



Dear Friends of iCivics,

I'd like to tell you a story about a little boy named Charlie. I met him in the summer of 2010, just a few months after Our Courts expanded to become iCivics. I'll be honest, I was a little worried. I believed in iCivics, but we were taking on a huge challenge. Charlie's grandmother introduced us, and I asked him if he would try playing my new video games. He politely agreed. The next morning, I saw Charlie. He told me that he had played iCivics' games again and again and enjoyed them. His grandmother had to repeatedly tell him to turn off the computer and go to bed. I was no longer worried – I knew we had a hit.

And in our first full year as iCivics, we continue to be a hit. 2011 would have been a busy and exciting year for an organization with three times the staff and ten times the budget, making our accomplishments all the more remarkable. This past year our games were played nearly two million times. Those games are how Charlie and many others know us, but video games are far from all we do. iCivics produced curriculum that teachers are using in all 50 states. We connected that curriculum to see real-world civic engagement. We brought together leaders in civic education to discuss forging a new path.

Bringing effective and engaging civic education back to our nation's schools is more critical now than ever, and iCivics has proven to be up to the challenge. I have traveled from coast to coast talking about the importance of civic education and spreading the word about iCivics' innovative approach. I see the wide smiles and genuine enthusiasm from young people like Charlie as they argue a Supreme Court case or take charge of the federal budget. Teachers tell me how well iCivics is working in their classrooms as a free, effective, and accessible resource to educate our next generation of engaged citizens.



“The cause of revitalizing civic education is the most important of my career.”

Retired Supreme Court Justice
Sandra Day O'Connor

Our democracy depends upon an educated and engaged citizenry. There is still much more work to be done to secure our democratic future – work we can and must continue to do together. iCivics has a winning formula, as this very busy last year has shown. I may have been worried once, but I'm not worried any longer. iCivics is here to stay and is quickly establishing itself as the leader in innovative civic education. I look forward to the exciting possibilities to come in 2012 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

Year in Review

Financial year 2011 marked our first full year as iCivics. It was a year when we advanced our mission of preparing young Americans for intelligent, active citizenship by developing engaging materials for civic education. And develop we did. By the close of 2011, we had made serious contributions to civic education while remaining true to our spirit of playful innovation.

These contributions are more vital now than ever. The future of civic education stands at a crossroads. Two-thirds of Americans are unable to name all three branches of government. The National Assessment of Education Progress deemed only 22 percent of eighth graders proficient in civics. Congress slashed over \$30 million in federal funding for civics education and materials. To combat these troubling trends, our goal is to reach as many young Americans as we can. The most effective way to reach students is through their teachers and schools. As publishers withdrew from the civic education arena, iCivics embarked on an ambitious agenda to develop a comprehensive middle school curriculum with easy-to-use-resources for teachers and fun and engaging games for their students.

The numbers speak for themselves: website traffic increased by an average of 30 percent month-over-month throughout 2011. Students played nearly two million games. Teachers used our games and lesson plans in their classrooms across all 50 states.

We also know that we are making an impact. A study conducted by Arizona State University researchers showed a

| iCivics By the Numbers | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Games added: Seven | Games played: 1,704,082 |
| Unique visitors: 703,549 | Pages viewed: 5,283,560 |
| Accounts created: 30,325 | Impact points donated: 52 million |
| New lesson plans: 16 | States using iCivics: 50 |

20 percent improvement in student test scores after teachers used iCivics games and the corresponding lesson plans. In the same study, 78 percent of students felt they had a better understanding of the material after using iCivics. Teachers told us that “all students were engaged in learning about how government works” and that from students who “struggle more with their behavior, to English Language Learners, to special needs students, they all loved it!” The study also informed our design choices; as a result, iCivics began targeting games and lesson plans to specific state standards.

We could not have accomplished as much or reached as far as we did without the committed people on the iCivics team. The team begins with our dedicated staff, which grew and changed in 2011. iCivics added two full-time educators to expand and develop our high-quality

materials. In May we said a sad goodbye to Abigail Taylor, who ably led the organization in its earliest years. Gene Koo joined iCivics as the new executive director to help guide the organization through our next exciting phase of development.

