CTCNet

What's Holding Us Back:
Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Community Technology Field
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Four Points Sheraton
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Facilitated using ToP® methods by Belinda Rawlins
with great assistance from Morgan Sully

SESSION OVERVIEW		
PARTICIPANTS	**FOCUS QUESTION**	**AGENDA**

Attendees of the CTCNet 2008 Conference
 	
Facilitators:
Belinda Rawlins, Director
    CTC VISTA Project
Morgan Sully, VISTA Leader
    CTC VISTA Project
	What are the opportunities and challenges facing the field of community technology?	Examine participant responses to Richard Chabran's keynote address
		
		Uncover common wisdom about the needs of the community technology field
		
		Identify potential actions for national organizations to support local organizations and for local organizations to support the national movement

CONTEXT AND SCAN

At the halfway point of the CTCNet conference, we've thought about the past, present and future of our movement.
Richard Chabran's keynote address provided a spark as we begin to identify our needs.

What phrases stood out, what were the key points?

- Digital inclusion
- Strategies
- Coherent messages
- Broadband
- White space
- Change
- Opportunity
- Community focus
- Engagement

What made us excited or nervous?

- White space
- FCC
- Policy
- Definition of digital inclusion
- It's not about technology, it's about people

What questions did the keynote raise?

- What is our coherent message?
- How do we define ourselves
- How will white space be used and by who?
- How do we create energy around the community technology movement?
- How do we create community focus and engagement?

The Consensus Workshop

The consensus workshop asked the question:

"What are the opportunities and challenges facing the field of community technology?"

The vision of a movement is held in part by all of its members. This workshop seeks to bring these together to create their shared picture of the future. The practical vision is the responsive statement of hope within the given environment. It provides a sense of the destination of the effort. It tells us where we are going, what the accomplishments, outcomes, changes and results are that we are seeking by our efforts.

Attendees of the CTCNet 2008 Conference articulated a practical vision for the near future with six key elements. Those are:

> - ***Clarifying our relevance to achieve our mission***
> - ***Policy and Advocacy***
> - ***Diverse sustainability***
> - ***Asset sharing and collaboration***
> - ***Embracing new technology and improving access***
> - ***Building capacity for inclusion and accessibility***

The chart on the following page holds the back-up brainstorm data generated by participants as well as the above consensus statements.

PRACTICAL VISION

What are the opportunities and challenges facing the field of community technology?

Clarifying our relevance to achieve our mission	Policy And Advocacy	Diverse Sustainability	Asset sharing and collaboration	Embracing new technology and improving access	Building capacity for inclusion and accessibility
➤ Rapid change in technology ➤ Clarity of CTCs' elevator pitch ➤ Immeasurable need ➤ New ways to measure impact ➤ Not engaging the public ➤ Relevant? ➤ Perception that the Digital Divide is over ➤ Irrelevancy of CTCs ➤ Dedicated people ➤ Corporate co-opting of community technology ➤ Need for community technology still exists ➤ Digital inclusion not including everyone ➤ Technology is leapfrogging "brick and mortar" CTC model	➤ New Presidential administration who has a technology focus and plan ➤ Net neutrality collaboration ➤ Our relevance to policy ➤ Change in administration ➤ New administration	➤ Funding ➤ Economic climate, especially finding jobs ➤ Social enterprise development ➤ $150 million being raised online for campaign	➤ Collaboration with tech industry ➤ Non profit tech collaboration ➤ Collaboration with education institutions ➤ We already exist ➤ Resource sharing ➤ Collaboration	➤ Open source and cheap technology ➤ New emerging web 2.0 tools ➤ White spaces ➤ New technology ➤ Rural broadband ➤ Technology advances and broadband access	➤ Convenient ➤ Capacity building ➤ Barriers to adoption ➤ Affordability ➤ Outreach

What creative, practical actions can we take to begin to move us towards our vision?

Participants are asked to focus on creative, practical actions that will deal with the blocks and opportunities identified in the previous session as well as move the organization towards its practical vision. By planning strategically, that is, in relation to its real situation and the underlying challenges, and its practical vision, then it has a chance to realize its vision.

The national organizations can help by:	Local organizations can help by:
➢ Developing effective language ➢ Executing & sharing studies ➢ Sharing assets ➢ Pushing a policy agenda ➢ Creating marketing boilerplate templates ➢ Tracking & sharing trends	➢ Helping with national fundraising ➢ Educating local constituents about national issues ➢ Providing meaningful feedback ➢ Helping with grassroots organizing ➢ Piloting projects

About The Session

Belinda Rawlins, Director of the CTC VISTA Project, used ToP® methods developed by The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) to facilitate this thought session.
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Morgan Sully, a VISTA Leader for the CTC VISTA Project, currently serves as the Online Community Manager at the National Alliance for Media Arts & Culture.
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CTC VISTA Project builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations that use media and technology to strengthen communities.

CTCNet is a national membership network of community technology centers (CTCs) and other non-profits, united in their commitment to provide technology access and education to underserved communities.

**We wish you good success as you continue your commitment to community technology, both personally and within your organizations.
We look forward to hearing of your successes.
If we can be of any help, please call.**