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## Digital Inclusion opens up Pop Up store in Ypsi

By [Allie Tomason](#) | 12/06/14 11:57pm



Ryan Dixon at the new Ypsilanti pop-up store

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Digital Inclusion opened a Pop Up store in downtown Ypsilanti on Nov. 24 at 10 North Washington Street, slated to be open until Dec. 17.

A social enterprise of Eastern Michigan University's The Business Side of Youth, Digital Inclusion refurbishes, repairs and sells donated computers at a considerably lower price than brand-new.

"I'm not sure of percentage, but to give you an idea, if someone counts as low-income they can get a working desktop with Windows 7 for \$100, a laptop for \$125," Anna Wendt, network security major, said. "And these computers will probably serve them for between 2-5 years."

The idea behind the Pop Up enterprise is to evaluate community interest in having a computer store in the area that will allow opportunities to purchase refurbished equipment in the community.

“Can we reach our customers easier, or the youth that we work with,” Director of the B. Side, Jack Bidlack, said. “We’re just looking at some things. Using this as a test model as well as just popping up and saying ‘hey can we make some quick money before the end of the year and let people know about what we do.’”

The B. Side is a program out of the Academic-Student Learning office. All funds generated by Digital Inclusion go back to support the student staff that run and operate the locations and train youth from the community to refurbish and trouble shoot computers.

“We operate training courses as well and serve mostly low-income and at-risk kids,” Bidlack said.

DI is a registered Microsoft refurbished, and as such offers an incentive to low-income or disabled status individuals to qualify for \$225 in free software.

Bidlack said that qualification is simple and the documentation is pretty minimal. People may show proof-of-income by producing things such as bridge cards, tax returns or public school lunch program verification. When consumers come in to look at the computers, they can point out that they fall under low-income or disabled parameters and then ask the staff what documentation is needed.

“We don’t need to make copies of it,” he said. “We just validate it so that we’re meeting the guidelines for Microsoft, so that we’re not in violation.”

For the first week that Washington Street was open there wasn't too much business, according to Ryan Dixon, computer science major. He attributes that to a weak community presence.

“Our name wasn't out there yet. This week we've had a lot more business and we've actually sold several machines!,” he said.

Dixon said that if business stays good, DI plans on trying to stay for a longer duration.

“If our business does pick up and we do quite well here, then we’ll actually try extending our lease for a month or two – month by month,” he said. “We’ve also been getting our online presence set up. Like setting up an EBay store and really trying to push that.”

At this time, the Ypsilanti location isn’t equipped to perform repairs. Consumers may visit 105 Sill Hall for repair services. An initial diagnostic fee of \$20 will apply.

The Ypsilanti store hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sill Hall is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

DI can also be found on the Internet by visiting [direcycle.com](http://direcycle.com).