

TELLING

*Building Community by Improving Communications*

STORIES

THE STORIES WE TELL  
AND HOW WE TELL THEM HAVE A  
HUGE IMPACT ON  
THE LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY.

*How we learn and tell about triumphs and disasters, problems*

*and solutions, barriers and breakthroughs affects how we feel*

*about our community, and how and whether we get involved.*

DO THE STORIES *we hear and tell* give us insight and wisdom about how our community works and how we can solve problems? Or do they create noise and confusion, fear and apathy, feeding a desire to build walls instead of connections? We need to pay more attention to our community information environment, particularly in light of new technologies such as the Internet.

### THE INFORMATION CHALLENGE

How do we get reliable information we can act on for the common good? Often through family and friends, co-workers and neighbors, clubs and places of worship. Sometimes we're informed through community-based organizations created to solve problems and improve neighborhoods. But often we don't hear much from such groups unless they want our money.

### NEWS MEDIA MELTDOWN?

News media have been important gatekeepers and framers for community information. But increasingly, news media tell us more about murder, mayhem, sex, fires and floods than real local news about what most matters to us. Entertainment, it seems, is more important than useful information. While many are titillated, lots of us are tuning out.

### INTERNET TO THE RESCUE?

Recent computer-based technologies promise more information—power to people of all sorts—even as they provide a renewed economic base for the Puget Sound region. Yet potentially useful information is still difficult for many to find on the Internet. The lightening-speed development of products and technologies too often fails to produce applications that support citizens' efforts to build community.

### GOOD NEWS/GOOD DEEDS

- What's preventing us from improving our communications environment?
- Can community and news organizations do a better job of communicating?
- Can new information technologies help shape a system that meets citizens' needs for good communication, thus building community and strengthening democracy?

These questions framed a research and education project in the Puget Sound region called **Good News/Good Deeds: Citizen Effectiveness in the Age of Electronic Democracy**. The study was created by three area citizens with extensive media backgrounds. With help from a wide network of advisors, the researchers identified some critical communication breakdowns as well as some possible breakthroughs that could benefit us all. The study asks us to step back and look at some basic systems and relationships. It suggests ways in which three major sectors of our community—not-for-profit organizations, news media, and high-technology—can exert leadership to develop the region as a model laboratory for building community through improved communication.

### WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE CITIZEN?

**According to scholars and activists, effective citizens:**

- Know their town, their neighbors.
- Take responsibility for solving problems: from picking up litter to helping a lost child to fixing (or flagging) a broken system.
- Know where to go to get accurate information.
- Know where to go and what to do to get things done.
- Listen twice, think about things.
- Discuss public issues and think bigger than themselves.
- Vote.
- Contribute time or money to their community.

“SOCIAL CAPITAL” IS a community’s most important asset. It refers to the institutions, relationships, networks, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social infrastructure. It grows when trust, social support, and common values of citizens grow and develop. Most often, this happens when people work together to address common problems—to start a food bank, get a traffic light installed, build a child care center or create a neighborhood blockwatch, for example.

The Puget Sound region has a fairly high level of social capital. More than 80 percent of adults regularly volunteer and/or give money to important community causes.

That’s a key element in the region’s “livability.”

A community’s communication system and its content play a powerful role in building social capital as well.

## ARE WE SQUANDERING OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCES?

When stories of community life are told with an eye to engaging citizens, solving problems and building wisdom, a rich and vibrant social structure grows. But some people say our social capital is being eroded by existing media and communication