Fortunately, our staff did not have to work alone. Our committed network of high-level volunteers expanded into all 50 states in 2011. State supreme court justices, secretaries of state, lawyers, and civics education experts spoke about iCivics with teachers and education officials, students and policymakers around the country. The members of our newly-formed Teachers Council reached out to fellow educators through conferences and special training sessions. Organizational allies including BrainPOP, Games for Change, and Ashoka’s Youth

Venture helped us expand our reach even further. Generous philanthropic partners including the Charles Evan Hughes Foundation, Foundation of the International Association of Defense Counsel, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supported our innovative work.

As much as iCivics accomplished in 2011, we expect even greater things in 2012. “21st century skills” is a phrase on the tongues of educators and thinkers around the country. Students must have the critical thinking and technological skills to meet new challenges. So we’re pushing beyond providing students with knowledge to helping them put that knowledge to use as engaged young citizens. In 2012 we’ll be piloting tools that support better writing and critical thinking. We’ll be exploring how games can support face-to-face learning experiences that prepare youth for active civic life. iCivics will continue to innovate to prepare young people to participate meaningfully in our democracy, developing their abilities to read, interpret, and form reasoned opinions about the world around them.

“The challenge today is to both boost civic knowledge and engagement and close the civics achievement gap... [o]rganizations like iCivics are helping to lead this shift.”

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan
March 29, 2011

Educating for Democracy in a Digital Age

iCivics, in conjunction with Georgetown University Law Center, the Aspen Institute, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, brought together experts from around the country to tackle some of the most critical questions facing civics education today. What is civic literacy? How can we capitalize on emerging technologies to engage students? What kind of policy reforms might be necessary to ensure students become active citizens?

Panelists and moderators included digital pioneers and education policymakers from across the country, including Harvard Education professor Howard Gardner, former California Secretary of Education Bonnie Reiss, and MacArthur Foundation President Robert Gallucci. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan delivered the keynote address. *Educating for Democracy in a Digital Age* made connections among participants that are revitalizing the field of civic learning.



Secretary Duncan honored four DC-area middle school students with the first Malcolm Wilkey prize, awarded by Justice O'Connor. These winning students created projects about their own civic heroes.

Games and So Much More

Making civic education fun, relevant, and important has been key to the success of iCivics. Providing our materials for free has made it possible for us to reach the widest audience possible. We stayed true to those beliefs in 2011, not only producing more games and lesson plans, but creating an entirely new interactive experience for our users and showing students real-life examples of civic engagement.

MAKING A GAME OF OUR GAMES

iCivics seeks to inspire passion and interest to motivate learners both in and out of the classroom. In 2011 we took an enormous step towards this vision by rewarding learners for playing our educational games. Students with accounts can now track their scores and earn badges for their in-game achievements. These achievements also unlock virtual clothing and accessories for another new feature: avatars. Through these avatars, students can create a fun identity on iCivics.org.

Teacher accounts let teachers track student achievements and manage iCivics in their classroom.

These new features dramatically increased engagement with iCivics.org. In 2011, 30,325 users registered for an account, and our web traffic increased by an average of 30 percent every month. Visitors spent an average of six minutes on the site.

GAMES

Games are at the core of how we make civics fun, and in 2011 nearly one million students explored civics by playing an iCivics game.



iCivics game concept art

Through our continued partnership with Filament Games, a game development company focused exclusively on educational gaming, iCivics published seven new games in 2011. That's an average of one new game every month and a half! We covered topics including budgeting, community involvement, and becoming a citizen.

Our 2011 game releases included:

Court Quest: Students guide people to the right venue as they learn how our nation's state and federal court systems work.

Represent Me: Players keep constituents happy while advancing important legislation.

Cast Your Vote: Gamers evaluate the candidates at a debate and make an informed choice on Election Day.

Year in Review Snapshot

July 2010-June 2011

July: Hired first full-time educator

August: Aligned materials with state standards

September: Created game tracking for students and teachers

October: Unveiled avatars

November: Added achievement badges

December: Launched our 10th game, *Immigration Nation*

January: Expanded volunteer network to all 50 states

February: Established Teachers Council

March: Hosted *Educating for Democracy in a Digital Age* conference

April: Launched Impact Projects

May: Hired new executive director

June: Partnered with educational content leader BrainPOP

Teachers Council Keeps iCivics Connected to Educators

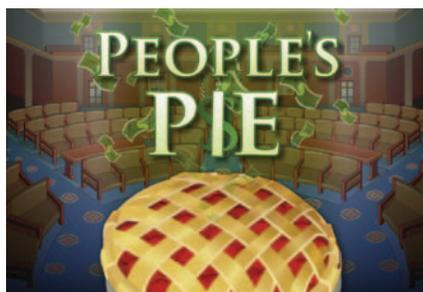
In March, iCivics convened its first Teachers Council to actively inform our product development and help shape our long-term direction. Through a competitive selection process that attracted educators nationwide, we selected 18 to serve on the council. These exceptional individuals represent 14 states and a wide variety of school settings, job titles, and personal backgrounds.

iCivics brought council members to Washington D.C. to meet Justice O'Connor and trained them to run iCivics professional development workshops. The teachers then customize the workshops to meet the needs of their region's teachers.

