



Bulkey Valley Laptop Share –Report

In total, we received seven laptops that were donated through community members. All of these laptops were refurbished through BC Web with funds from the Wetzin'Kwa Community Forest Corporation as well as in-kind support from BC Web. For each laptop, the memory was erased, the operating system re-installed and fitted with Open Office. The idea was that students would mainly be using these computers for papers and assignments.

Due to the limited number of laptops, we were only able to support students at the Northwest Community College (NWCC). There were five recipients of laptops, many of which were of aboriginal decent, starting in the fall and ending in early May. Three of these students were part of the Essential Skills for Work (ESWK) program, which is a community-based program that integrates employment and preparation skills with personal development. The remaining students were working towards completing University Credit courses at NWCC or other institutions. Prior to the program, all of these students had limited access to computers outside of class time or College hours. As a result, this opportunity allowed them to complete assignments and papers on their own time.

Even after they were refurbished, two of the laptops did not perform very well and were exchanged by students. A few of the computers were fairly old and one student did mention that the computer they received did not perform very quickly. Given the limited number of laptop donations, it might be better to run this program with desktop computers as well. Students mainly used the computers at home, so the allure of a portable computer may not be as important as having a personal computer period. Furthermore, expanding to desktop computers allows the program to find a greater number of machines in good working condition.

Overall, I think the program was a success in its limited capacity. I think a larger pool of computers would better serve the community and allow the program to include high school students as well.