

Speaker 1 ([00:02](#)):

Listeners, welcome to re-Imagining Tech Futures. In a world where innovation races ahead, sometimes communities are left behind. Our podcast seeks to bridge that gap and our mission is to empower voices that have too often been sidelined in the tech revolution. Re-Imagining Tech Futures is your platform a haven for sharing stories, ideas, and dreams about the relationship between technology and your world. It's where you, our cherished listeners become the storytellers, sharing your experiences and envisioning a brighter future. In our upcoming episodes, we invite you to explore your own utopia. It's not just about conversation, it's about transformation. So lean in and prepare to embark on a journey where we can reshape the future of tech, making it work for all. I'm your host, Tawana Dilla Hunt, an associate professor of information at the University of Michigan and on leave as an MLK fellow at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and planning. Welcome to re-Imagining Tech Futures.

([01:17](#)):

In today's episode, I'm joined by Diamond Hatcher and Edwin Taylor, two of Detroit's amazing young adults who support and work with Detroit businesses to uplift their communities. Both are residents of Jefferson Chalmers, a neighborhood filled with rich history, and recently recognized for innovative economic development strategies like pop-up businesses and historic apartment renovations. Diamond enjoys helping others and spending time with her friends and family. She's completing college and building her business acumen as a future spa owner and esthetician. Also. Here with us is Edwin Taylor, another long-term resident of the Jefferson Chalmers community. Ed is passionate about helping his community and has been involved with nonprofit work since childhood. Ed is also a social media influencer who goes by the name of Ed Eats Diamond and Ed. Our community tech workers who provide technology support for small business owners in the East Jefferson section of Detroit. They offer free one-on-one support to business owners in their communities and would like to see the program grow to more neighborhoods in Detroit. In this episode, diamond and Ed share their journey of evolving interests from traveling to focusing on their local community and pursuing entrepreneurship themselves. They describe a typical day as community tech workers helping local businesses manage social media and outreach and stores of how their tech support positively impacts local businesses.

([02:51](#)):

Can you both give me a little bit more about your background, who you are, what you like to do for fun?

Speaker 2 ([02:57](#)):

So

Speaker 3 ([02:59](#)):

My interest in fund are changing. When I first came into this job, I liked to travel, I liked to go see other communities. I still like to do that, but I'm more interested in my community now. My interests weren't as strong when I first got here, so I wasn't thinking that I would come into this job and be who I am now. So now I enjoy simply doing things for the community. This is my first office job. Before this, I've worked in temporary plants, I've worked in fast food, I've even worked at a clothing store before. Nothing really caught my interest back then. I wasn't really planning my life ahead, I would just take everything a day at a time. So this job helped me put a lot into perspective. When I got here, they were asking, Hey, what's your five year plan? What do you want to do with yourself? Is this just a stepping stone for you?

Speaker 1 ([03:56](#)):

And Ed, what about you? Can you tell me a little bit more about yourself? Who is Ed Taylor and what were some of your personal experiences that inspired you to learn more about technology and provide support to local businesses?

Speaker 4 ([04:12](#)):

So I grew up in a community. I've been here for 15 plus years. I've always loved helping my community, whether that means with the kids in the community, through another nonprofit that I actually work at the name of Hope House Detroit, where we help kids find their next steps and help through reading literacy, developing next plans after high school. So there's different age groups there. And then also just being a community advocate overall. And then when I'm not being a community tech worker, I'm somewhat of a social media influencer where I do full reviews and I like to highlight small ES that don't get as much recognition and that may get overlooked a lot compared to ones that we kind of see every day. I try to look out for restaurant that are kind of under the radar and give them some type of outreach.

Speaker 1 ([05:21](#)):

That's awesome. Thank you for sharing. And can both of you tell us what your typical day looks like as a community tech worker when you're out supporting local Detroit businesses?

Speaker 3 ([05:33](#)):

Absolutely. So our regular day to day, depending on the weather, if it's wintertime like it's now, we come into the office, we usually have our meeting signed up and these meetings can range from an hour to two hours. We are usually helping the business owner with our most popular thing is social media management. So that includes posting and what to post and what kind of audience you're trying to reach. We try to help them identify that. If it's the summertime, we usually try to get more active. So we go out into the community, we're either talking to business owners or people of the community and we're passing out flyers, trying to just get the word out there about who we are and what we do. Because we do events sometimes and it's not just to business owners, like a lot of events we have are for the entire community.

