RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Hub for Aging Collaboration
School of Social Work

Beyond the Database: Villages' Digital Tech Ecosystems

Emily A. Greenfield, PhD & Natalie E. Pope, PhD

Village to Village Network In-Person Conference

Sunday, October 25, 2026 | Philadelphia, PA

Presentation Overview

- Orienting to digital tech as core to Villages
- National findings on Village tech use
- Discussion on insights and implications
- Announcing the 2025 Villages Census Map

Where I’m Coming From

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Hub for Aging Collaboration
School of Social Work

socialwork.rutgers.edu/aging

Glen Rock Neighborhood Network
aging happily together

grnnvillage.org

My Initial (Technology-Infused) Involvement with Village Efforts in My Community

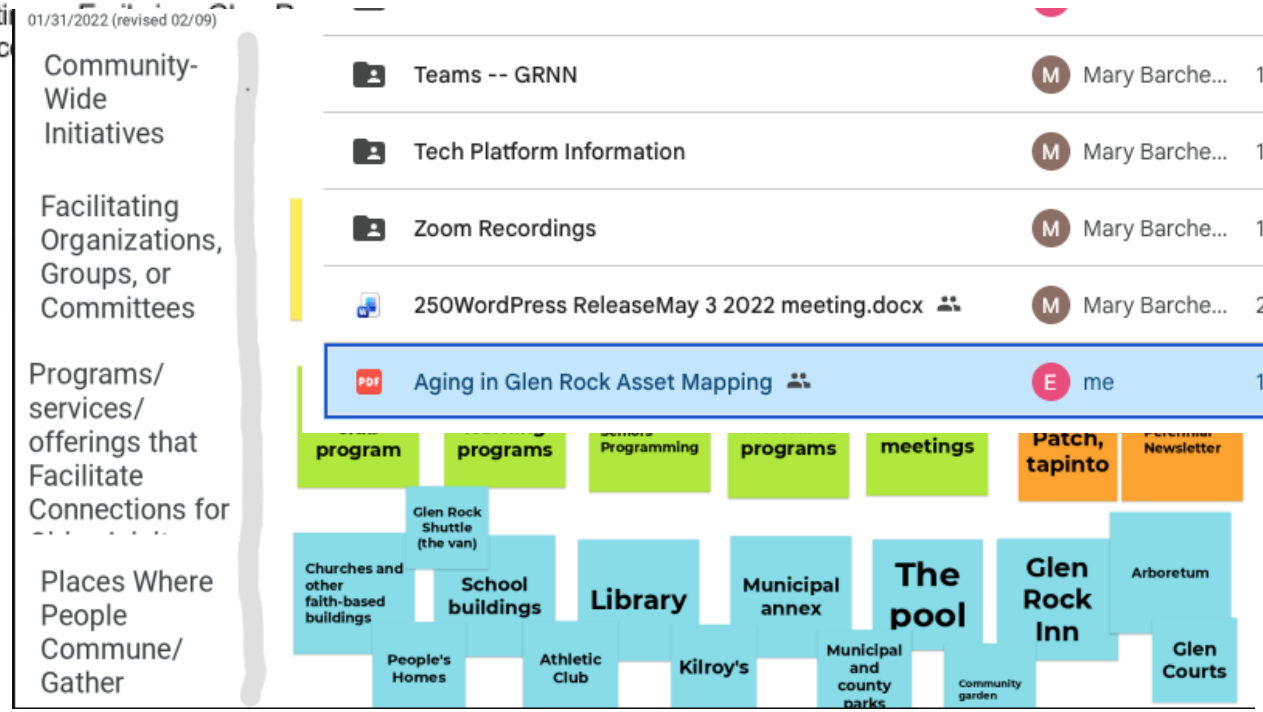
Sent: Tue, Jan 25, 2022 11:54 am
Subject: Dates for core group meetings on zoom

