

Technically | Philly

This Digital Literacy Program Will Also Get You 6 Months of Free Bikeshare

By Melissa Simpson | June 9, 2016

When **Carniesha Kwashie** first became the grant manager of the [Better Bike Share Partnership](#) in September 2014, she immediately realized that internet access could create a roadblock for individuals looking to sign up for **Indego**, Philadelphia's bikeshare program.

"I found out that you couldn't apply anywhere else but online," she said.

So she began to reach out to people to tackle the issue. Just last spring, [Digital Skills and Bike Thrills](#) was born.

In Digital Skills and Bike Thrills, individuals participate in a monthlong workshop where they learn basic computer skills at their own pace and also get six free months of Indego. It's a clever way to attract people to take computer classes and also seems to be a way to get more kinds of people using bikeshare. The first cohort took place at West Philly's **Dornsife Center KEYSLOT** computer lab (3509 Spring Garden St.) with 24 students.

It's a team effort between Indego, the **Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems**, the Better Bike Share Partnership, the **Office of Innovation and Technology**, the **Mayor's Commission on Literacy**, the **Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia** and the KEYSLOT network.

Although most of the coursework is available online, the participants can come to one of the many KEYSLOT computer labs that are located across the city to get one-on-one attention. The coursework isn't solely related to computers — participants are able to get education on local bicycle law and best practices.

"The theory really was, 'Can you get adults to increase their digital literacy while at the same time doing something that they are genuinely interested in and something that is fun to do?'" said **Jennifer Kobrin**, associate director of programs at the Mayor's Commission on Literacy.

The next cohort of Digital Skills and Bicycle Thrills will begin on June 14, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the **Dixon House-KEYSPOT Lab** (1920 S. 20th St.).

You can also call 1-844-446-3346 to register or get more information.

Emily Phillips, a 58-year-old West Philadelphian, was one of the first people to sign up for Digital Skills and Bike Thrills. When she found out about the program, she had just moved to Philly and couldn't afford to buy a bike yet. She thought it was a great opportunity to pick up more digital skills.

Since completing the program, Phillips has rode Indego everyday, excluding rainy days. She said she's getting the hang of biking in Philadelphia, since every city is different in terms of biking culture — "How drivers drive, how bicyclists bike, how many potholes there are in the road," she said.



Digital Skills and Bike Thrills participants after a group ride.

This Digital Literacy Program Will Also Get You 6 Months of Free Bikeshare (continued)

She thought about biking culture in Europe, where she used to live.

“Bicycling in Europe is a part of everyday life,” says Phillips. “Everybody does it. It does not matter if you are skinny, fat, old, young or whatever. I think that is the same sort of culture that we desperately need to have here.”

Since the launch of Indego, many individuals have been concerned about the [program’s inclusiveness](#). [Similar access questions have been asked in Brooklyn](#).

When we asked Kwashie if the implementation of Digital Skills and Bike Thrills was a way to diversify ridership, she didn’t go so far as to say that, but she did say that it’s essential for the city to serve all people of Philadelphia.

“In order to have a greater impact, we could accomplish two things: teaching people digital skills and teaching them about bike safety and the rules of the road,” Kwashie said. “They could take those theories and apply them to something that would be useful to them.”

Read this article at: http://technical.ly/philly/2016/06/09/free-indego-computer-class/?utm_content=buffer871a5&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer