

Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center: a History of Success

The Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center is a grassroots collective dedicated to give voice to issues, ideas, and opinions that are underrepresented in the mainstream media. We provide the tools, training, and support so that ordinary people can "become the media." We are part of a global Indymedia Network of over 100 IMCs on 6 continents.

November 1999
Massive Protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle – dozens of locals attend and tour Seattle's Independent Media Center, the flagship IMC.

April 2000
Locals travel to DC to protest against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and report for DC-IMC.

September 2000
IMC founded in an Urbana. Members collectivize their personal computer and media equipment to start covering local events - www.ucimc.org is born.

November 2000
IMC begins producing local news for WEFT 90.1 FM in issues such as racial equity in local schools, local migrant farm worker issues, Illiniwek Mascot debates, local anti-war protests, execution of Timothy McVeigh, arrests of gay-rights activists in the State Capital, Bunge-Lauhoff strikes in Danville.

January 2001
With the help of 50 "Founding Funders," the IMC opens downtown storefront location and starts saving to buy a building.

March 2001
Ralph Nader, founder of Public Citizen and Green Party presidential candidate, presents in the new space.

April 2001
IMC locals cover Anti-Free Trade Area of the Americas actions in Quebec City, Canada.

June 2001
UC-IMC gains tax exempt 501c3 status - the first IMC to gain status.

July 2001
National syndication of UCIMC features with Free Speech Radio News and Independent Native News begins.



August 2001
The Public I, the IMC's monthly free local newspaper prints first edition.

September 2001
Grrrrfest - a festival of workshops for girls and women @ IMC.

Oct 2001
Regional gathering Midwest independent media makers.

Nov 2001
Community web hosting founded to provide low cost web hosting services.



Fetal Position - a documentary film project produced in Paris, France about abortion clinics airs @ UCIMC.

School of the Americas protest - IMC sends correspondents.

January 2002
UCIMC becomes fiscal sponsor of the Global Indymedia Network made up of over a 100 IMCs on 6 continents. Israel, NYC, Boston, Pittsburg, and Washington DC IMCs are also fiscally sponsored by the UCIMC

March 2002
IMC Music venue opens, as the only all-ages venue in town. The venue has hosted Red Hot Valentines, Dub Narcotic Sound System, Bitch and Animal, a feminist folk punk group, Alix Olson and Stacey Ann Chin – NYC spoken word artists, folk music legend Charlie King, and David Rovics.

April 2002
Pacifica Network News hires local IMCista to cover anti-war and Pro-Palestinian protests in Washington D.C.

May 2002
Local activist Ahmed Bensouda is detained by the FBI and INS. The IMC stays open 24 hours to provide a drop-in center and continues round-the-clock coverage on his location. A month later, Ahmed is released on bond due to community pressure.

RadFest, an annual gathering of progressives, invites IMC members to present on Independent Media. (IMCistas have presented at the Society for Community Research and Action, Know Your University, Allied Media Conference, Get Up!, the Parkland College Brown Bag Series, & MediaReform conference).

June 2002
Correspondent sent to Palestine to send back on the ground reports.

Fundraiser for Nigeria IMC - \$4000 is raised.

Eye of the Storm – producing an indy documentary on the 2002 uprising in Argentina – is sponsored by UC-IMC.

Aug 2002
IMC-Latina - which distributes seed grants to 14 IMCs through Central and South America - is sponsored by UC-IMC.

Oct 2002
IMC Middle Room Gallery opens. Booked at least 6 months in advance, the middle room gallery has hosted Bookmobile - a traveling show on handbook and independent books, Drawing Resistance, a traveling political art show, as well as shows by local artists.

CU Wireless Project is founded as a project of the IMC and begins establishing a free, a community-owned, wireless network in downtown Urbana.

The IMC Capital Campaign to purchase a building formally kicks off.

Nov 2002
Global South Fund is established with the aid of members of the UC-IMC. The Fund provides micro-grants to media projects throughout the global south.

Local Public Access Channel 6 (UPTV) begins airing nationally and locally-produced IMC news programs.

January 2003
IMC Radio News Coordinator is hired with a grant from the Robeson Fund for Independent Media.

IMCista is sent to Costa Rica to learn radio skills with Radio For Peace International and produce features on South American issues.

250 computers are sent to South America as part of the Computer Underground Railroad project - sponsored by UCIMC.

March 2003
Zine slam and DIY comic shop.

85% Coalition, film fest and letter writing for queer rights.

40 N/88 W the Champaign County Arts Alliance and IMC host roundtable discussion with local indy musicians.

David Blume, internationally renowned permaculturalist, hosts a weekend work shop.

April 2003
Guerrilla Film Festival hosted by IMC Video group.

An anonymous donor offers a matching grant of \$20,000 to the Capital Campaign.

May 2003
IMC-Baghdad and an independent Baghdad newspaper founded – fiscally sponsored by UCIMC.

July 2003
UCIMC has brought in \$40,000, almost half way to its capital campaign goal of \$100,000 by December.