Speaker 4 ([06:26](#)):

So day-to-day looks like we are here in the office regularly, nine to five. We do take walk-ins, but mostly by schedule. And then when we're not here in the office, we're doing outreach, doing surveys, canvassing, different things like that.

Speaker 1 ([06:48](#)):

Can you say more about canvassing? What kind of canvassing do you do?

Speaker 4 ([06:52](#)):

So when we first started as a community tech worker program, so we had to canvas our service area. So we went door to door business to business, getting different information not only for our internal use for us to be able to service these business, but also to have their information for different types of grant opportunities and different events that's going on in the corridor, different things like that. And then since then we've also been able to help other different organizations such as East Warren Development Court been able to help them canvas properly with information to get how to get that information.

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Because sometimes there can be a disconnect when you're asking some type of information such as how much revenue you made last year. Some business owners may not want to give that to a complete stranger. So just knowing the proper procedure or how to ask that.

Speaker 1 ([07:53](#)):

Can you share a specific success story or example of how providing businesses with tech support has positively impacted them in some way?

Speaker 3 ([08:03](#)):

Yes. So there was a business owner that came to us in the Jefferson corridor and their business was showing up on Google as a different business. I can't remember the exact name of that business because they've moved since then. But that was a problem we were able to solve when people looked them up, it gave false information. And ever since we went in there, we helped them change that. With SEO people were able to find them easier and people know that they're an actual business.

Speaker 1 ([08:34](#)):

So you were able to change what they were showing up as through Google?

Speaker 3 ([08:39](#)):

Yes, through Google and also through our canvassing. That was a big part of canvassing was making sure that businesses appeared how they were. So some businesses were open online but didn't even exist here. There was a coffee shop somewhere over here and we didn't one at that time.

Speaker 1 ([08:57](#)):

Any idea how that happened?

Speaker 3 ([08:59](#)):

It could be because of a business that used to be here or when that business owner set that up in Google, like their SEO, it could have been a mistype with the address.

Speaker 1 ([09:10](#)):

And do you want to explain to the listener what SEO is?

Speaker 3 ([09:13](#)):

Yes. SEO is search engine optimization. This is what we go on Google and we use the little search bar and we search pretty much anything. You can literally search like a kid with pink paws and so many things will come up.

Speaker 4 ([09:30](#)):

There was a client that both me and Diamond worked on, so when she came into us, she didn't have a website, she didn't have any social media, so we were able to help her with both of those and many other things. And since then she's been able to win different grants, get the same number of growth of outreach and sales, and she's been able to do events and be in a commercial kitchen and be successful. And to this day she calls and thanks us for all the help that we've been able to do for her.

Speaker 1 ([10:09](#)):

That's awesome. And how do you all feel about that?

Speaker 3 ([10:12](#)):

I love it because I never thought I'd be able to make a difference in someone's life in that way. When you think about changing someone's life, you think about doing something big and drastic. You don't think about the small things that could make a huge impact.

Speaker 1 ([10:29](#)):

That is wonderful. And how have each of you changed, if at all, with your role as a community tech worker?

Speaker 3 ([10:37](#)):

I've changed drastically. I never thought of myself as being a business owner, but now I am pursuing that I want to open up a spot within the Jefferson corridor. So I put myself through school and I'm almost at graduation. So it's changed me a lot. It's made me think about my future and how I want to have an impact in the community and exactly what I can do.

Speaker 4 ([11:01](#)):

Yeah, I would say being community tech worker definitely has given us assets to a lot of different resources and being able to meet a lot of different people who know people who know how to do certain things and is a big reason for my success in my social media influencing and also having another food business by the name of Tomo Cafe that I'm currently working on. And I've been able to establish an LLC and working towards getting in the commercial kitchen for that. I've been able to do jazzing at the vanity event that we host here on Jefferson every year and be a vendor there while also working on behalf of Jefferson East.