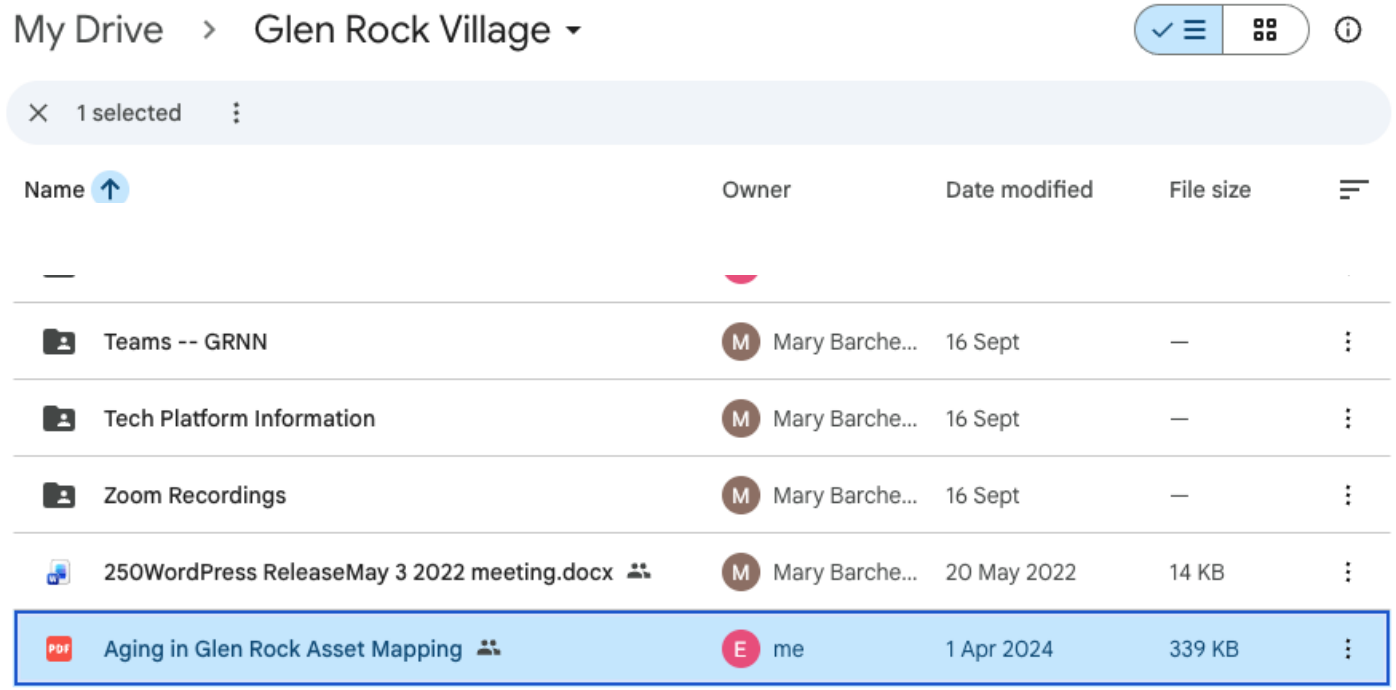
Hello Everyone,

We have dates for our core group meetings! The meetings will be on zoom ur
April. We are all so anxious to get going with our vision for how the village co

Emily Greenfield will be joining our group for the meeti
She will be offering her insight on how the village conc

The zoom meeting dates:



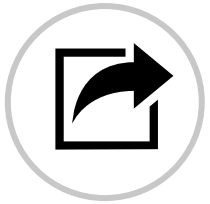


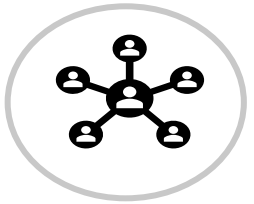
Digital Tech and the Village Movement

We Must Acknowledge and Tend to the Water!

- IF…Villages are fundamental infrastructure for aging in community.
- AND…Villages as infrastructure are organizations or a part of organizations.
- AND…Organizations carry out work in the form of tasks.
- AND…Technology includes the tools, methods, and systems used by humans to accomplish tasks.
- THEN…Tech should be core to Villages and the Village Movement.

Communicating Information, Ideas, & Resources
(with members, volunteers, donors, etc.)





Partnership Development & Community Outreach

Strategic Uses of Digital Tech for Villages

Delivering, Documenting, & Evaluating Programs & Services

Teamwork, Governance, Planning, & Resource Administration

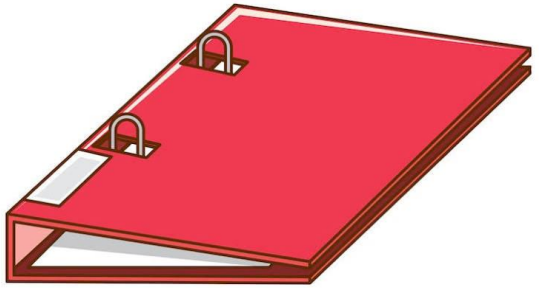
Ideas building from Greenfield, E. A., Pope, N. E., & Amir-Koren, U. (2025, December). Strategic uses of digital tech in age-friendly community initiatives. Invited presenter for the webinar *Going Digital: How age-friendly communities are adopting tools for impact*. Monthly webinar for the AARP National Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Online.