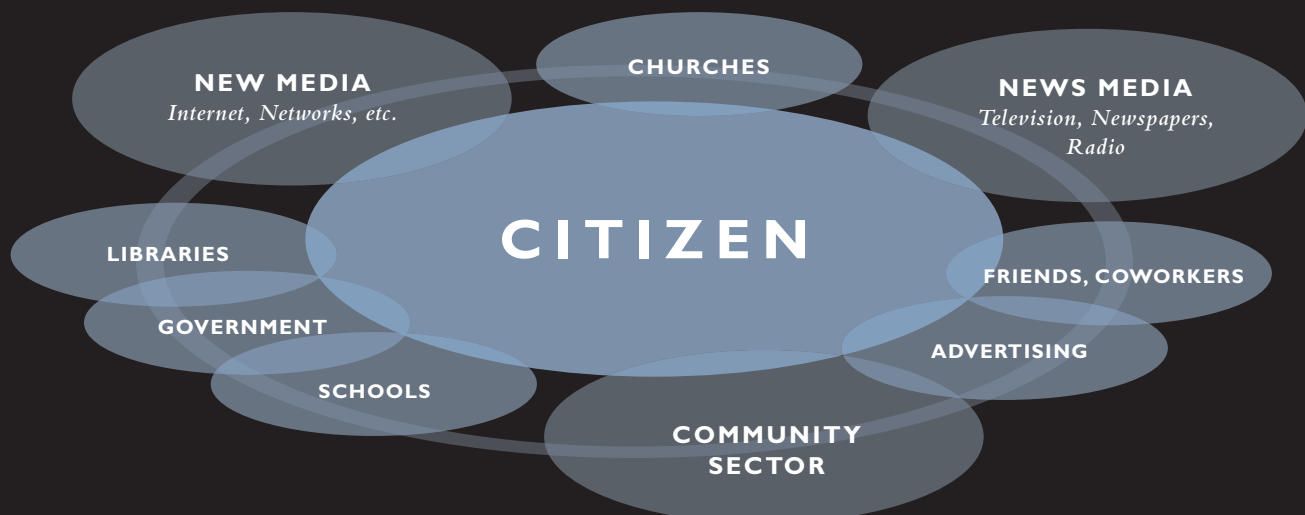
systems not telling stories we need. We hear more about the burglary than the block watch. We read more about gang bangers than Boy Scouts. Most stories point to problems, then just fade away.

Our existing communication system’s effectiveness is reduced by several factors: News media cultures promote adversarial relationships. Bottom-line mentalities prevail in all sectors. The struggle for resources is unending. Short-term thinking is the norm. Organizations don’t cultivate communication skills. Website design can foster tabloid-style stories. The complex processes inherent in public life are difficult to see. So citizens feel powerless to do anything about the most critical issues we face because they don’t get the information they need.

Yet, we have new technologies which allow for more people to tell their stories, potentially enriching the fabric of community life and building social capital.

**Good News/Good Deeds** chose to explore three critical sectors of the information environment—the community sector, the news media, and new media/communication technology—to learn how each can boost its contribution to our social capital.

### THE COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT



## THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

### Charities, Not-for-profits, Foundations

Not-for-profit community organizations—such as food banks, theaters, independent schools, neighborhood associations, health and environmental groups—are at the heart of community building. They are the main mechanisms through which citizens create social capital—an invisible gold mine.

Yet all too few people know about them, and how they can get involved or served. Why? For one thing, these organizations rarely work together to raise public awareness. For another they're not on news media's radar screens in any meaningful way. They've yet to tap the potential of new technologies. Finally, their economic pressures and organizational cultures foster a crisis orientation. They communicate reactively to citizens and media if they communicate at all.

#### QUESTION:

What can not-for-profits do to strengthen communications and build community?

## NEWS MEDIA

### Television, Radio, Newspapers

Traditional news media play a vital role in how communities see themselves. Though people within news organizations care deeply about being useful, economic pressures have decimated local media's previous success in building social capital. Too often stories chronicle conflict, not cooperation; crime, not community building; style, not substance. Since the federal government deregulated the airwaves, public service messages have nearly disappeared while commercial messages have proliferated. In print, that proliferation has reduced the space for local news.

Readers and viewers find a disconnect between what they experience in their community and what's reported on. Trust in media continues to decline. One million fewer people get news from national news broadcasts than a year ago. No wonder locally some media outlets are trying to reconnect with citizens in innovative ways.

#### QUESTION:

Can news media step forward and exert new leadership in important community conversations?

## NEW MEDIA/COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

### Internet, Networks, etc.

Today, information moves in many directions, thanks to computers, phone lines, and the Internet. Technology allows for more voices to be heard. It gives people direct access to more information—and more junk. Yet again, there's a disconnect between companies that are trying to “build community” and real people living and working in communities that already exist. Corporate cowboys ride roughshod toward big bottom lines, with only a few willing to take the “long view” that created much of the technology they ride upon.