Speaker 3 ([11:50](#)):

Another thing that I think is really big about community tech workers that we walk away with for life is that if we decided to go into social media management personally and be social media managers for businesses, which is a really big thing now, I think that's one of the biggest assets that we walk away with. And I don't even think that anyone really realizes that

Speaker 1 ([12:13](#)):

There's so many roles that you're taking on as community tech worker. I also see consulting, you're consulting with these businesses, which is huge as well, your community advocates. Can you share with the listeners what works best in explaining technology or showing someone how to use tech?

Speaker 3 ([12:34](#)):

It's so many different techniques. The best that has worked for me is if this is even a technique, is patience. Because even as a tech worker, it tries us a lot. We have problems that we have to take a step back and figure out first before going forth with the client. And patience is the top number one thing because it might be something so small as to where's my search button or where's my menu button? Why is it not here? And it could be a very easy fix plugin or anything of that sort. So really just take your

time and try to pace yourself with the clients when coming to technology because it gets complicated to explain.

Speaker 1 ([13:23](#)):

Yeah, patience will take you a long way. It it'll

Speaker 4 ([13:28](#)):

Kind of to go off of what Diamond said, patience, but really going at the client's pace because you really realize that everyone's at a different level. So everyone has to go at their own pace and really expressing that to them. They may feel obligated to learn in a certain amount of time or a certain way, but to reassure them that we're in no rush. You have us as long as you need, we can have multiple meetings. So there's no timeline to where you need to learn this.

Speaker 1 ([14:04](#)):

And what are some of the common challenges that you see or that you've encountered when providing support?

Speaker 3 ([14:10](#)):

I want to say one of the most common challenges for me is just the placement of certain things. Everything with the internet is not always intuitive, so you have to put in a lot of time looking for things. For example, I was working with a client on Shopify and I couldn't figure out how to get this plugin in. So Ed is my favorite person to go to because he has the most clients with Shopify and he really takes his time and combs through it. And it's so much on that site in particular that it's like I don't even recommend it for business owners who are not very tech savvy.

Speaker 1 ([14:52](#)):

And can you tell the listeners what Shopify is and what business owners use it for?

Speaker 3 ([14:58](#)):

Yeah, so Shopify mostly for us is a website builder. It could be used to kickstart your website. They have professionals on there that will build your website for you while you work with them telling them exactly what you want. We like to call it a back end. The back end of Shopify is kind of like your dashboard where you would go in and if you need to change your prices, you would do that or if you need to update anything.

Speaker 1 ([15:26](#)):

And how do you overcome such challenges

Speaker 3 ([15:29](#)):

Overcome? So going off what Ed said, I try to work with them at their pace. So if I notice that they're not very tech savvy, I would recommend a more intuitive platform and then we would come through that, everything possible. I don't rush anything. I take everything one meeting at a time. So one meeting we may be just looking at the dashboard and looking exactly where everything is so that they could find it.

Speaker 1 ([15:55](#)):

And what about you, ed? What are some common challenges or barriers that you've experienced when providing tech support?

Speaker 4 ([16:02](#)):

I would say with the client themselves, a big demographic of our clients are older business owners and they tend to really stress themselves because they're not used to technology. So when it's in front of them, they free freak out and just want to give up right then and there. But we have to stress that it's not easy. But right now we're in the age of technology, so this is something that you will need.

Speaker 1 ([16:42](#)):

And so that's how you overcome those challenges is just reassuring them that, well, this isn't an easy thing to do and we can work through it.

Speaker 3 ([16:50](#)):

And also breaks if it's becoming too overwhelming for them in that meeting, kind of just relax them a little bit, talk about their business. As they start talking about it, they'll ease up more like, okay, I'm ready to try this again.

Speaker 1 ([17:05](#)):

So take their mind off for a second and then go back to it.

Speaker 3 ([17:08](#)):

Yeah, yeah, just relax them for a minute.

Speaker 1 ([17:11](#)):

You're answering kind of the next question was how do you tailor your support services to meet the unique needs of your clients because everyone's different. How do you meet people where they are?

Speaker 3 ([17:23](#)):

That's where our intake form comes in at. This is where we talk to them and we get their understanding of where they are. I've met clients, more tech savvy than me, so I've had to tell them, okay, wait, let me get comic on this. Anything about this platform? And you're like a genius. So I just adapt to it. I'm a great adapter job.

