

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Graduate School of Library and Information Science

Library and Information Science Building
501 East Daniel Street
Champaign, IL 61820-6211



Fact Sheet: Prairienet
Founded 1993

Overview: Prairienet is a member- and donation-supported community information network for Champaign-Urbana and the surrounding East-Central Illinois region, offered as a community service by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Most of Prairienet's services are provided by volunteers and are coordinated by its staff.

Mission:

- ▶ Strengthening community organizations by helping them provide and retrieve networked information.
- ▶ Empowering individuals by providing access to networked information and by teaching the skills necessary to access and use this information.
- ▶ Facilitating information and resource sharing in support of community development efforts.
- ▶ Promoting equity in access to computer resources for everyone in the community.

Services: Prairienet is first and foremost a Community Network, hosting information from hundreds of area businesses, non-profit organizations, churches, schools, libraries, and hobby clubs. This information is donation supported and is freely accessible to members and visitors. Memberships for additional services are available for both individuals and organizations. Connection options include Prairienet Classic, which is a menu-based text interface, and PPPrairienet, which permits the use of graphical browsers and programs. Members have access to a full range of Internet services, including e-mail, Newsgroups, the World Wide Web, FTP, Telnet, chat, and on-line games.

In addition, Prairienet sponsors a variety of service programs:

- ▶ Public Access Sites—terminals in public buildings that provide access to community members who do not own computers.
- ▶ Community Computer Recycling—reconditioned computers are distributed to low-income community residents and service organizations as part of the Community Networking Initiative, which is helping these residents and organizations build community networking.
- ▶ Community Links Program—training, computer equipment donations, consulting and technical support are provided to technology-poor social service agencies.
- ▶ Training—regular opportunities to learn and explore Prairienet and the Internet in a relaxed atmosphere.
- ▶ Low-cost and free memberships for low-income residents.
- ▶ Community Calendar, free Electronic Mailing Lists, and more.

Clients: Prairienet currently counts more than 2000 individuals and 500 organizations among its growing membership. Special emphasis is placed on serving local non-profit organizations, community members with low income and limited access to technology, and those new to on-line services. Its Web server is accessed upwards of 1 million times per week and Prairienet welcomes over 1000 visitor logins each month.

Contact: Dean Leigh Estabrook, Ph.D., or Director Martin Wolske, Ph.D.
Phone: (217) 333-5218; e-mail, info@prairienet.org; WWW <http://www.prairienet.org>