Some companies and individuals are experimenting with new ways to build and compound social capital. And some people who've become wealthy through working in high technology are poised to strengthen the community sector.

#### QUESTION:

Can new technology go beyond information and commerce, to helping citizens build community and generate new knowledge and wisdom?

# THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

COMMUNITY-BASED not-for-profit organizations touch—and serve—virtually everyone, at some stage of life. From

child advocacy to senior housing, from environment to health care, from education to human rights causes—community organizations reflect people’s deepest passions. And they’re no small part of the economy:

- Not-for-profit organizations comprise the fastest-growing sector of the nation’s economy.
- One in every 11 U.S. workers is employed in the not-for-profit sector.
- The average monthly employment in Washington state’s not-for-profit sector is larger than any single commercial enterprise.
- More than 80% of Puget Sound adults either volunteer or contribute to not-for-profit organizations.

What’s preventing the community sector from being heard? Why aren’t they communicating effectively to make connections among citizens more vital and powerful? Some barriers include:

- Many not-for-profit organizations are needs-driven, crisis-oriented operations. Communicating about what they do seems less important than serving people directly. They rarely communicate with each other.
- Citizen activists’ passionate advocacy makes journalists skeptical of their point of view. Recent high-profile charity scandals have reinforced this lack of trust.
- Always strapped for cash, not-for-profits have difficulty telling their stories outside of a fund-raising pitch. Journalists are loathe to be used as a fund-raising tool.
- Not-for-profits don’t take the time or energy to tell their stories to the community. They rarely develop communication plans, or train their boards, staffs, and volunteers in the art of telling their story.
- New technologies baffle many not-for-profits. Those who do use them are just scratching the surface of their potential to communicate effectively—and inform, organize, raise money, and recruit volunteers.
- Turfism and competition for dwindling resources undermine potential collaborations that could tell better stories and build social capital.
- Not-for-profit leaders do not understand the historical role voluntary associations have played in the community, and in America. Hence, they’re unable to see their work in a context larger than their own narrow focus. Most of our great social movements—including the abolition of slavery, women’s suffrage, child welfare, civil rights, and the creation of public libraries—were fueled by visionary citizens, and evolved through the work of not-for-profit organizations.

These and other factors make the community sector “invisible.” They prevent citizens from learning which community-based efforts speak to issues of their own concern, discovering which solutions are most effective, and how they might become involved in strengthening the community. They prevent us all from understanding the fascinating interplay between individual efforts, and those of government and business, to create systemic responses to our community’s most vexing problems.

## Inside looking out:

### WALTZES OR SCANDALS

“Coverage (of philanthropy) in this town is superficial. It’s either event or social-function based, or focused on the fact that in any given organization, a pencil might be missing.”

- *Seattle grantmaker*

### FULL COVERAGE

“I don’t think what we need from the press is necessarily that they be more positive. It is more an issue of their being accurate and fair about things going on in our community. It’s about (covering the community) in its entirety.”

