

The following *five* strategies will enable our society to survive and thrive in the new millennium and ready ourselves for the next technological age:

- *Understand and embrace new technology*
- *Be an active participant in the information age*
- *Prepare the next generation of black digerati*
- *Join online communities*
- *Obtain an understanding how e-commerce works*

## **UNDERSTAND AND EMBRACE NEW TECHNOLOGY**

As the world continues to change quickly, it has become increasingly difficult to keep up with new technological developments and to understand their implications. Already futurists are talking about an electronic wallet--a smart card that replaces your money, keys, driver's license, medical records, and other necessities. Just around the corner are smart homes that will make the typical family resembling the Jetson's and not the Jefferson's.

In addition, are you looking for a new job, or do you want to buy a new home? What about a new car? There are more listings posted on the Web than there are ads in newspapers nowadays. Being online also has its financial benefits. You can pay your bills and keep tabs on your 401(k) plan, plus online trading can be cheaper than using a stockbroker. Some of the lowest prices for goods, especially hard-to-find items, are found at stores whose addresses end with DOT something.

You will be able to capitalize on the forces and trends shaping the world of tomorrow, but only if you are inspired to have the right information and technological tools today. The real hook up is being online. Not only does it enable small businesses to compete with large companies, but also preferential treatment is given to companies that do business with each other electronically.

It seems there's nothing a computer chip can't do once you slip it into the right place. The promise of tomorrow is that you can access any information--from anywhere at anytime within the blink of an eye as long as you are connected.

**BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE INFORMATION AGE.** Beyond the role of public and private partnerships, everyone has a part to play. Overcoming the *digital divide* begins at home. It has become commonplace to have a television set not only in the family room, but in every room. Ideally, families should have more than one computer--one for mom, one for dad (or one for the parents), and another for the kids (shared or individual).

On the other hand, if families continue not to be plugged in, they won't be able to play in the technology game of life. And if you don't play, you can't expect to win.

One way you can help ensure that everyone has access to information technology is by getting your employer to donate computers to schools, or churches, or even families in the area. Volunteer your services teaching computer and Internet skills at any of the more than 350 Community Technology Centers nationwide.

**PREPARE THE NEXT GENERATION OF BLACK DIGERATI.** Many opportunities exist in the high-tech sector. Yet, the nation's top tech companies resemble the rest of corporate America. Minorities are moving laterally while other groups are moving up. Also, too few African American students are earning science and engineering degrees. Statistics from National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME) - "*Math is Power*" campaign show that African American students lose interest in math and science after the sixth grade. Ironically, *Generation Y* has grown up on technology. Today's youth are familiar with interactive characters and 3D graphic video games. Never mind listening to CDs on a Sony Discman – they listen to MP3 players; we're talking about downloading music from the Internet and listening to it on portable digital players and not being subjected to buying full CD's anymore.

Don't forget to constantly upgrade your own skills so you can compete in an increasingly technological workforce. Using current technology to educate the next generation must be a priority.

## **JOIN ONLINE COMMUNITIES.**

The World Wide Web has become a powerful medium for bringing about a greater sense of community online and off. The Net has become a meeting place for people to share resources and exchange ideas.

Make no mistake about it, the Internet does has a soulful side to it offering plenty of opportunities for you to network, shop, find jobs, listen to music, view movie trailers, and meet that perfect mate. There are more than a dozen Black-oriented Web portals and destination sites, from NetNoir ([netnoir.com](http://netnoir.com)), one of the first cyberspace explorers, to [BlackPlanet.com](http://BlackPlanet.com), one of the fastest growing community sites today, to [HappilySingle.com](http://HappilySingle.com), a new place for adult singles to meet and interact.



*portals*

At one side, in particular, [Africana.com](http://Africana.com), is bridging the gap between a national and an international community. In addition, they want their site to be useful and relevant to people's lives. For example, they ran a series '*from job to career*,' which provided advice on how to package and present yourself.

There are thousands of online communities geared towards just about every interest of today society. And guess what? If there isn't one you that serves your interest, start your own!

## **OBTAIN AN UNDERSTANDING HOW E-COMMERCE WORKS.**

For would-be Internet moguls, private-equity markets are more pliable than ever before. The amount of venture capital investments ballooned to \$21 billion in 2000 and over \$42 billion in 2004, with Internet companies getting the biggest share. E-commerce is a term referred to conducting business over the Internet, such as buying or paying for something online. This isn't new - what it is an improved way we conduct commerce transactions and has become unavoidable.



*e-commerce*

All of the major companies have begun bypassing traditional links in the supply chain and shipping direct to buyers. At Amazon.com® (<http://amazon.com>), you can review a book, compare subjects and once you find the item you want, then make an educated purchase while in the comfort of your own house; or you can purchase airline tickets, at the price you want, select your seat, and print out your boarding pass.

E-commerce has changed the way we all conduct normal transactions. This segment allows individuals, as well as companies the ability to fulfill purchasing needs quickly and without hassle 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.

In addition, the Internet helps us find necessary information to help make an educated decision on a given purchase. With this enhancement of commerce, companies have recognized that so many people, so many businesses, within reach at such low cost, as well as so much potential revenue available to businesses only. This is why e-commerce has become a necessity for businesses today.