interactive experiences

Respond Thoughtfully and Conscientiously

- Close the loop
  - Meet the expectations that you set
- Explain how engagement fits into the "big picture" moving forward
- Increases people's personal stake
- Answer the questions that you've asked

Build Long-Term Capacity

- Work has a dual purpose
  - Solving a concrete problem
  - Building social intelligence (John Dewey)
    - Community communication & collaboration
    - Solve common problems
    - Enrich public life
- New group of "usual suspects"
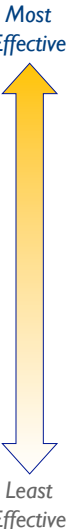 - Impact future BOE elections

Other Considerations

- Measure your results
- Be prepared to work
- Transparency builds trust

How do we do this?

- These things can work ...
  - Newsletter
  - Media Coverage
  - Posting Stories to the Website
  - Messaging System
    - Phone calls • E-Mails • Text Messaging
- One-way communication
- They inform but do not engage

Reaching your Audience

Most Effective

- Face to Face
- Small group discussion
- Large group presentation
- Phone call
- Personal note/letter/e-mail
- Mass-mailed letter/e-mail
- Newsletters, brochures, etc.
- Press coverage (newspaper, TV, etc)
- Advertising (newspaper, TV, radio, etc)

Least Effective

Audience Retention

- People remember:
  ◦ 20 percent of what they are told
  ◦ 30 percent of what they see/read
  ◦ 50 percent of what they see and hear
  ◦ 70 percent of what they say
  ◦ 90 percent of what they do

> **Tell them.**
> **Tell them again.**
> **Then tell them you told them.**

But these are better ...

- Well planned/organized meetings/events
  - Workshops/Open houses
- Small group work sessions and one-on-one activities
- Opinion leader groups
- Forums/Town Hall Meetings
- Sewing Circle
- "Same-room" Communications

Use Research as Your Guide

- Methods
  - Focus groups/input sessions
  - Telephone surveys
  - Mail/email surveys
  - Internet panels
  - Communication audits
  - Tracking surveys/on-going measurement
- Weight them appropriately
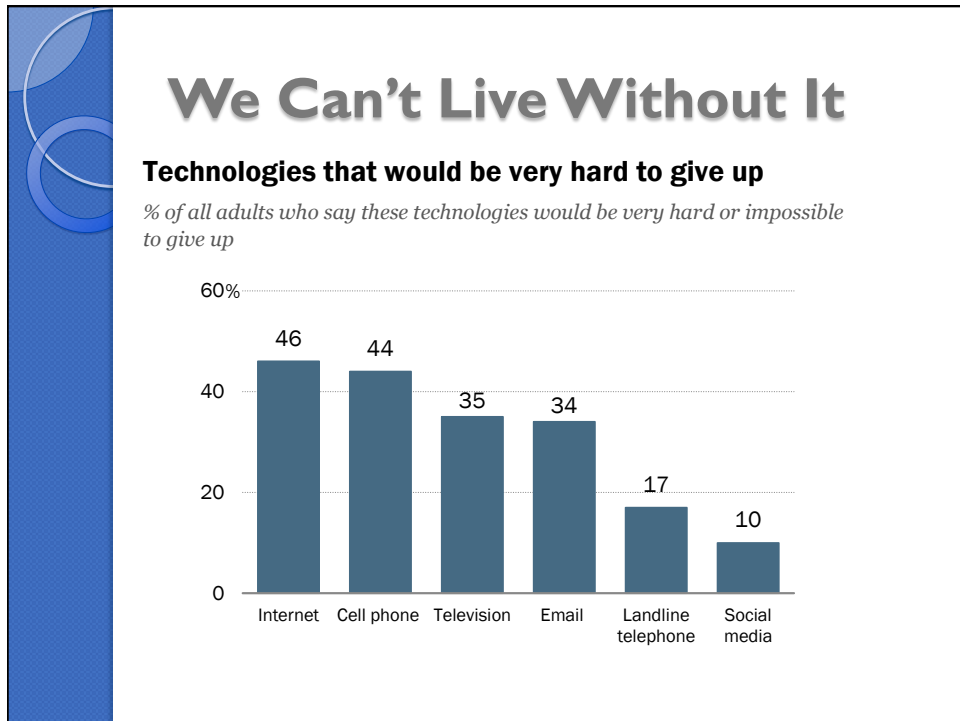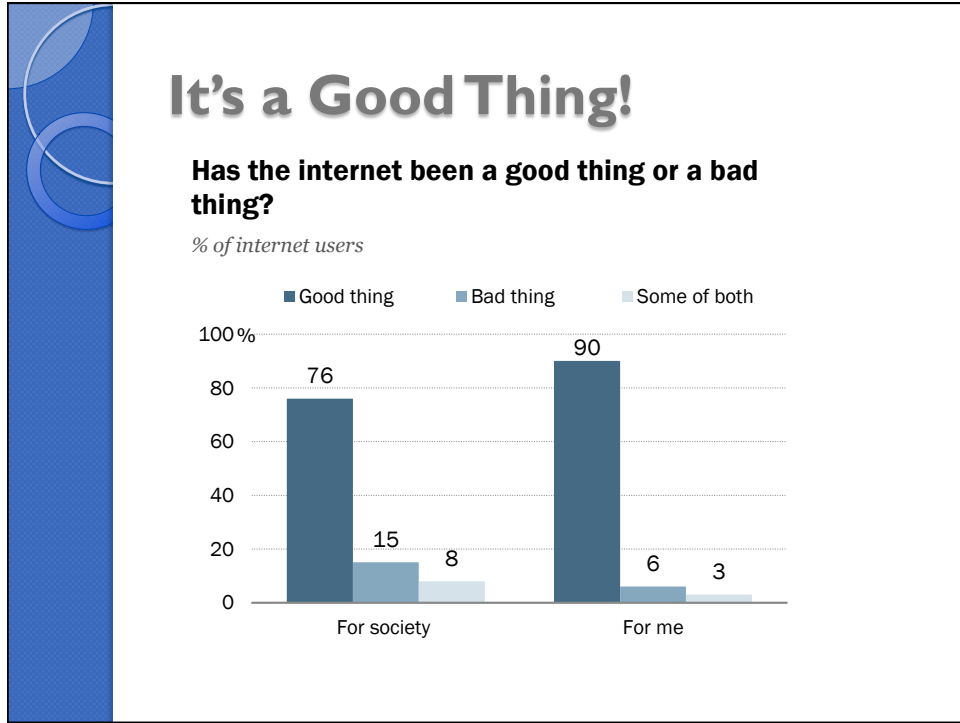