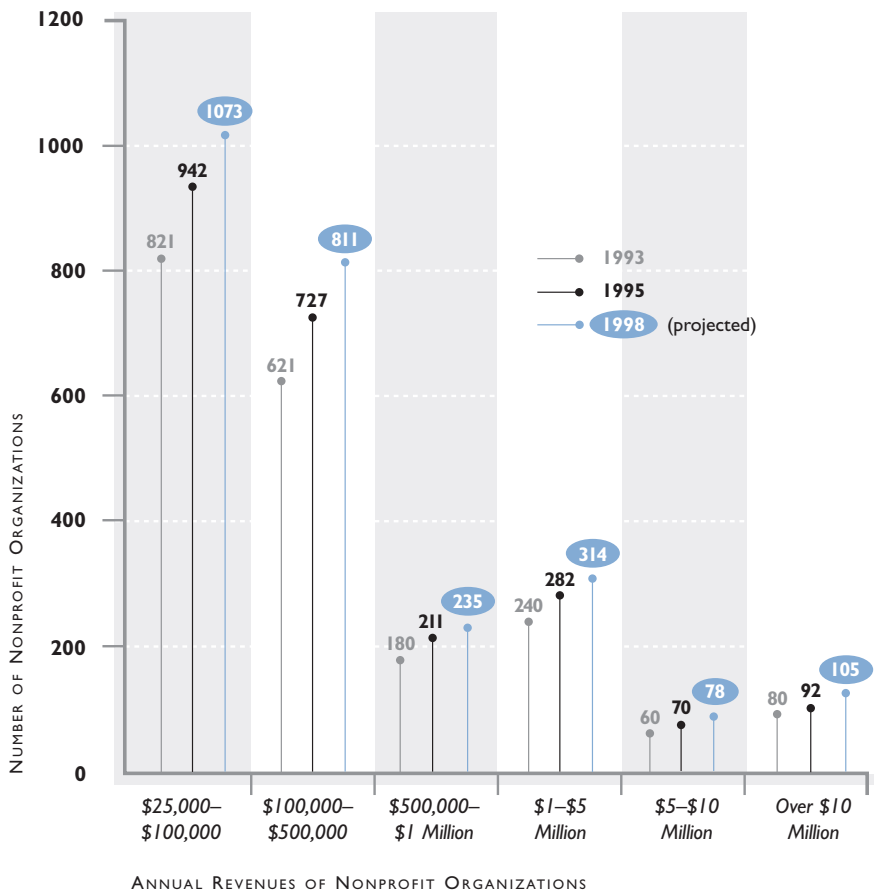
- *Seattle-area foundation executive*

### DROP EVERYTHING

“When a reporter calls, I drop everything to try to fill their needs and/or refer them to another agency.”

- *Human services executive*

**I. NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WITH ANNUAL REVENUES OVER \$25,000 IN KING, PIERCE AND SNOHOMISH COUNTIES**



ANNUAL REVENUES OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

**II. WASHINGTON NONPROFITS BY SECTOR**

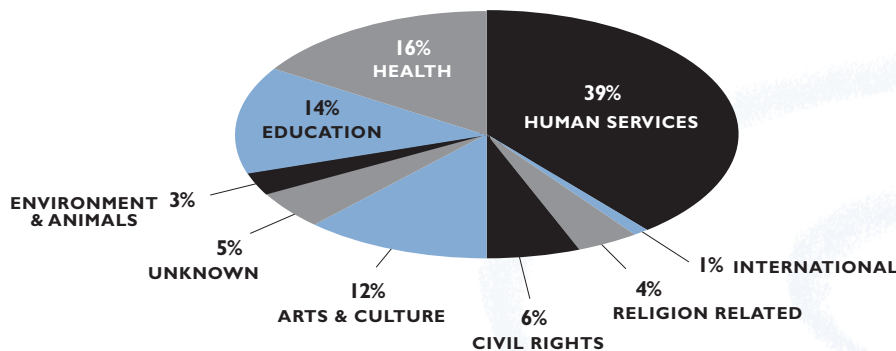


Chart I Source: 1993 and 1995 figures from the Nonprofit Almanac 1996–97. 1998 data projected assuming Washington State nonprofit sector growth rate of 11.5%. Numbers do not include churches.

Chart II Source: State Nonprofit Almanac 1997: Profiles of Charitable Organizations.

**Outside looking in:**

**NOT IMPORTANT**

“We do not see (these community organizations) as a group as being important to the community. We just don’t cover nonprofits.”

- News editor, major Puget Sound newspaper

**PRIME SUSPECT**

“There’s nothing more suspicious than saying you’re doing something good.”

- Newspaper reporter

**RELUCTANT NETWORKERS?**

“Nonprofits virtually have to be taken by the scruff of the neck to be put on-line. But once they’re on-line, they become immensely grateful and enthusiastic users, quickly expanding their general outreach, membership communications, press relations, and networking.”

- Author David Bollier, in 1996 report to MacArthur Foundation

**THE VANDERBILTS**

“Philanthropy? It reminds me of rich old people living in a big house.”

- Puget Sound-area newspaper reporter

# NEWS MEDIA

## Inside looking out:

### INTEREST OR NECESSITY?

“If practical reality were no object, the thing that would help [improve coverage] the most would be... some equivalent of ratings for individual newspaper stories. The problem is, we are guessing what readers are really reading.”