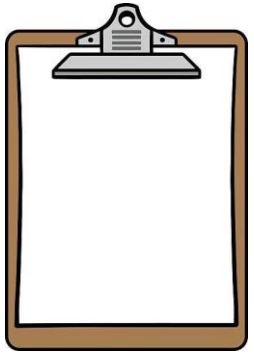
What digital tools does your Village use to accomplish tasks?

- Delivering, documenting, and evaluating programs and services
- Communicating information, ideas, and resources (with members, volunteers, and other Villages)
- Teamwork, governance, planning, and resource administration
- Partnership development and community outreach

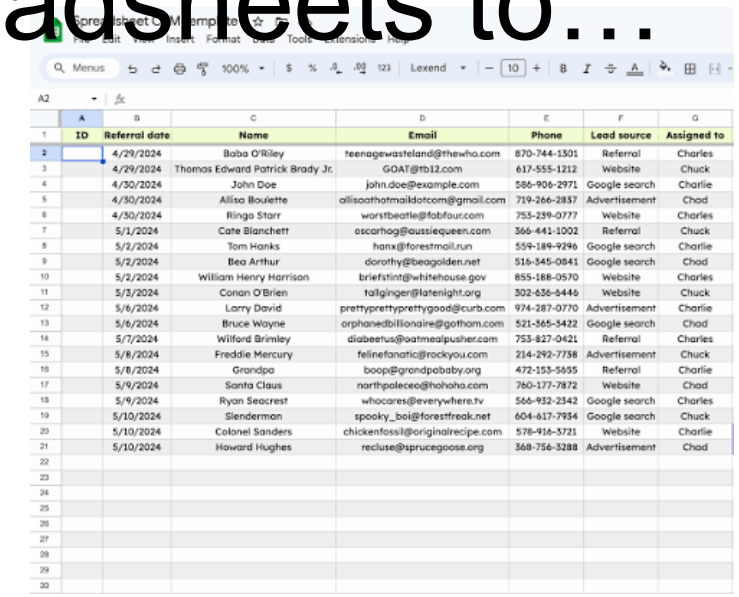
Slido.com: 4252775

From Clipboards and Notebooks to…



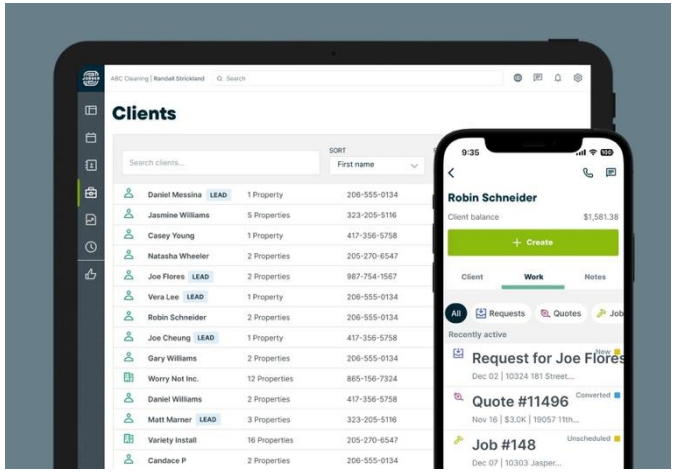


Spreadsheets to…



	ID	Referral date	Name	Email	Phone	Lead source	Assigned to
2		4/29/2024	Baba O'Riley	teenagewasteland@thewho.com	870-744-1301	Referral	Charles
3		4/29/2024	Thomas Edward Patrick Brady Jr.	GOAT@tb12.com	617-555-1212	Website	Chuck
4		4/30/2024	John Doe	john.doe@example.com	586-906-2971	Google search	Charlie
5		4/30/2024	Allisa Boulette	allisaathotmaildotcom@gmail.com	719-266-2837	Advertisement	Chad
6		4/30/2024	Ringo Starr	worstbeatle@fabfour.com	753-239-0777	Website	Charles
7		5/1/2024	Cate Blanchett	oscarhog@aussiequeen.com	366-441-1002	Referral	Chuck
8		5/2/2024	Tom Hanks	hanx@forestmail.run	559-189-9296	Google search	Charlie
9		5/2/2024	Bea Arthur	dorothy@beagolden.net	516-345-0841	Google search	Chad
10		5/2/2024	William Henry Harrison	briefstint@whitehouse.gov	855-188-0570	Website	Charles
11		5/3/2024	Conan O'Brien	tallginger@latenight.org	302-636-6446	Website	Chuck
12		5/6/2024	Larry David	prettyprettyprettygood@curb.com	974-287-0770	Advertisement	Charlie
13		5/6/2024	Bruce Wayne	orphanedbillionaire@gotham.com	521-365-5422	Google search	Chad
14		5/7/2024	Wilford Brimley	diabeetus@oatmealpusher.com	753-827-0421	Referral	Charles
15		5/8/2024	Freddie Mercury	felinefanatic@rockyou.com	214-292-7738	Advertisement	Chuck
16		5/8/2024	Grandpa	boop@grandpababy.org	472-153-5655	Referral	Charlie
17		5/9/2024	Santa Claus	northpoleceo@hohoho.com	760-177-7872	Website	Chad
18		5/9/2024	Ryan Seacrest	whocares@everywhere.tv	566-932-2342	Google search	Charles
19		5/10/2024	Slenderman	spooky_boi@forestfreak.net	604-617-7934	Google search	Chuck
20		5/10/2024	Colonel Sanders	chickenfossil@originalrecipe.com	578-916-5721	Website	Charlie
21		5/10/2024	Howard Hughes	recluse@sprucegoose.org	368-756-3288	Advertisement	Chad