How Else Can We Do This?
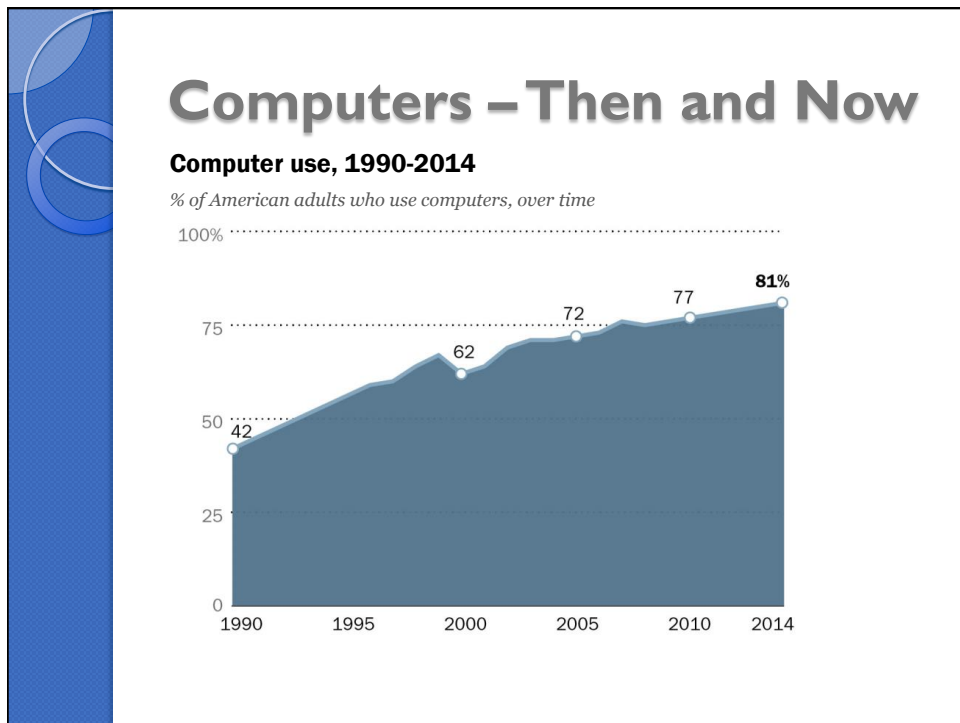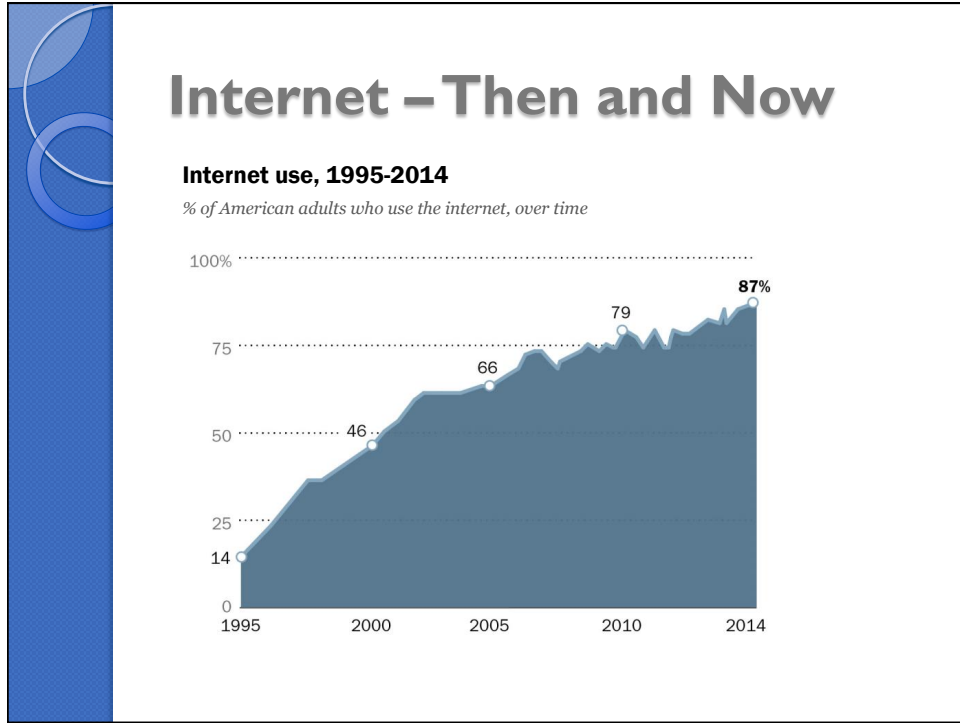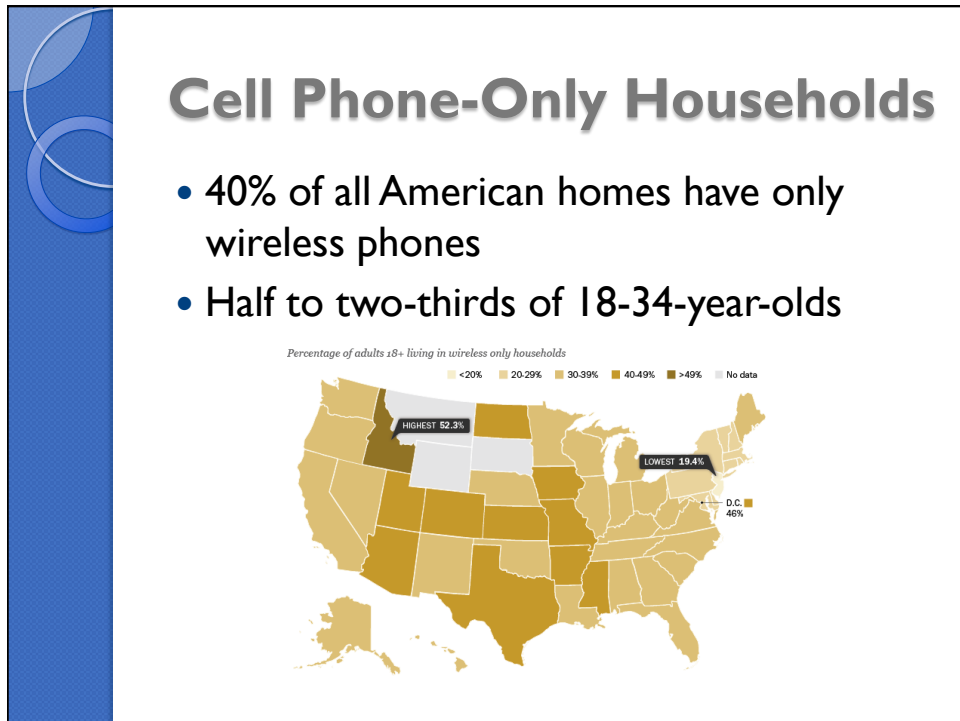