- Editor of a Puget Sound area daily

### PRIORITY SHIFT

“When our [newspaper] was locally owned, the company’s priorities were people, product and profits (8 percent pretax profit margins at the time). Now, with out-of-town owners, it’s (28%) profits, product, then people... in that order.”

- Advertising sales representative, local daily

### REALITY CHECK

“I would say... 70 to 80 percent [of young reporters] are better motivated... and want to do good journalism. When they get to the paper or the broadcast station, they find that they are not allowed to write anything that means a damn thing!”

- Bob Simmons, former KING-TV journalist

### RUN FOR IT

“Nowadays if we publish a story about which positions are open for school board, we also run something that encourages people to participate or helps people participate.”

- Mike Phillips, publisher, Bremerton Sun, explaining why and how his newspaper practices civic journalism

WHY IS IT so hard to find good news? Good news, complete news—news that includes stories from the community sector—is difficult to find in many news media.

Why? For one thing, reporters say they find not-for-profit organizations to be poor news sources. They find many of them narrow-focused, bureaucratic and self-serving, generally interested only in raising money. What’s more, they perceive that people who work for not-for-profits do less work, and make more money, than they do.

Despite sharing similar public-service ideals, journalists and community-sector workers are often at odds. Several significant factors account for this disconnect:

- Journalists aren’t taught how and why to cover not-for-profits.
- Experienced reporters, who understand community history and culture, have been laid off or forced to retire.
- Most local and regional broadcasters and publishers have sold out to national corporations, weakening ties to the community.
- Federal requirements for public-service broadcasts were eliminated in the 1980s, thereby reducing visibility for community issues.
- Focus on bottom-line profits has eliminated staff and room for local news while advertising has increased.

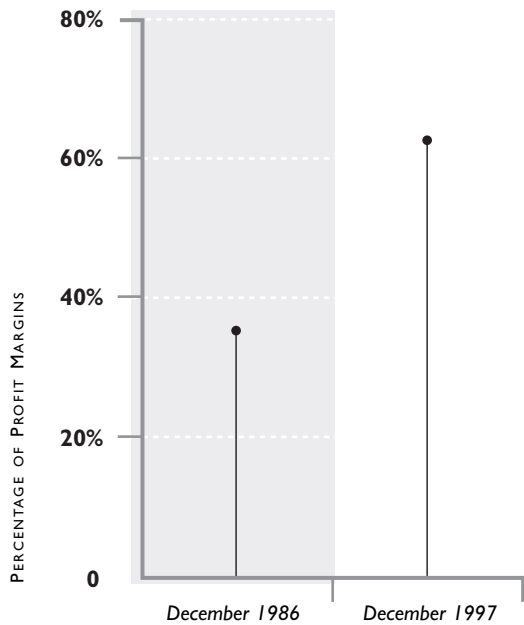
Area television stations, which won awards for producing their own outstanding public service broadcasting in the 1970s and 80s, have eliminated their public service departments. Today, “public service” announcements often have corporate sponsorship.

It’s no wonder news media profits are soaring. Television profit levels in the Seattle-Tacoma market—already amazing ten years ago at between 32 and 36 percent—had risen to over 60 percent in 1997. This despite a dramatic decline in viewership: Network news audiences have dropped from 36.3 percent of television homes in 1981 to 12.7 percent in 1997, according to A.C. Neilsen.

Newspaper circulation has been on the decline nationally for the past 20 years. But at one Puget Sound newspaper, that trend is reversing. *The Sun* of Kitsap County has the fastest growing circulation in the Northwest, and one of the five fastest in the U.S. One reason for that growth: *The Sun* pursues active community experiments seeking out community opinion and involvement in such public issues as land-use planning and education. This kind of “civic journalism,” according to Publisher Mike Phillips, “challenges the morality of conventional journalism. Journalists have adopted an attitude that somehow we have a divine right... a constitutional right to criticize... If you went out on the streets of Bremerton and asked about a newspaper’s right to criticize, [people] would say, ‘That’s all right for them to do if they’re also being helpful.’ And we weren’t, as an industry, being helpful to the democratic process.”