Databases to…



Village Tech Ecosystems!

Insight

Findings on Tech Use from the 2025 National Census of Villages

Check whether your Village has used any of the following digital **tools as part of its operations** within the past year.

	Yes	No
a. Facebook	☐	☐
b. Instagram	☐	☐
c. LinkedIn	☐	☐
d. Stripe, PayPal, or other online payment system	☐	☐
e. Venmo or Zelle	☐	☐
f. Cloud-based meeting platform (e.g., Zoom, Teams)	☐	☐
g. Microsoft 365	☐	☐
h. Password manager	☐	☐

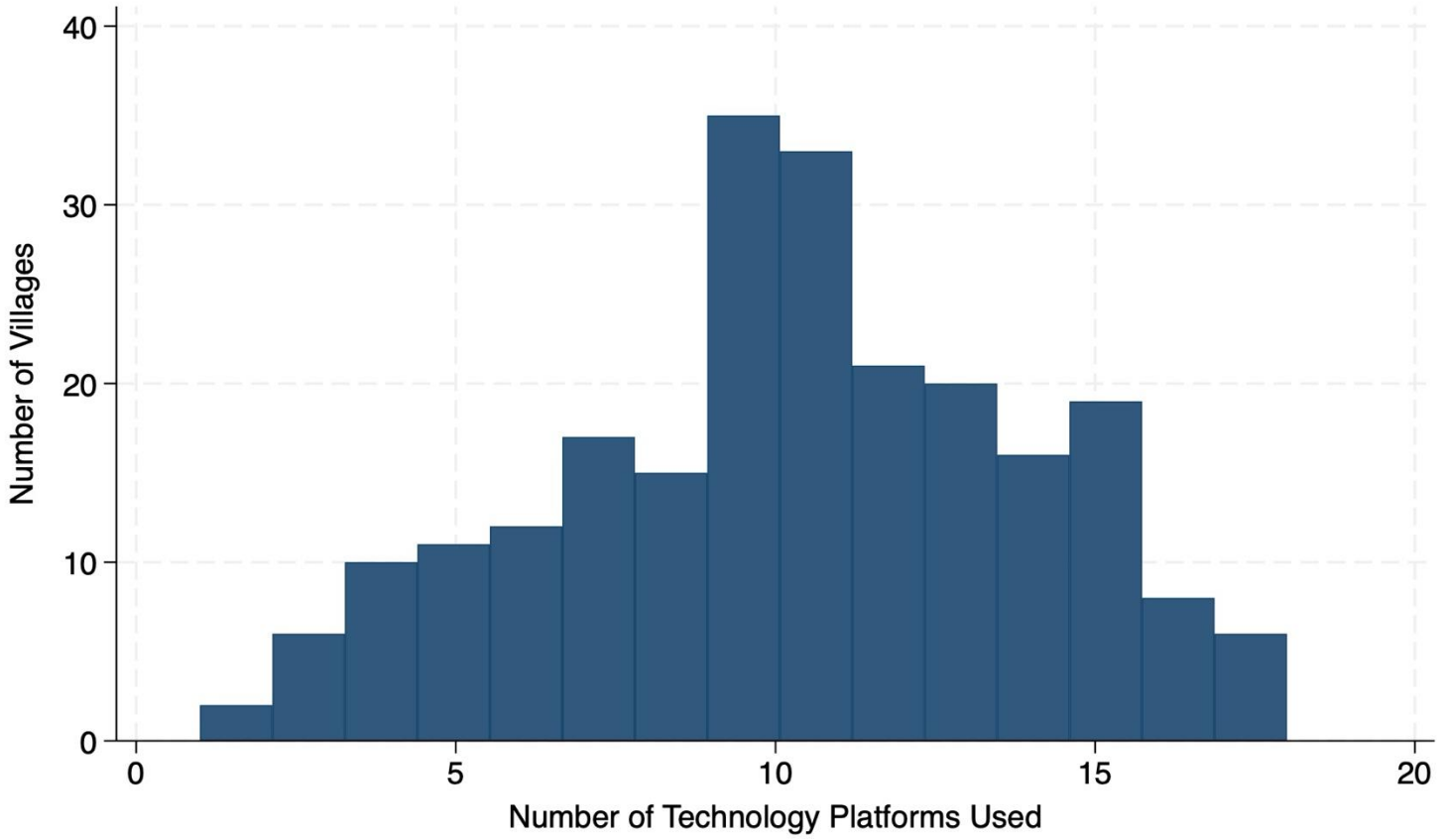
About the 2025 Census

villagesresearch.org/villages-survey

21 Possible Tech Tools

- Any social media (Facebook, etc.)
- Stripe, PayPal
- Venmo or Zelle
- Cloud-based meetings (Zoom)
- Microsoft 365
- Email inbox
- Password manager
- Collaborative file sharing
- Design software (e.g., Canva, Smore)
