

# Digital Inclusion in Waltham, MA

by [kanarinka](#) | Published [September 18, 2012](#)

Last week's topic in Intro to Civic Media was Digital Inequality. Aviva and Alexander wrote [a great summary post](#) of our readings and conversation.

As they describe, we traced the evolution of thinking around digital inequality from its inception as a "digital divide" – a binary of being online or not – to being seen as a more complex and phased process. One interesting concept proposed by Hargattai was "autonomy of use" – when and where do people have access? People do different things with Internet in the home versus Internet for an hour at the local library. And there are stages of literacy – do people know how to get around on the Internet? Can they accomplish tasks like information gathering, and emailing? Can they use the Internet for their benefit, i.e. to find a job or sell some stuff? In this case, I was thinking of my in-laws who have email and Internet but find the process of using the computer extremely onerous. For them, moving paperwork, banking and administrative things to the Internet is anything but convenient as it often takes them double or triple the time to accomplish things.



## Waltham, MA

My family moved around a lot when I was growing up – North Carolina to Virginia to Alabama and then Michigan. I came out to Boston to go to college and ended up staying in the area afterwards. So while I'm not "from" Waltham, MA, where I currently live, it is the place where I have lived the longest (since 2004).

Waltham is a [super rocking hometown](#). Historically it was a seat of the Industrial Revolution and an early center for the labor movement. Francis Cabot Lowell first developed his "Lowell System" at the Boston Manufacturing Company on the banks of the Charles. Though 82% white, Waltham is home to significant populations of Ugandans and Latinos. It's actually been nicknamed "Little Kampala" because there are so many Ugandans living there. And we have three Indian grocery stores that Indians from all over Massachusetts travel to on the weekends to buy their food. While you can tell it's gentrifying based on





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### Upcoming Events

THU **[Open Virtual Civic Meeting \(Spring 2020\)](#)**  
20 August 20 @ 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

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THU **[Open Virtual Civic Meeting \(Spring 2020\)](#)**  
27 August 27 @ 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

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