In Seattle, community publications like *The Chinese Post* practice traditional journalism, but focus on their communities and use community sector organizations as sources. Some community groups are trying to create community-owned media co-ops. But for public affairs reporting and community service, the outlook for “new media” may be more promising.

**I. SEATTLE TELEVISION PROFIT MARGINS**



**II. THE SHRINKING NEWS "HOUR"**

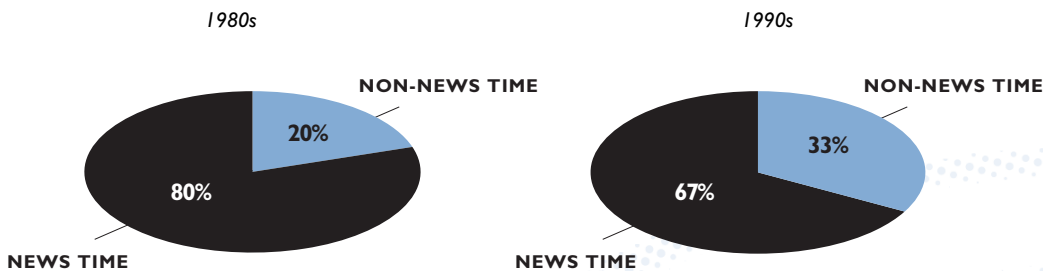


Chart I Source: A number of reliable sources including a former television executive in Seattle and a media analyst in New York City.

Chart II Source: Mark Worth, "Out of Tune: A Study of Television News in Seattle", December, 1997.

**Outside looking in:**

**REVOLVING DOOR**

"Because of the turnover in reporters, it's difficult to cultivate the kind of relationship we want, to cultivate a productive relationship."

- *Not-for-profit executive director*

**ETHICAL DILEMMA**

"Information about my organization... has got to be stated in a way that appeals to the media, but that's not necessarily the way it needs to be presented to do a good job of covering the issue. It's the choice between doing something clever and something honest."

- *Not-for-profit executive*

**PERCEPTION OR REALITY?**

"We've found that reporters are very lazy people. If we provide them names or how to access a homeless person they might do a story, but when they feel they have to go out and find a homeless person themselves, they drop the story."

- *Not-for-profit executive*

**HIGH-TECH MILLIONAIRES?**

"The only thing [news media] are interested in are quarterly earnings and their perception that we're all these millionaires running around with nothing to do."

- *Retired high-tech executive-turned-philanthropist*

# NEW MEDIA/COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

THE INTERNET IS fomenting a revolution in communication. Not only can people talk back to the media, they can talk to each other. They can tell their own stories and do

their own research. They can create virtual communities around issues that inspire passion. Issues like the ones their real communities deal with every day. Issues and stories that are the lifeblood of the community sector. New “containers” for these issues, views, and exchanges are still evolving: electronic mail is most prevalent today; newsgroups and listservs; websites; multi-user domains (MUDs); electronic magazines such as “SeaZine”; and in the Seattle neighborhood of Ballard, a “Ballard-Net.”

With leadership from those in and around the high-technology field, Puget Sound has a timely opportunity to craft a communication system that works to build community: accurate, focused information; spaces for community dialogue; new ways to present and synthesize more voices than usually get aired in today’s public dialogues.

Several barriers make creating such a system a challenge:

- The cultures of most high-technology companies understandably revolve around software, battles, profits, sales, and market share—with little concern for process or community.
- High-tech cultures rarely intersect creatively with those of the news media or the community sector. (In fact, most media and community sector folks are just now learning to use new technology.)
- Currently the Internet is exploding with websites and data, information and images, but with little sifting for accuracy.
- Many residents of the region are not connected to the Internet, for economic or cultural reasons.
- For many, the glitz of new technologies is overpowering and prevents people from experiencing their potential usefulness.

However, there are an equal number of promising possibilities. Washington State’s burgeoning high-tech economy employs one in three residents. Many of those people are involved in some way in volunteer activities in the community sector, contributing their creativity and technical expertise. Yet the psychic gulf between “techie” and not-for-profits remains. More creative connections between high-tech communications and low-tech community services can improve bottom-line results for both—and raise the level of social capital at the same time.

