

Get Involved

CUWiN began with volunteers and is constantly looking for people, both locally and internationally, who can help fulfill its mission to democratize the Internet. Whether you are a local resident or living outside the United States, if you are interested in providing alternatives to mainstream media you should get involved with CUWiN.

Here are some of the opportunities to get involved:

For Champaign-Urbana Residents:

- Put a node on your roof and expand the network.
- Volunteer to help others construct nodes.
- Join Hack Night, a collection of wireless and community network enthusiasts who support CUWiN.

For Community Organizers:

- Formulate your own community wireless network initiative. We can partner with you in the grant-writing process.
- Test and help develop our open-source software.

For Developers:

- Join the CUWiN Development team and help resolve the problems that arise as we test the software in the real world. Our Development website is: <http://sf.net/projects/wireless>

For Investors and Funders

- Consider funding one of the next stages of development for CUWiN software.
- Help us implement CUWiN networks in developing regions and train local organizers to maintain and develop their telecommunications infrastructure.
- Partner with CUWiN on hardware and software development or create a sustainable business model.

Contact CUWiN

Mailing Address

CUWiN
202 South Broadway, Suite 1
Champaign, Illinois 61801
USA

Tel: +1 217 278-3933
Fax: +1 217 278-7171

Website: www.cuwireless.net
Email: cuwinsupport@cuwireless.net

Fiscal Sponsor:
Urbana-Champaign
Independent Media Center Foundation
www.ucimc.org
EIN: 37-1403593

Champaign-Urbana Community Wireless Network

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CUWIN

**WIRELESSING
THE
REVOLUTION
WITH OPEN SOURCE MESH**

What is CUWiN?

The Champaign-Urbana Community Wireless Network (CUWiN) is a world-renowned coalition of wireless developers and community volunteers committed to providing low-cost, do-it-yourself, community controlled alternatives to contemporary broadband models. CUWiN is fiscally sponsored by of the Urbana-Champaign IMC, a non-profit 501(c)(3). CUWiN is an international partnership of dozens non-governmental organizations, community groups, and businesses.

What We Do

Software Development: CUWiN develops free open source software for mesh wireless networking.

Wireless Consulting: CUWiN provides expertise in developing and maintaining wireless networks for your business, community, and municipality.

Community Education Programming: CUWiN provides educational programs about community wireless technology and telecommunications policy. Educational Programs are available to anyone, including policymakers, community organizations, and educational institutions.

CUWiN History

In Spring 2000, a group of software programmers, radio techies, system administrators, and community activists began discussing ways to set up a community-operated wireless network using widely-available, off-the-shelf hardware. On November 18, 2002, CUWiN's software allowed its first multi-hop, bandwidth-sharing wireless cloud to become op-

erational—creating, for the first time, access to the Internet from multiple locations. This marked the first time CUWiN used a single Internet connection from houses located a half-kilometer away, with traffic routed through an intermediary wireless node. Within two years, this technology became known as “mesh wireless”.

CUWiN has continued to deploy additional nodes in the community and extend the system software to deal

proof-of-concept for deployment in impoverished communities. Since then, the CUWiN development team has been building a new generation of hardware—chosen for its durability, price, and suitability for this application. The initial exploratory grant enabled CUWiN to double the number of nodes in the network, allowing CUWiN to test new software improvements under real-world conditions.

Since 2004, CUWiN has received major funding from the Information Program of the Open Society Institute to develop the software as a model case for transfer to other communities. As the software has stabilized, CUWiN has seen incredible growth in the number of organizations and communities worldwide looking to use this technology to bring Internet service and intranet applications to their neighborhoods.

Globalizing the Local

The CUWiN project has over 200 members and 75 developers, and systems deployed in locations around Illinois, across the U.S., and internationally. CUWiN's technology is being considered by over 50 communities, organizations, and businesses

worldwide. Locally, there is a sizable waiting list to join the network. In addition, the City of Urbana recently allocated funding to wireless the downtown area with CUWiN's technology. Eventually, as isolated wireless “clouds” grow, distinct areas will merge, creating a single trans-neighborhood, interconnected wireless community. Internationally, we are partnering with organizations in Ghana, South Africa, and other countries around the globe to demonstrate the application of the technology in the developing world.

Our Mission

The Champaign-Urbana Community Wireless Network (CUWiN) seeks to:

- connect more people to Internet and broadband services;
- develop open-source hardware and software for use by wireless projects world-wide; and,
- build and support community-owned, not-for-profit broadband networks in cities and towns around the globe.

with real-world conditions (e.g., transient connections, interference, radio driver incompatibilities). CUWiN's initial deployments brought major press coverage and created opportunities for over two-dozen new organizations to partner with the project. The CUWiN development team also quickly realized that in order to scale up the system, major changes would have to be made to the software.

In 2003, CUWiN received an exploratory grant from the Threshold Foundation to buy equipment as a