- Website platform (outside of Village CRMs)
- Accounting software (other than Excel)
- AI chatbot or assistant
- Club Express
- Helpful Village
- Ride Scheduler, Assisted Rides
- Spreadsheets
- Forms or survey platform
- E-marketing platform
- Donor/fundraising platform
- Other

How Much Tech Do Villages Use?



# of Tools Used (out of 21 possible)	% of Villages (out of 231 respondents)
0	0%
1-4	8%
5-6	10%
7-9	22%
10-11	21%
12-14	25%
15+	14%

What do you think the most common tool is?

- Any social media (Facebook, etc.)
- Stripe, PayPal
- Venmo or Zelle
- Cloud-based meetings (Zoom)
- Microsoft 365
- Email inbox
- Password manager
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- Design software (e.g., Canva, Smore)
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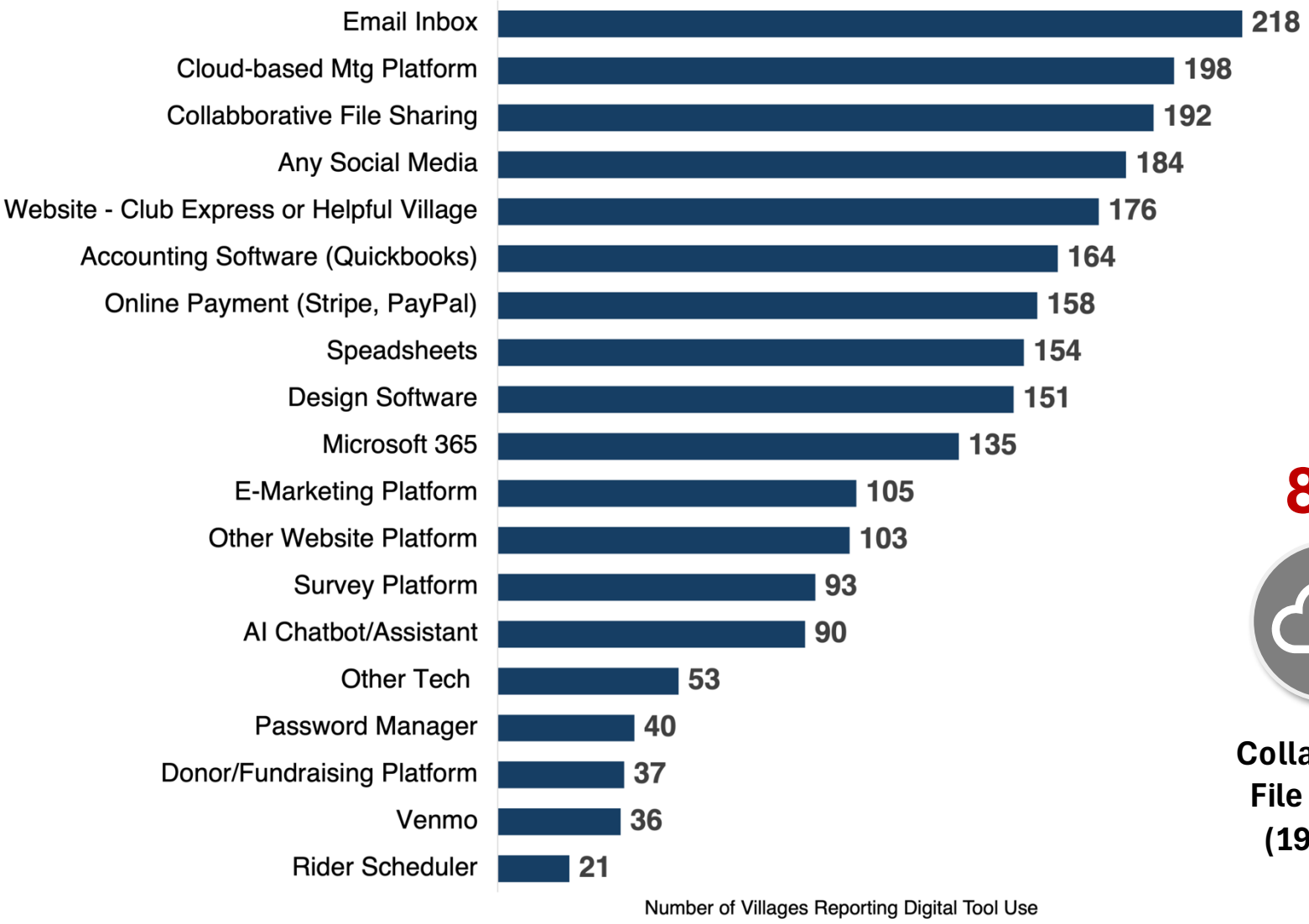
Most Common Tools



