



# 2013 Tech Day Focuses on Transformational Role of Technology in Education & Culture

Contact: Wes Swietek  
[wswietek@connectednation.org](mailto:wswietek@connectednation.org)  
270-792-2879

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## ***In partnership with Kentucky Historical Society, event honored eight organizations, individuals***

**Frankfort, KY**— For the 7th time, [ConnectKentucky](http://ConnectKentucky.org) honored the Commonwealth's technology leaders at its 2013 Tech Day, held Thursday at The George and Ellen Rieveschl Digiitorium in Griffin Hall at Northern Kentucky University. The 2013 Tech Day event featured discussions on technology's impact on education, history, and culture, federal policy updates, and a keynote speech by noted venture capitalist David Jones, Jr.

Tech Day allows the state's broadband leaders to gather and discuss the latest developments in, and impacts of, broadband technology across the state. The event, held in partnership with the Kentucky Historical Society, was sponsored by Humana, tw telecom, and AT&T.

"Technology creates an environment for learning and improving quality of life. We need to make sure connectivity is available on campus ... and off campus," said Tom Ferree, president and COO of ConnectKentucky parent organization Connected Nation. "Making sure broadband is accessible is not the only piece of the puzzle. We must factor in the workforce. Forty percent of businesses report it's difficult or very difficult to find employees with necessary training. Digital learning programs that boost broadband adoption and use are a central piece to cultivating the best and brightest in our communities."

ConnectKentucky presented the following awards at the event:

**Small Business Technology Award:** *Instant Access Tours/Battery Row Productions*

Instant Access Tours is helping Kentucky towns preserve and promote their history online; converting digital maps and brochures into virtual walking tours that can be accessed online or by using your smart phone. Its first tour commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Civil War Battle of Augusta with a website, [www.battleofaugusta.org](http://www.battleofaugusta.org), and a 10-site walking tour that included signage with QR codes so visitors could access the online content via their smartphones.

**Secondary Student Technology Award: *Nicholas Boucher***

Villa Madonna Academy junior Nicholas Boucher designed and programmed the new [Villa Madonna Academy](#) website. The new website has special login areas for students, teachers, and parents and was quite a programming challenge for a junior in high school. Nicholas not only made it much more visually captivating but he also incorporated better design elements that make the site more user-friendly.

**Postsecondary Student Technology Award: *Robert Crawford***

Robert Crawford, a junior at Northern Kentucky University from Goshen, Ohio, is lead developer for entrepreneurial startup company [InstrumentLife](#). His responsibilities in this role include developing new product functionality within the Drupal framework, performing any support related tasks, and working directly with the clients and his managers to ensure new requirements and/or issues are addressed and implemented, within any required parameters, quickly and efficiently. The online application gives users the ability to chronicle performance history and preserve their musical experience, as well as enabling self-promotion and performance sharing within its online member community.

**School District Technology Award: *River Ridge Elementary - Kenton County Public Schools***

Using technology in a way that not only enhances the capacity of the institution, but also is teaching a group of young leaders to be informed citizens, is what makes River Ridge Elementary School in Kenton County a worthy winner of the School District Technology Award. Guidance counselor Jill Dilts and school psychologist Jessica Roesch and their 5th grade media team are using technology to teach 1,100 students and their families the value of digital information. Each day the 5th grade media team uses technology to write, shoot video, and edit a product that is professional and based on literacy standards. They incorporate social messages about bullying, and safety prevention interviews with local police and fire officials to send not only to other students, but their families as well. The videos are loaded on the [website](#) and families are encouraged to receive newsworthy events from the student lead team. The videos are available [here](#).

**Postsecondary Institution Technology Award: *Murray State University***

The Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology at Murray State University (MSU) recently upgraded its Learning Management System from an older system to [Canvas](#). The change was radical and extensive and has provoked a sea change in teaching and learning at the university. MSU streamlined faculty/student interaction, improved student feedback, simplified course organization, permitted native use of mobile technologies, and increased the availability of the classroom environment. Faculty can now focus more clearly on desired educational outcomes, and less on managing the technology that supports those outcomes. The availability of high-quality online assistance and an

intuitive interface has resulted in less confusion, and greater support with no additional investment.

**Postsecondary Institution Technology Award:** *Northern Kentucky University*  
[Northern Kentucky University](#) (NKU) needed to provide access to discipline-specific software for students and faculty. In the past, converting classrooms into computer labs, purchasing many desktop computers and loading campus-licensed software, met the need but that solution took up much physical space, was limited to the number of computers provided and the currency of the hardware, and required students to be on campus during business hours. The implemented solution was a virtual desktop that allows students, faculty, and staff to log into what appears to be a “computer lab machine” via the Internet from any personal device. This solution has revolutionized the way that NKU provides software. This innovation work has changed how students get access to the required materials and allows students to be more productive anywhere, anytime. Benefits include: expanded replacement cycle of computers; increased speed of new software installations and security; and reduced electrical usage with more energy efficient servers instead of desktops.

**Government Leadership in Technology Award:** *Eastern Kentucky University/Kentucky Educational Television*

January 11, 2013, marked the culmination of months of preparation among NASA, Eastern Kentucky University, and Kentucky Educational Television. The result was a unique event: a live broadcast on KET from the International Space Station that featured astronaut Dr. Tom Marshburn and approximately 160 middle school students at EKU’s Hummel Planetarium. The centerpiece of the day was a live question-and-answer session with 20 students and Dr. Marshburn. The middle school students in attendance were chosen from EKU’s service area and were all identified as gifted and talented in science or math. Students submitted questions for the astronaut prior to the event, and EKU chose 20 students to ask their questions live. Utilizing broadband technologies provided through the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Network, KET, in partnership with EKU, created a 30-minute special program from the question-and-answer portion of the day. This program was delivered live across the state in high definition on KET and streamed live on the web. The event can be viewed [here](#).

**Non-profit Leadership in Technology Award:** *Kenton County Public Library*

Kenton County Public Library is a leader in providing digitized history and cultural content, ensuring area residents, researchers, students, and policy makers have access to hundreds of thousands of local history images, documents, maps, and other artifacts. The library’s substantial online resources include general reference, business materials, newspapers and magazines, eBooks, history, culture and society information, and much more. To view the vast online resources of the Kenton County Public Library, see the website at: [www.kentonlibrary.org](http://www.kentonlibrary.org)

To access presentations and watch the livestream of the event, visit the ConnectKentucky [website](#).

**Photo caption:** *Winners of the 2013 ConnectKentucky Tech Day awards were honored Thursday at the George and Ellen Rieveschl Digitorium in Griffin Hall at Northern Kentucky University.*

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**About ConnectKentucky:** ConnectKentucky, a subsidiary of the national non-profit [Connected Nation](#), is leading the way into a new economy for Kentuckians. As an independent technology-based economic development organization, ConnectKentucky works to ensure that Kentucky remains the place of choice to live, work, and raise a family. ConnectKentucky is an alliance of technology-minded businesses, government entities, and universities working together to accelerate technology in the Commonwealth.