How do we know technology has changed us?

Research Supports It.

It's a Good Thing!

Has the internet been a good thing or a bad thing?

% of internet users

Bar chart with legend: Good thing, Bad thing, Some of both.

For society: Good thing 76, Bad thing 15, Some of both 8
For me: Good thing 90, Bad thing 6, Some of both 3

We Can't Live Without It

Technologies that would be very hard to give up

% of all adults who say these technologies would be very hard or impossible to give up

Bar chart:
Internet 46, Cell phone 44, Television 35, Email 34, Landline telephone 17, Social media 10

Internet – Then and Now

Internet use, 1995-2014

% of American adults who use the internet, over time

Computers – Then and Now

Computer use, 1990-2014

% of American adults who use computers, over time

Cell Phones

Cell phone ownership, 2000-2014

% of American adults who own a cell phone, over time

Cell Phone-Only Households

- 40% of all American homes have only wireless phones
- Half to two-thirds of 18-34-year-olds

Smart Phones

Smartphone ownership, over time

% of American adults who own a smartphone, over time

Social Media

Growth of Social Media

Social networking site use by age group, 2005-2013
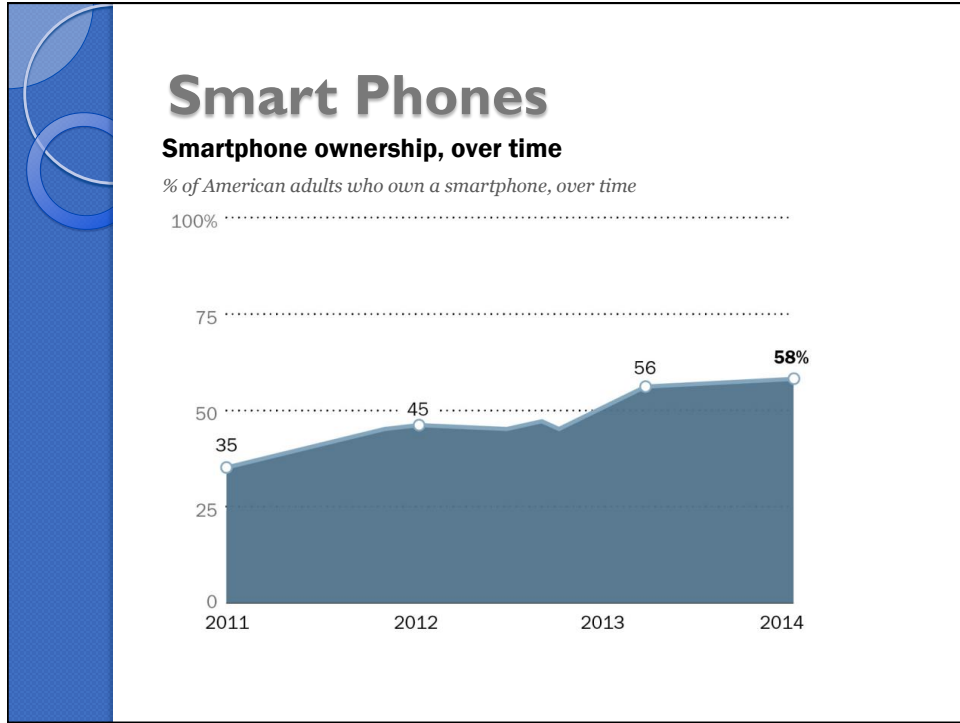*% of internet users in each age group who use social networking sites, over time*
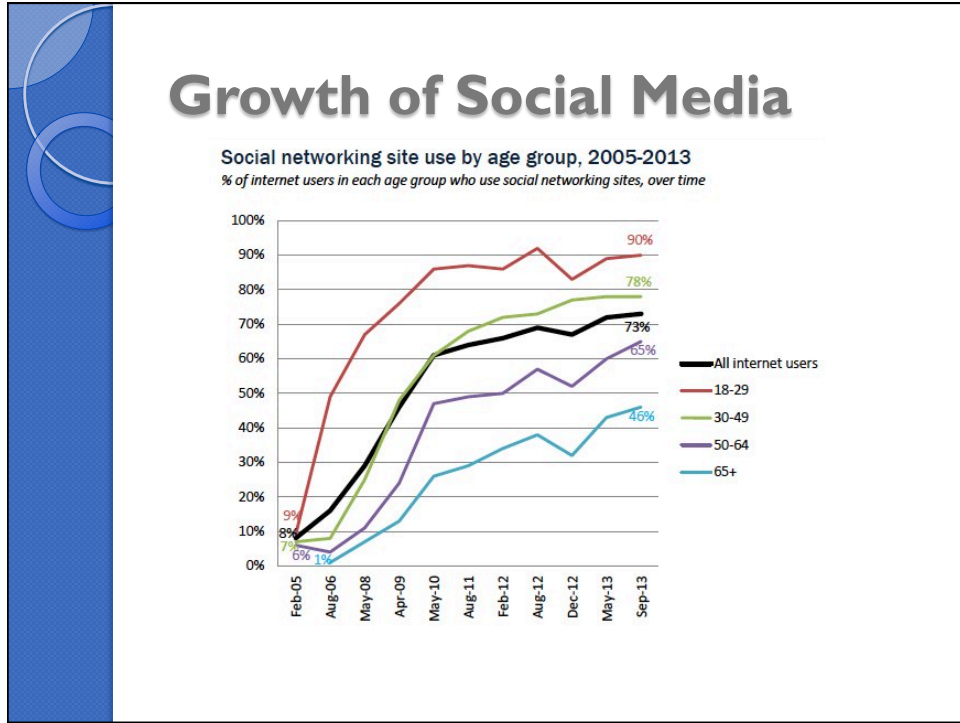
Who Tweets?

- Ethnicity
  - African American – 29%
  - Hispanic – 16%
  - White – 16%
- Age Group
  - 18-29 – 31%
  - 30-49 – 19%
  - 50-64 – 9%
  - 65+ – 5%
- Community Type
  - Urban 18% • Suburban 19% • Rural 11%

Who is using Facebook?

- Ethnicity
  - African American – 76%
  - Hispanic – 73%
  - White – 71%
- Age Group
  - 18-29 – 84%
  - 30-49 – 79%
  - 50-64 – 60%
  - 65+ – 45%
- Community Type
  - Urban 75% • Suburban 69% • Rural 71%

Engaging with Technology

- Social Media
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
- Streaming Meetings
- Interactive Website
- Audience Response Systems
- Web surveys and polls

Engagement ...

- Do you want to engage?
  - Key questions to ask
- Use sound principles to guide engagement efforts.
- Interact with your community on multiple fronts:
  - One-Way
  - Same-Room
  - Technology

High Tech/High Touch

**Merging New Technologies
and Traditional Principles
to Gather Feedback
and Build Consensus**

www.claytonschools.net/DESE2014

Paul Tandy, APR
Director of Communications
Parkway School District
ptandy@parkwayschools.net

Chris Tennill, APR
Chief Communications Officer
School District of Clayton
christennill@claytonschools.net