95%

Email Inbox (218/230)

86%

Cloud-Based Mtg Platform (198/229)

83%

Collaborative File Sharing (192/230)

80%

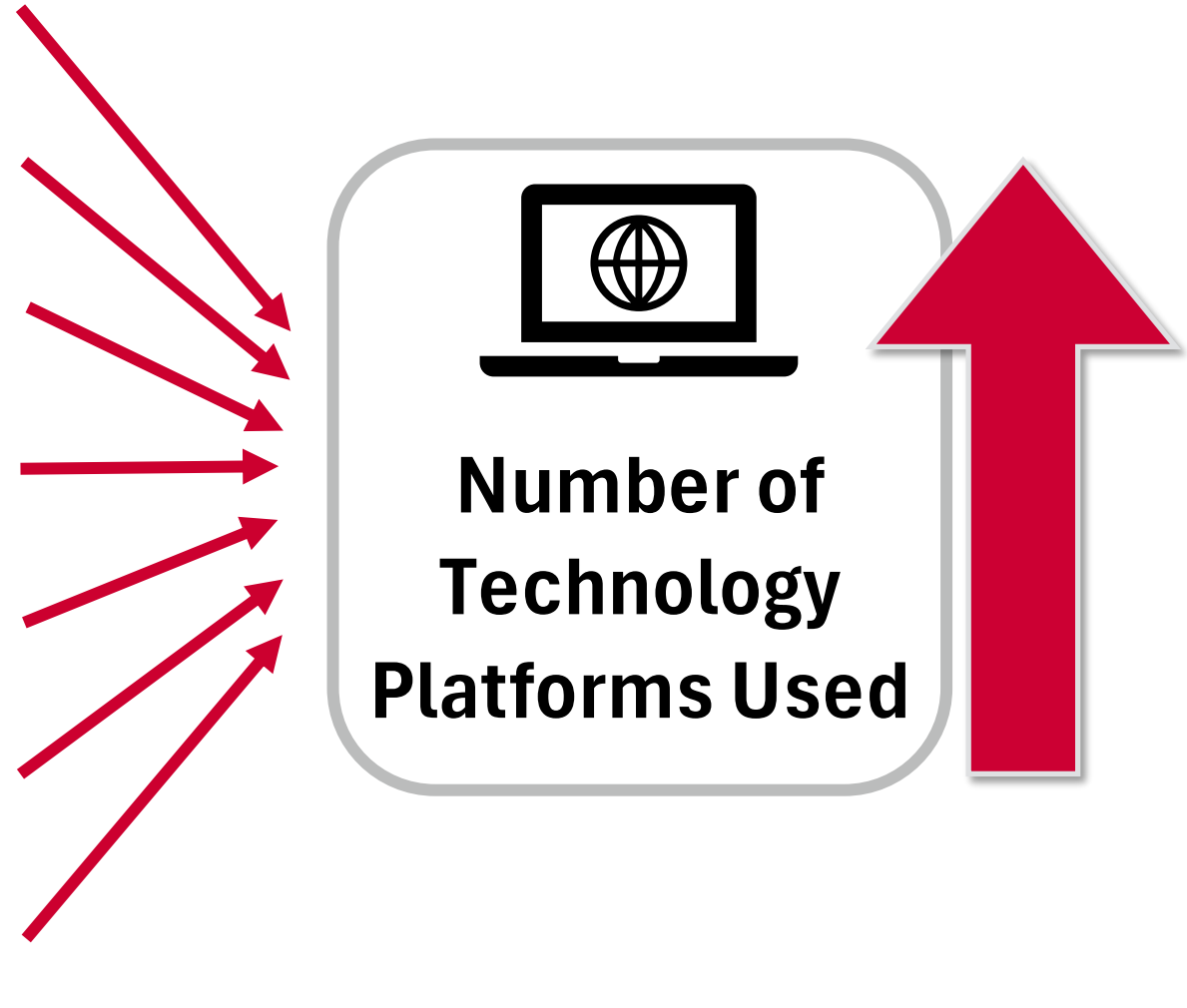
Any Social Media (184/231)