Speaker 4 ([17:50](#)):

I definitely have to second that. That intake really shows where they are. And they'll also express to you, yeah, I know this already, so you're kind like, okay. Okay. And they'll definitely show you how savvy they are in that intake and also us gathering that information already. We have the notes that they left and things like that. So it really

Speaker 1 ([18:15](#)):

Helps. So you're all learning together.

Speaker 3 ([18:17](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 1 ([18:19](#)):

What ways have you seen businesses thrive with technology, if at all?

Speaker 3 ([18:25](#)):

So many ways. I can't really pick one. I had a meeting with granny's pound cakes. She's a business in Detroit, and when she first came to us, she didn't know how to do things such as get on Google and actually search things nonetheless posting on Instagram. So sometimes it's just little things like that that can make them thrive and make their business go through the roof. I saw that once she started posting and showing up to the events that we were throwing, she would get a lot more customers. Same thing with Simply Frozen. She's now in Kroger. When I first started meeting with her, she wasn't in many big stores. Now she's all across the city, and that was just due to her website and she wanted a very simple website. She didn't want outgoing, she didn't want to post every single day. So we made her website as interactive as possible and I've seen nothing but growth since then.

Speaker 4 ([19:27](#)):

We had a cap cut workshop last year and since then numerous clients have come back to show me their cap cut videos and well, to explain what cap cut is, Kaka is a video editing software that can be used for marketing purposes or personal, but we went through how to use Cap cut step by step and also gave them a three pager that they could take home and also always refer to when we're not there. But since then there's been so many clients come back, yeah, look at my CAP video and look what I was able to do. It's been really helping their business.

Speaker 3 ([20:13](#)):

And that includes our boss who Talo,

Speaker 4 ([20:16](#)):

Yes,

Speaker 3 ([20:17](#)):

We learned how to make it while we were doing our workshop and now he comes up to us every now and then. Look at this video I made on Cap.

Speaker 1 ([20:27](#)):

And then what factors, if any, do you think play a role in people's relationship with technology? Do you think it's something that varies by business type or is it the business owner or is it just whether or not it's winter or summer?

Speaker 3 ([20:42](#)):

All of these play a factor, but I'd say the most is the business owner. You have business owners who grew up advancing with technology, so they do know how to keep up with their social medias, but then you have business owners who didn't have this much technology growing up and they're not really aware to the platforms and what they could do for their business. Some of our older business owners

might see a business platform and they might think it's a scam because there's a lot of times that that comes into play.

Speaker 4 ([21:16](#)):

I think she got it right on the nail. Yeah,

Speaker 1 ([21:21](#)):

Diamond and Ed discussed the challenges face while providing tech support, especially to people less familiar with technology. They emphasize the importance of patience and adapting to clients' paces. Next they describe successful events and workshops they've hosted, like search engine optimization and cap cut video editing workshops and how they have benefited local businesses.

Speaker 3 ([21:47](#)):

We have all kinds of events. I'd say the most effective event by far was our SEO workshop. A lot of businesses did not have that set up. They didn't understand why they needed it. And yeah, I think that was the most successful we get to this day. So many questions on that and I even have some people come back and they're asking, I think that's our best one, but we have a lot of events

Speaker 4 ([22:15](#)):

And now it's come to the point where they want to part two to get even more advanced features at cut. So I would definitely have to say CAP was the one,

Speaker 1 ([22:26](#)):

How do you determine what events to hold,

Speaker 4 ([22:30](#)):

Listening to what our clients want? And then also when we kind of come up, what a problem that is like, man, I could not figure that out. It's probably other people who also couldn't figure this out. Let's do a workshop on it.

Speaker 3 ([22:49](#)):

Absolutely. Back that a hundred percent.

Speaker 1 ([22:52](#)):

This is kind of a broader question about technology, the role of technology and even how developers design technologies. How do you see technologies making a difference or not in the lives of local business owners in Detroit?

Speaker 3 ([23:10](#)):

I see it making a difference. Let's go with a fast food restaurant. We have business owner number one who has DoorDash, GrubHub, Uber Eats, all of that connected to his business so they get more orders because as of right now, it's snowing outside. No one wants to, let's say, take the bus or drive to go get their food. They want someone else to bring it to them. So business is thriving for business number one. Business number two, they don't have those apps. They have just home store in conditions such as right



now they might not see a lot of business because people have to get up and actually go or just may not be able to make it there. DoorDash is huge. Everyone uses DoorDash. So I don't think a business could really thrive without having that internet in their lives.

