



Civic Tech Forum – KCMO City Council Candidates
Responses by Dennis Anthony, 5th District At-Large (blue)

Digital Divide

Over the last few years, we have seen an increased focus on the digital divide--the lack of access to computers, Internet connectivity and other digital tools that are increasingly necessary for full participation in civic life and the modern economy.

What do you think the city's role is in bridging the digital divide?

--Currently we have public access computers in 8 of 10 Community Centers...We should begin talks soon, planning for future install in each Community Center more computers for public use, possibly donated and maintained by Business, as funds permit.

Also, I like a non-profit organization called OLPC...One Laptop Per Child, this was set up in 2005 to get laptops at about 100 bucks each to every child. I would like to see some version of that in KCMO.

What goals do you believe Kansas City should set in bridging the digital divide, and what strategies should we adopt to achieve those goals?

--Local leadership should brainstorm more practical ways for Kansas Citians to get access who otherwise cannot do for themselves, as I mentioned above.

Open Data

In the past couple years, Kansas City has established an open data policy and launched data.kcmo.org to make city data more accessible and usable. This is important because it enables citizens to do things like monitor 311 requests online, look up property records through GIS, and even create new applications to make the city work better, such as what the Code for America brigade does in its "civic hacking" meetups.

Have you ever used Kansas City's open data portal?

--yes....usually GIS and Action Center info)

Do you support an ongoing commitment to open access to city data?

--yes. This also assists in a more transparent government.



What are the biggest opportunities that a philosophy of open data offers, and what are some of the risks?

--Accurate information is empowering to the Receiver, the risks of hacking personal info and other security Risks are a downside.

What approaches do you support to manage those opportunities and risks?

--the Director of the city IT department is tasked to oversee and manage technology activities. The Director will collaborate with Council, local Activists, city manager and Mayor to plan, organize and actuate public IT endeavors.

Economic Development

Traditionally, economic development has been defined by real estate development and the ability to attract and retain large employers. Technology is changing the nature of work and jobs in some ways that we understand and others that we don't fully grasp yet. The ability to freelance and do "project work" is increasing, large employers don't offer the long-term stability they once did, machines are able to do more jobs once done by people, and the technology skills needed to find jobs change more quickly than the educational system can adapt.

How do you think the city's economic development tool kit needs to change in order to compete in the current economic environment?

--It is very very important to continue funding and advance the LAUNCHKC endeavors! Good progress! Techweek will have a 7 day conference September 14th...important to pursue these type of events in KCMO!!

Education and Training the workforce of the future beginning at age 4,... (Hickman Mills School District now offers FREE pre-school for all 4 yr olds...we need that in each of the 14 school districts!) and -- Providing a modern, fully maintained infrastructure --clean and free of crime...

--we must Love, educate and train children from Birth to age 5 much more than some of us parents do presently.

I maintain that children should be parented in a cohesive, loving family, and ensure the opportunity for all day PreSchool for all children at age 4. That gives us a kickstart foundation for the future. We do not need more 10th grade dropouts turning to crime in order to pay their bills. Because Crime negatively affects in a big way Economic Development, we must focus on getting Teenagers to graduate; then go on to military training, vocational training, or community college or university.



In this way our city Leaders assist in grooming a healthy, educated work force that businesses across the Region DESIRE for employment. In addition, the city should have a modern, maintained, clean infrastructure and a Regional transportation system for the 21st century that includes 100 additional modern Hybrid electric buses.

Smart City

The city announced a groundbreaking “smart city” partnership with Cisco early last year, but details are still being worked out and specific information has been scarce. The idea behind “Smart Cities” is that data collected from digital devices--whether electronic sensors and cameras managed by the cities or the mobile phones and wearable devices that citizens purchase--can benefit the entire community in areas like public safety, traffic management, health care, and energy efficiency. Specific examples may range from red light cameras to street lights that dim when they can sense that no one is around.

How proactive do you think the city should be in developing these sorts of solutions?

--the Leadership should further brainstorm ideas and leave nothing off the table...However, I am very much against the specific “Big Brother” ideas such as red light cameras and dim street lights...both of which have NO value-added to citizens.

How would you balance the priority of the city to support the common good with the preferences of individuals who may not want to participate or worry about their privacy?

--I have full 100% opposition to anything that smacks of “Big Brother” ...this is still a Free country. We want a transparent and honest attempt to bring everyone online, but respect for the Individual is paramount.

Sharing Economy

There is a phenomenon sometimes called the “sharing economy” or the “collaborative economy” that encompasses car services like Uber and Lyft (which recently caused some controversy in their entry into the KC market), lodging companies like Airbnb, coworking spaces, community gardens and other activities that blur the line between personal and commercial. Municipal regulations and tax codes often aren’t set up to deal with these sorts of services.

How should the city treat deal with these emerging business models in a way that is friendly to innovation and also respects the need to protect the public and fund city services?



--These new services that cause some level of heartburn at city hall might have avoided any drama by approaching the city before commencing business activity. Out of respect for the Law, it seems self-evident that any legitimate business would make inquiries ahead of time...AND then, the city owes a listening ear to these companies, provide advice and encouragement, and simplify the bureaucracy of doing business with the city.

Which collaborative economy activities, if any, do you participate in (e.g., do you use Airbnb when you travel)?

--I regularly buy and sell on EBay.

The Playbook

KC Digital Drive's charter document is [the Playbook](#) that resulted from the Mayors' Bistate Innovations Team recommendations in 2012, which has been [updated and released in digital form](#).

Have you had a chance to review the Playbook?

--yes

Where do you think we've seen the most progress and where do you see the greatest opportunities?

--it appears to me that we are scratching the surface of each, but probably a great area of opportunity to expand education and training to our people is: Every community center in KCMO accessible to more local residents' tech needs.

Personal Tech Adoption

We all have to find balance in how much we choose to incorporate technology into our personal lives.

How do you decide when to absorb new technology tools into your life and work?

--When the tech SIMPLIFIES a product or process that I need, that captures my interest.



What social media channels are you most active on? What are your favorite tech tools that you've recently started to use?

--7 days a week usage of email and Facebook. I signed up for Twitter, but it won't let me in to use it, for some unknown reason (?)

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