76%

Village Website/CRM (176/231)

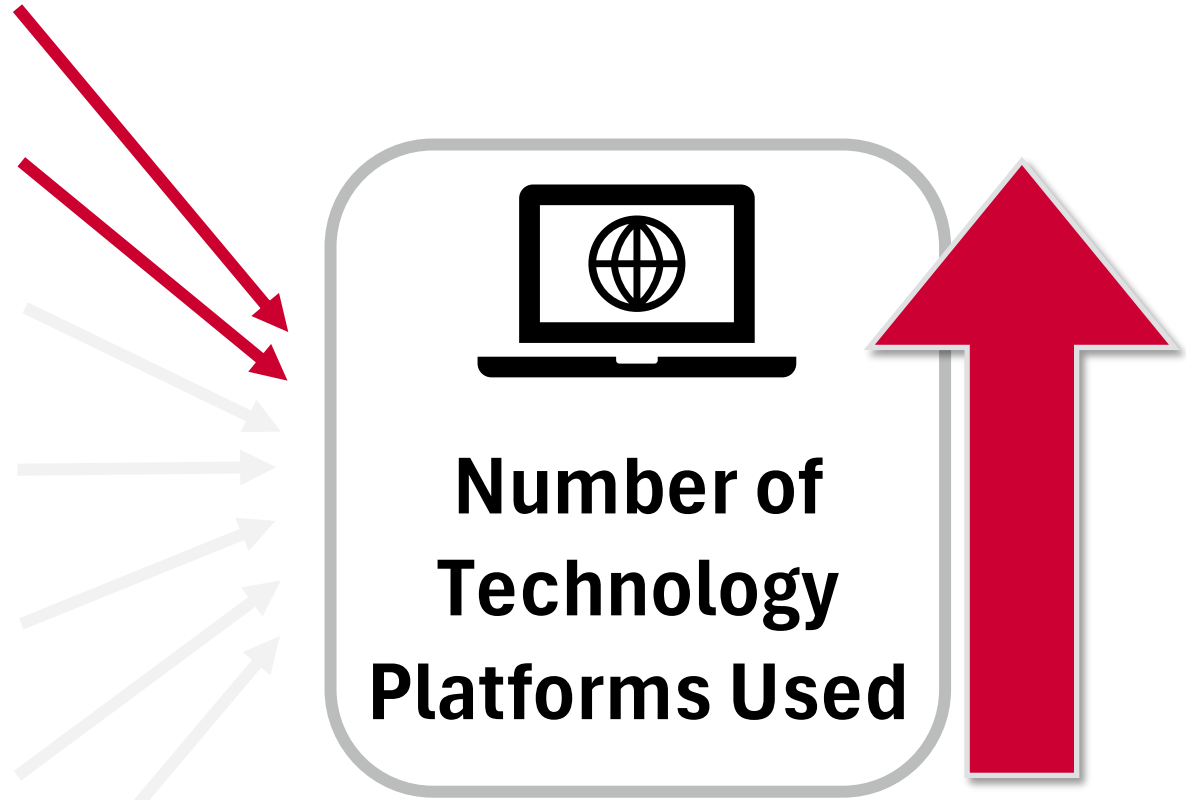
Predictors of Greater Tech Use

- Number of Paid Staff
- Annual Budget Size
- Number of Years Operational
- Offers Membership
- Offers Services
- Offers Events
- Number of Members



Budget & Paid Staff Matter the Most

- [x] Number of Paid Staff
- [x] Annual Budget Size
- [ ] Number of Years Operational
- [ ] Offers Membership
- [ ] Offers Services
- [ ] Offers Events
- [ ] Number of Members



Budget & Paid Staff Matter the Most

	β		p
Number of staff (0-8)	0.36	*	0.046
Annual budget size			
0-19K	---		---
20-49K	1.520	*	0.012
50-99K	2.821	***	0.000
100-149K	3.781	***	0.000
150-199K	3.793	***	0.000
200-349K	4.951	***	0.000
350-499K	3.411	**	0.007
500K or more	4.581	***	0.001
Years of operations	-0.059		0.166
Offers membership	1.061		0.273
Offers services	0.211		0.781
Offers events	2.044	+	0.088
Number of members	0.000		0.686
Constant	4.58	**	
R-squared	0.427		
Observations	221		