Speaker 1 ([24:03](#)):

So in a way you see these businesses like DoorDash and this particular case you gave as kind of breaking down barriers to access, like I'm not able to go and get food at this time because it's snowy or I don't want to risk it, but these technologies enable someone who might have a four wheel drive truck to pick it up for me. And it sounds like you're saying the businesses can stay open during these times.

Speaker 3 ([24:33](#)):

Yes. That's what kept a lot of businesses open during covid. So a lot of businesses that didn't have these platforms went out of business.

Speaker 4 ([24:41](#)):

Yeah, it definitely makes a difference whether it comes to social media, their website, even down to their POS systems. I can't name five people off the top of my head who still carry cash. So just being able to use card or your phone, the tap at that restaurant or at that establishment just makes a big difference.

Speaker 1 ([25:07](#)):

And can you tell us quickly what POS stands for?

Speaker 4 ([25:10](#)):

Yep. So POS is point of sales. So that is whether that be your card reader, your cash machine, whatever you're using to take orders, the tablet that you may see at some establishments, autos are a part of your POS system.

Speaker 1 ([25:30](#)):

Do you see where technology might pose some type of challenge or barrier to the business owners?

Speaker 4 ([25:39](#)):

Yes, because they don't know what they don't know. And then also technology does get complicated and that's why we strive to keep this program going as well as more programs around not only just the city of Detroit, but to have more programs like this. Especially since covid, everything has changed. So technology is a big necessity and if you don't get it while you can, you may fall behind. I

Speaker 1 ([26:12](#)):

See. I'm going to go back to one of our earlier episodes of the podcast and we had a guest who said that Detroiters might not have good experiences with technology. I'm going to read the quote. She says, when you talk about technology, it does kind of create some grunts in the conversation, whether it's because they might feel shame because they can't get their kids the next tablet coming up, or as you all kind of suggest that technology might be daunting or they're hyper aware of the fact that if we go into another shutdown, they might not have the technology to do what they need to do. What are your

thoughts on this guest's sentiment that Detroiters might not have good experiences with? Technology? I would go on to say is that a lot of us might not have good experiences with technology.

Speaker 3 ([27:05](#)):

I agree with that statement and that is why the community tech workers partner up with businesses such as human IT to provide laptops for not only business owners, but we did a laptop giveaway, I believe was that for school starting back. And I want to hit on the part where she says they may or may not be able to get that laptop if there is another shutdown. That is what we're working so hard to prevent because it is very important and a lot of people do feel shame and they don't want to just go ask the next person and or business. I feel as if it's kind of 50 50 because the newer generation does have a hold on technology, but the business owners who really need it, they don't have as tight of a hold. I like to think that we do make a huge difference. So since we've been working, I feel like a lot of business owners have been getting that grip and it's in the process of changing.

Speaker 4 ([28:05](#)):

Yeah, I would say that well honestly goes both ways. Yes, I do feel like Detroiters may have a bad experience with technology, but I also think they have a bad experience with technology if they don't use it. So it really does go both ways, but to be honest, it's coming to the point where they don't have a choice. So you're going to have that bad experience if you don't get up on technology.

Speaker 1 ([28:37](#)):

And how do you two feel about that? Not having a choice? That's a powerful statement, ed that you just said.

Speaker 3 ([28:46](#)):

I feel as if he is a hundred percent correct when he says that only because we're sitting here, we were brought in because of the digital divide and because of these business owners that don't have this grip and because they don't have that their businesses are not doing as well as they could. I've seen businesses had to shut down in the Jefferson area because they aren't getting enough revenue because they aren't involved with technology. Enough. Word of the mouth is good, but it's not what it used to be. The internet is the word of the mouth now. So if people aren't talking then you're not getting any business. So I do agree with what he said. You don't really have a choice if you want your business to thrive because this is a world of technology now is technology everywhere you go. We have self-driving cars,

Speaker 1 ([29:35](#)):

We're flying cars soon. So in your opinion, what are the key digital literacy skills or support that local businesses and residents should seek to thrive in the digital age?

