

## Hamilton County Business & Industry Sector

### Why Is This Important?

Today, a number of factors are forcing businesses to change time-honored models of operation, including global competition, partnering/outsourcing and demand for more personalized services. Each of these trends can save businesses time and money, but they require a sound technological infrastructure. The good news is that while these trends are becoming more prevalent, the costs of technology are falling. Businesses cannot be sheltered from competitors. The reality is that Hamilton County businesses must adapt to the changing world in which they operate. Businesses have to learn the tools of the networked economy and innovate in order to survive.

The business & industry sector often experiences the most direct benefit of high-speed Internet with increased sales, profit and growth. However, many businesses and industries are utilizing high-speed Internet to simplify processes, increase efficiency and develop new marketing methods. While a company's employees benefit immediately from Broadband implementation, the consumer also ultimately sees lower prices and better quality.

Increased benefits from the implementation of high-speed Internet are not just for large corporations. For smaller businesses, technology creates an even playing field with much larger companies. eCommerce, the buying and selling of goods over the Internet, allows small or even home-based businesses to operate and sell their goods on a national and sometimes international scale. Where small businesses were once limited to only local customers they could attract through local advertising and word of mouth, the Internet now allows them to attract customers across the globe.

#### Hamilton County Business & Industry

- Hamilton County Economic Development, [www.hamilton-co.org](http://www.hamilton-co.org)
- Greater Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, [www.hamilton-ohio.com](http://www.hamilton-ohio.com)
- Ohio Economic Development, [www.OhioMeansBusiness.com](http://www.OhioMeansBusiness.com)
- Ohio Chamber Of Commerce, [www.ohiochamber.com](http://www.ohiochamber.com)
- Ohio Department of Development, [www.odod.state.oh.us](http://www.odod.state.oh.us)
- ODOD Office of Policy Research and Strategic Planning, [www.odod.state.oh.us/research](http://www.odod.state.oh.us/research)
- Appalachian Ohio Business, [www.firstohio.com/DataCenter/Economic.aspx](http://www.firstohio.com/DataCenter/Economic.aspx)
- Small Business Development Centers, [www.seorf.ohiou.edu](http://www.seorf.ohiou.edu)

Utilizing Broadband and technology, businesses with multiple locations can save money by implementing Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). VoIP allows businesses to call between those locations with little or no costs. It allows users to travel anywhere in the world and still make and receive phone calls. Additionally, VoIP allows for collaboration not available when using traditional telephone methods.

Technology has allowed larger businesses to maximize efficiency in order to better serve customers. Email, intranets, paperless operations and automated logistics processes are just a few examples of how the Internet is allowing large companies to work with much greater efficiency and at lower costs. These practices allow those businesses to expand into other markets, grow their companies and even pass the savings on to their customers.

### Where Are We Today?

Hamilton County residents utilize the Internet to conduct business through a variety of methods at a rate slightly higher than the state average. Uses of the Internet by Hamilton County residents are as follows:

- 87% of residents research products online (77% statewide)
- 85% of residents purchase products online (70% statewide)
- 67% of residents use online banking (55% statewide)
- 46% of residents search for jobs online (50% statewide)
- 29% of residents buy, sell or trade investments online (19% statewide)

According to Ohio's March 2009 Labor Market Information, Hamilton County's unemployment rate is currently 8.7%. The county's largest employers by type are:

- Professional and Business Services with 102,890 employees
- Trade, Transportation, and Utilities with 91,134 employees
- Education and Health Services with 87,147 employees

Within the business & industry sector, technology and Broadband are viewed as vital to the economy and Hamilton County's growing success.

The Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, [www.hamilton-ohio.com](http://www.hamilton-ohio.com), is designed to meet community

needs. Among other things, it is a civic clearinghouse, a public relations counselor, a legislative representative, an information bureau and a research and promotion medium. It now offers links via its website for worker's compensation as well as health insurance and business resources. It is often the first place tourists, businesses and those seeking residential/business relocation turn to for information about the county.

Media services in Hamilton County are beginning to utilize the Internet and Broadband services to expand their offerings to readers, listeners and viewers. Hamilton County media services with online presences currently include:

Cincinnati Business Courier, [www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati](http://www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati)

Cincinnati Enquirer, [www.enquirer.com](http://www.enquirer.com)

Cincinnati Post, [www.cincypost.com](http://www.cincypost.com)

Community Press Newspapers, [www.communitypress.com](http://www.communitypress.com)

WAKW 93.3 FM, [www.wakw.com](http://www.wakw.com)

WCIN 1480 AM, [www.1480wcin.com](http://www.1480wcin.com)

WCKY 1530 AM, [www.1360homer.com](http://www.1360homer.com)

WDBZ 1230 AM/WIZF 101.1 FM, [www.1230thebuzz.com](http://www.1230thebuzz.com)

WEBN 102.7 FM, [www.webn.com](http://www.webn.com)

WGRR 103.5 FM, [www.wgrr.com](http://www.wgrr.com)

WGUC 90.9 FM, [www.wguc.org](http://www.wguc.org)

WKFS 107.1 FM, [www.kisscincinnati.com](http://www.kisscincinnati.com)

WKRC 550 AM, [www.55krc.com](http://www.55krc.com)

WKRQ 101.9 FM, [www.wkrq.com](http://www.wkrq.com)

WLW 700 AM, [www.700wlw.com](http://www.700wlw.com)

WMOJ 100.3 FM, [www.wmoj.com](http://www.wmoj.com)

WOFX 92.5 FM, [www.wofx.com](http://www.wofx.com)