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.10

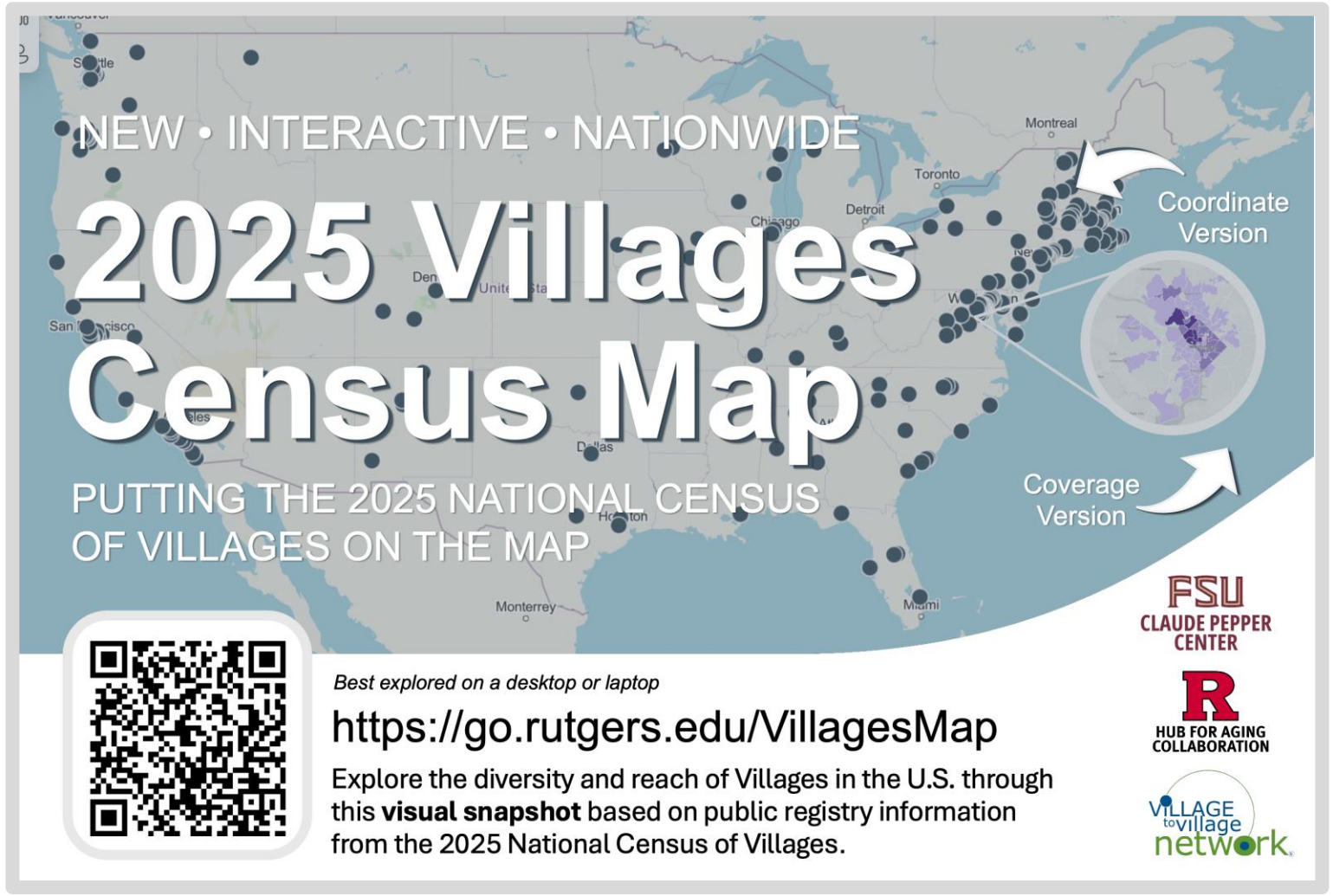
Recap of Key Findings

- The vast majority of Villages use 7+ digital tools for their operations.
- Most common tools are email inboxes, online meetings, collaborative file-sharing, social media, and a Village CRM (customer/constituent relationship management).
- Bigger Villages – especially by budget size – is greatest predictor of using more digital tools.

Discussion

- Insights for….?
  - ❑ Your Village
  - ❑ Village support organizations
  - ❑ The national movement and our work together (e.g., collaborative research, tech development, webinars, resource sharing)

One More Announcement: The Census Map!



Register Now

Wed., Dec 10
1-2PM ET (virtual)

Updates on National Research with Villages

go.rutgers.edu/village-research-update-2026

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Thank you!

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