7. Executive Summary of Overall Proposal:

Utah has a very high rate of online citizens (70%) as reported by Robert D. Atkinson and David Correa in the 2007 State New Economy Index. However, the same report indicates that there is a very low usage of IT in business in Utah. It is difficult to say conclusively why this is the case. However, from our personal experiences as IT professionals in Utah and comments of IT professionals outside Utah who occasionally do business here, companies are financially conservative and may be reluctant to spend the high dollars that commercial, enterprise IT require. Unfortunately, the internet and the use of advanced information technologies will determine individual and corporate success in the future to meet business-to-business transactions and increasing government regulations.

There are 3 components to the expense of IT — labor, technology, and the processes to implement. We have been testing and selecting a set of technologies that have a lower cost of entry and a lower cost of maintenance for individuals and businesses. However, people need to become aware of their IT options and they need preliminary training to determine if these or similar products will fit their needs. Additionally, we feel the people and businesses at most risk, are those residing in rural communities.

We plan to deliver courses and seminars to rural areas using local classrooms or public spaces, our own training center in Summit County, and our 2 BWB on Wheels roving classroom. Konvective is proposing the Broadband Without Borders (BWB) project as an outreach program to train households and small businesses in how to use open source software and thin clients connected to local hosting centers. Although laptops or desktops can be used, the optimal solution for ease of use, cost, and no maintenance, is to access software applications residing in hosting centers over the internet. This dramatically lowers the cost of ownership and the headaches of maintaining increasingly complex desktop and laptop devices especially in areas where there is minimal IT support options.

Our overall approach is to setup a minimum of 2 Rural Enterprise Data Centers, powered by Solar Panels, along Utah's Western Fibernet's rural fiber network. One will be collocated with our main training facility and the other collocated in a Telco central office. We will provide open source applications using virtual sessions. The virtual sessions allow us to provide a desktop experience without a desktop. Constructing the rural data centers is necessary because commercial offerings of these technologies are still lagging or not well priced and the quality of the experience improves with regional data centers.

The second part of the approach is training and informational seminars on how to use services on the internet to the benefit of yourself, your family, or your business — in an affordable and secure manner. For businesses, we will expose owners to affordable open source enterprise quality, business software that can be leased by the month at low cost. We will provide training and informational seminars at our training center in Summit County, in public buildings in other areas, and in roving classrooms in our customized Airstreams. First, our approach is innovative in that our technology and our training will be place-based, i.e., conducted within the local community — not a distant community or urban area. We feel this is a...
We expect to reach all the non-urban rural counties. Our team's experience spans academia, commercial industry, and local, state, and federal government. As a team, we plan to train individuals in the local communities to sustain support for the individuals and businesses who adopt these technologies.