WRRM 98.5 FM, [www.warm98.com](http://www.warm98.com)

WSAI 1530 AM, [www.wsai.com](http://www.wsai.com)

WSWD 94.9 FM, [www.949thesound.com](http://www.949thesound.com)

WTSJ 1050 AM, [www.wtsj.com](http://www.wtsj.com)

WUBE 105.1 FM, [www.wube.com](http://www.wube.com)

WVMX 94.1 FM, [www.mixcincinnati.com](http://www.mixcincinnati.com)  
 WVXU 91.7 FM (Xavier Univ. (NPR), [www.wvxu.org](http://www.wvxu.org)  
 WYGY 97.3 FM, [www.thewolf973.com](http://www.thewolf973.com)

Hamilton is an important shipping center, as the main industries are: machinery, transportation equipment, food, metals, publishing and printing, chemicals, automobile parts, aircraft engines, machine tools, soaps, cosmetics, sand, gravel, greenhouse and nursery products. Cincinnati, the county seat and the third largest Ohio city, is the traffic and commercial center between the south and north-central United States. The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra was one of the nation's first orchestras. The Cincinnati Reds, formerly the Red Stockings, were the world's first professional baseball team. Hamilton County is the focal area for biotechnology activities in the region. While the metropolitan area is below average in degree of specialization, the county is well above average. Hamilton County is also the central county of the Cincinnati Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA). The Community COMPASS– Hamilton County’s Master Plan and Strategies – was initiated in 2000 to establish a shared long-range vision for 49 political jurisdictions within Hamilton County.

Business & Industry Sector Assessment Overview			
Category	Current Assessment	Future Vision	Additional Comments
Networked Places	4	4	Goal is to improve business revenue, allow telecommuting and remote education for the workforce.
Applications & Services	4	4	Allow remote workers and financial services to consumers and workforce.
Leadership	3	4	Leadership advocates for technology adoption will help foster competition and lower costs for consumers and businesses thereby benefitting business and industry.

The Hamilton County eCommunity Leadership Team found that the business & industry sector is just

beginning to use technology to its advantage and believes the Internet to be essential to business operations.

- **Networked Places** – In the category of networked places, Hamilton County’s business & industry sector is currently at stage 4 on a 0 to 5 scale. Some businesses use VoIP to save money. Some office workers have converted from desktop computers to portable devices with wireless connections. Some office computers have webcams for videoconferencing.
- **Applications & Services** – In the category of technology applications & services, the business & industry sector is currently at stage 4 on a 0 to 5 scale. Some businesses outsource most of their computing services. Some retailers and manufacturers sell goods out of state or internationally. Some employees work remotely, some out of state.
- **Leadership** – In terms of technology leadership within the business & industry community, Hamilton County is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Some businesses permit some employees periodically to telework. Some businesses encourage employees to take work-related classes offline. Employee training on new technology is a priority.

## Where Do We Need To Be?

While the Hamilton County eCommunity Leadership Team found that business and industry’s current use of technology is somewhat limited, the team has an aggressive vision for how the sector should be using technology in two years. The team has set goals to move networked places from stage 3 to stage 4, applications & services from stage 3 to stage 4, and leadership from stage 3 to stage 4, all on a 0 to 5 scale.

The team’s vision includes:

- Some businesses use VoIP to save money. Some office workers have converted from desktop computers to portable devices with wireless connections. Some office computers have webcams for videoconferencing.
- Some businesses outsource most of their computing services. Some retailers and manufacturers sell goods out of state or internationally. Some employees work remotely, some out of state.
- Some businesses permit some employees to telework one or two days a week. Some businesses encourage employees to take work-related courses online. Businesses are working with educational partners to raise workforce skill levels.

In Hamilton County, the median commute to work is roughly 25 minutes for 398,465 people. Finding a

way to enable telecommuting for 25% of these workers would result in over \$91 million in savings on gas alone (30 miles/20 miles/gal x \$2.50\*/gal x 240 day/yr x 99,616). On an individual basis, this is over \$900 per year per commuter, plus the environmental impact from reduced emissions and carbon credits.

## How Do We Get There?

### Project Ideas

- Provide fiber to schools.
- Act as a connectivity catalyst.
- County initiatives to spur trust and ease of use for consumers that ultimately benefits business and industry.
- Educate residents of the county on purchasing and ownership of computers for their homes, this is the first step in computer skills instruction.

### Other Potential Projects

- Create a telecommuting work center with Broadband access.
- Create call center/tech support center via community improvement center.
- Promote Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and encourage its use among businesses as a way to save money.
- Create a high-tech center to display technology infrastructure and technology tools for employees.
- Develop a directory for local information technology services in the county including business-to-business opportunities.

The eCommunity Leaders within the Business and Industry sector include:

Walt Fischer, Cincinnati Computer Cooperative

Mark Haverkos, HotSite Data Center

In working toward the advancement of the business sector goals, Connect Ohio recommends that

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\* As the price of gas fluctuates, this formula is based on \$2.50 per gallon.



additional participants be brought into the process, which may include technology providers, subject matter experts, community organizations which serve the business community and the resources of agencies and commercial providers of products and services to the business sector.

Sage Cutler, Northwest State Operations Manager for Connect Ohio will continue to work with the business sector leaders to advance selected projects toward their completion. By leveraging Connect Ohio's project management process, its research information, and its partners, projects will be defined, developed, and reviewed to help assure that the local teams are equipped to execute them. Connect Ohio will assist in the identification of funding sources, introducing technical resources, and helping to define the measurable goals that will ensure that the projects are actionable, measurable, and valuable.