In addition to their role in outreach and professional development, the Teachers Council also provides iCivics with valuable input on our game and lesson plan development. They are among the first to provide feedback on projects under development, and continuously offer suggestions on resources already published.

Immigration Nation: There are many paths to citizenship; can players stay on the right track?

People's Pie: Choices about taxes, funding services, and keeping the people happy are highlighted as players manage the federal budget.



game title screen

Responsibility Launcher: There are a lot of ways to be a good citizen. Students make choices about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Activate: Players make a splash at the local, state, and national levels to get attention for the issue they care about most.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

We want to inspire young people to get involved. In spring 2011, iCivics launched a bold experiment to bridge our online civics games with offline civic engagement.

In partnership with Ashoka's Youth Venture, iCivics set out to reward student-led organizations making a difference in their communities. Our Impact Project program identifies ten groups that are tackling issues in areas ranging from poverty to education to the arts. Students can donate the points they earn playing iCivics games to vote for their favorite project. At the end of the program cycle, the winning team receives a \$1,000 grant to expand their work.

The Impact Projects program gives students a window into civic engagement by other students across the country. Users can show their support by donating points, or hone their policy discussion skills by making comments and encouraging other students to give to the project of their choice. Our first winner was Teens Against Domestic Abuse, which used its grant to educate more young people about the warning signs of domestic abuse. Students donated more than 52 million points in the first three months of the Impact Challenge.

CURRICULUM

Civics in the classroom isn't only about fun and games for students. Teachers need resources to meet their classroom needs. Our staff develops the highest quality civics materials for classroom use, and in 2011 iCivics published 16 new lesson plans in three brand-new curriculum units:

Foundations of Government: Students examine the purpose, forms, and limitations on government. They learn about key philosophers like John Locke and explore practical examples of government functions.

Citizenship & Participation: Students learn what it means to be a U.S. citizen and how citizenship is obtained. They compare and contrast personal and political rights with social responsibilities and personal duties.

Budgeting: Students learn the principles and processes of budgeting and develop an understanding of budgeting, money management, and the consequences of budgetary choices from the level of personal budgets to the federal budget.

2011 Financials

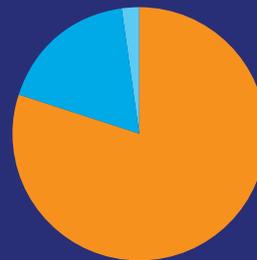
SUPPORT

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Contributions | \$ 1,293,174 |
| In-kind contributions | 52,947 |
| Net assets released from restrictions | 111,985 |
| Total support | 1,346,121 |

EXPENSES

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Program salaries | \$ 217,558 |
| Game development | 210,610 |
| Web services | 125,844 |
| Outreach and Professional Development | 111,179 |
| Other program expenses (e.g. payroll taxes) | 60,467 |
| Total program services | 725,658 |
| General and Administrative | 165,250 |
| Fundraising | 21,869 |
| Total Expenses | 912,777 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Change in net assets | 433,344 |
| Net assets, beginning of year | 405,986 |
| Net assets, end of year | 839,330 |



EXPENSES

- Program Expenses (80%)
- General and Administrative (18%)
- Fundraising (2%)



PROGRAM EXPENSES

- Program Salaries (30%)
- Game Development (29%)
- Web Services (17%)
- Outreach and Professional Development (15%)
- Other Program Expenses (8%)

2011 iCIVICS BOARD AND STAFF

Abigail Taylor, *Executive Director (through May)*

Gene Koo, *Executive Director (from May)*

Jeffrey Curley, *Deputy Director*

Nancy Cooper, *Curriculum Coordinator*

Carrie Ray-Hill, *Professional Development Coordinator*

Molly Watson, *Office Manager*

Alison Atwater, *Curriculum Coordinator*

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