Speaker 3 ([29:51](#)):

I would say, I don't want to say the normal because everyone didn't grow up the same in school. So in school, speaking for myself, they taught us how to make our resumes, formate emails, learn how to use word doc, sickly, learn how to get on the internet and just search for things. And I think the more time you spend on it, the more you, I don't want to say accidentally, but you unconsciously gain those literacy skills.

Speaker 1 ([30:20](#)):

So you're saying kind of to explore, to just go on and do it?

Speaker 3 ([30:24](#)):

Yeah, just kind of explore because you don't want to just identify one thing and be like, okay, that's what I need. I feel as if you kind of need everything. So maybe you should just explore around and whatever is most easiest for you to understand, you just take it from there.

Speaker 4 ([30:40](#)):

Yeah, I would say honestly just starting by learning how to use a computer that will give you so far, it's funny because in a sense all technology is the same. If you can learn how to do the most basic things you can then look at something super complicated and be able to figure your way out. So looking at that phone, looking at that computer will definitely take you a long way.

Speaker 1 ([31:08](#)):

How can the audience, your listeners help or support your efforts as community tech workers and trying to bridge the digital divide?

Speaker 3 ([31:18](#)):

Just spread the word. Just spread the word. Our services are a hundred percent free. You don't have to come into the office. Everything can be virtual and I think that will help a lot of people because such as myself, there's a lot of business owners, entrepreneurs that are trying to become business owners and they don't know the first place to start. You don't have to be completely certified. If you want to get your social media up before you all the way step out with getting a brick and mortar, I think that would be good. So just telling people, Hey, you don't have to pay that much for a website, go to them.

Speaker 4 ([31:58](#)):

I definitely second that, honestly, spread the word. And then also there's so many new business forming in today's age and a lot of people just don't know what they don't know. So giving them these different resources that you heard about or that you know about or that you've had access to will definitely go a long way.

Speaker 3 ([32:24](#)):

Recently we had a huge bus kiosk and they could see where the bus is, what time the bus is coming, they could even take a picture. So I feel as if there's going to be a lot of technology and that's just the kickstart of it. I can't say exactly what there'll be. I mean hopefully there's flying cars I want to fly, but I think that in every aspect there will be something technology wise around the neighborhood. Of course.

Speaker 4 ([32:54](#)):

Yeah, I feel like technology will play the biggest role in the future of our communities, honestly. And things like the kiosk and just everyone, different resource centers like these and just assets to public wifi and resource centers and libraries, different things like these that we're supposed to already have and that we don't everywhere because I keep saying people don't know what they don't know, but it's really the truth. So if they don't have access to what they don't know, they may never know it.

Speaker 1 ([33:38](#)):

Opportunity might pass them by. So I'm asking this question for listeners out there who might be developers of technology or designers of technology, what messages would you have to them to consider when they think about how to support local businesses?

Speaker 3 ([33:56](#)):

I would say they should consider the business owner going back to if they're tech savvy or not, I think they should consider them by, if you're planning on offering them help, maybe offer them help that is on their level of understanding. First started, I used to do this thing with clients and it was just very confusing for them. I would like, okay, this is the site, this is what we're going to do. I would just tell them step by step, but that wasn't enough. They actually needed me to show them. So I said, just be very, not holding their hand, but if they need their hand held, don't be scared to do that. And also that the tech developers could consider that the local business needs technology that the locals can interact with. So also make sure it's compatible for the locals, making sure they understand it, even if they don't understand technology.

Speaker 4 ([34:54](#)):

I would say put yourself in the mindset of not a tech developer but a human being who's also learning technology because of course you know it. And that was part of our training, just how to interact with people in general because yes, we know how to use a computer, but they don't, so we can't just open up this computer and expect them to start just typing. We have to put ourselves in the mindset of, I don't know how to do this and you don't know how to do this. Let's learn this together.

Speaker 1 ([35:30](#)):

Can you talk about any partnerships or collaborations that you've formed to enhance your impact in bridging the digital divide since you started as community tech workers?

Speaker 3 ([35:40](#)):

So we work closely with U of M and we've collaborated with a couple of their programs before. One of them was suggesting the correct POS system to business owners. And I think that's one of my favorite personally because when it comes to U of M students, they are very outgoing and they're going to do a thorough sweep of everything. So when it comes to POS systems, me and Ed touch bases on it, but we don't go too deep into it as far as calculating how much it would be for the year or what kind of outcome you should have with that. So I think that collab was very good. We brought our expertise of DPOS systems and they did the kind of back work on it and making sure that it was a perfect fit for that business owner.

Speaker 1 ([36:32](#)):

What about you, ed?

Speaker 4 ([36:33](#)):

Yeah, I would say one of the collaborations we've done that has really been success is with Detroit Meets business and we have our own personal special page on their website where they can go to our calendar and scheduled meetings through and has rung us more clients, made it easier to get those clients on our calendar already has the intake integrated in the appointment and just access overall.

Speaker 1 ([37:09](#)):

So I've asked you to consider what you would tell developers. I've asked you to think through partnerships or collaborations that you formed. Now I want to ask you too about advice that you would give to young adults who want to get involved in similar initiatives in their communities.

Speaker 3 ([37:28](#)):

Don't be scared to go for it even if you have no experience. I knew very little about technology when I started working here. I knew how to upload on Facebook and Instagram and I didn't think more into it. So when I heard about the job, I didn't think I was qualified. So had I listened to myself and it was like, nah, I'll just go find something else. I would not have so many doors open. So keep pushing for that and trust me. You got it.

Speaker 4 ([37:58](#)):

Yeah, I would say there's always opportunity. Just know there's opportunity everywhere. So if there's nothing like this in your community and you feel as if you can do it, tell somebody, because they may know somebody who can jumpstart this. You may be talking to Lou Talo and not know that you're talking to Lou Talo. So I would definitely say just keep your eyes open, always be ready to pitch and just know there's always opportunity.

Speaker 3 ([38:34](#)):

I want to achieve more programs such as this because it helps the digital divide go further and I want it to be everywhere, not just Detroit. I don't think we'll ever get to a point to where we don't need community tech workers just because technology is always evolving. So I would say, yeah, that's my answer. I hope to achieve more tech workers and I think that more tech workers will help close the digital divide or get it as close as possible until technology hits us with another one.

Speaker 4 ([39:06](#)):

Yeah, I wanted to get to the point to where the business owners are, the community tech workers. The business owner can have these workshops with everyone in their corridor and teach them this technology that they got from a community tech worker.

Speaker 3 ([39:25](#)):

I love that.

Speaker 1 ([39:27](#)):

What is the role of artificial intelligence in the work that you've done or have been doing so far?

Speaker 3 ([39:34](#)):

Oh lord, the role is every role. There's AI for everything. So one thing we don't do as community tech workers is we don't come up with the context, let's say for their websites or anything. If the business owner, they have a brain fart or anything like that, I always recommend, Hey, go to ai. Type in the first thing coming in your mind and they'll put it in. I definitely use it. I had to write a paper and I was stuck on this one question, so I asked AI to sum it up for me and help me understand better. And it did that. At first, I wasn't a fan because AI like, Hey, that's what we are. We're not in the computer. But I think it's a lot. It could even help build a website. I

Speaker 4 ([40:22](#)):

Like that you said that's what we are, because that kind of goes into what I was going to say. Some people would see AI as a competitor because it is, but also it could be your friend when you manipulate it in the right way. So using it when you get stuck on verbiage and things like that and being able to use it as a friend and not a fo.

Speaker 1 ([40:52](#)):

I love that. I love that. Anything else you'd like to add or,

Speaker 3 ([40:57](#)):

Yeah, I would tell any listeners that possibly thinking about making a community tech worker program of their own, I would just always suggest getting people with no experience. Not only does it make a point and prove that point, but it also, it helps people out with their lives. For a lot of younger people my age or older, a lot of times, like I said earlier, you only see them working in plants, fast food or clothing stores. There's not many opportunities out there for them, and I think that if you're going to do something as such as this that that's definitely one thing you could take into consideration.

Speaker 4 ([41:40](#)):

Yeah, I would say if you are an adult listening to this, get with the youth in your community and if you are one of those youth in your community, please keep your eyes open. Realize that there is opportunity not just for something like this, but anything that you strive to do, you can do it. If you want to help your community in any shape or form, you can do it. So just know that it is never too early to start and it's never too late to start.

Speaker 1 ([42:15](#)):

Love it. Thanks for tuning in. Be sure to tune in for our next episode where we continue discussing efforts to bridge the digital divide.