For example, the Seattle Community Network was created by volunteer computer professionals to provide free e-mail, websites, and Internet access to all citizens. It’s used to announce meetings, mobilize volunteers, and debate issues. Real Networks, through its WebActive division, is experimenting with Internet public service announcements. Internet cafes not only provide access to technology and know-how, but the opportunity to rub elbows with other learners over coffee or beer. Snohomish County residents can study for

## Inside looking out:

### WAR MENTALITY

“[Techies] live in the mindset of the battlefield. They’re not really into process.”

- *Ex-Microsoft executive*

### BUILDING COMMUNITY

“Interactive applications such as civic involvement, registering for volunteer positions and events go beyond the point-and-click mentality to true community building.”

- *Tom Campbell, president & CEO, SNONET*

### INVISIBLE CONNECTION

“Technology should be invisible. There should be nothing in the way of the person/institution and the community action.”

- *Stewart Dutfield, Lucent Technologies*

### NEW PARTNERS

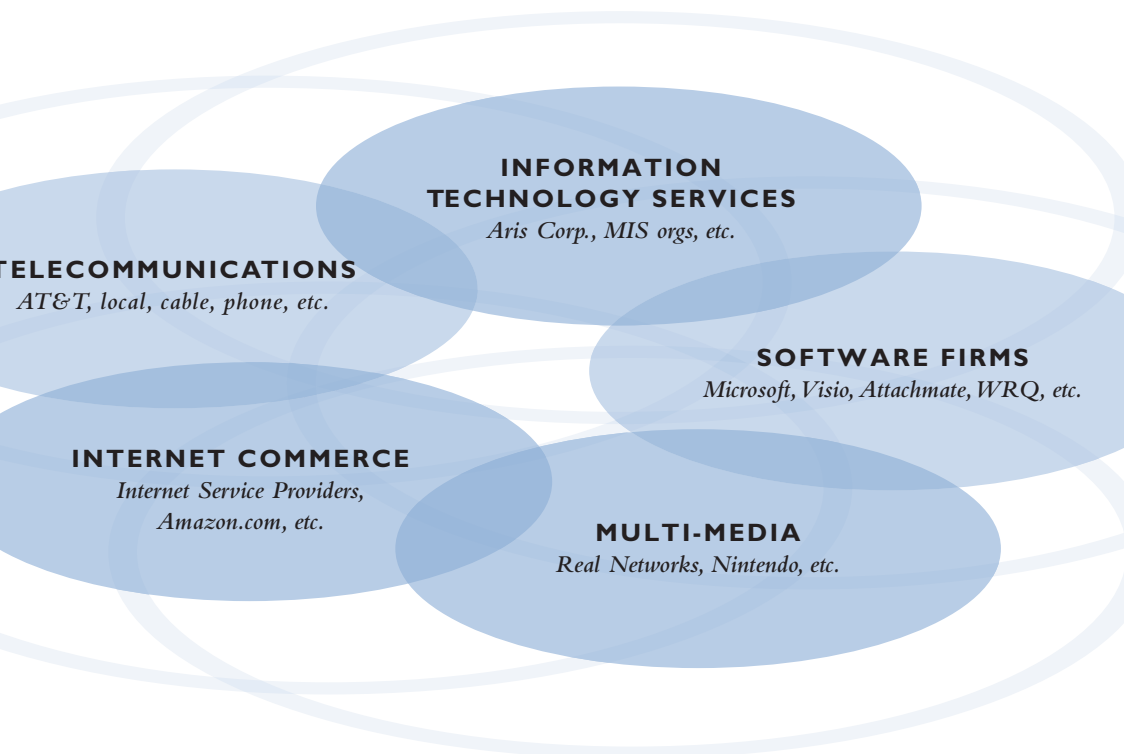
“As more high-tech people cut back on work or retire—they’re not going to sit around and eat bon-bons or shop—they’re going to be doing some amazing things with their money and time.”

- *Linda Jaech, high-technology writer-turned-philanthropist*

elections, exchange job skills, and identify and solve problems through an experimental computer network called SNONET.

Experiments like these are only the beginning of what the Puget Sound region can do. Collectively, high-tech companies and community-sector citizen organizations can create applications that begin to lessen the widening gulf between “haves” and “have-nots.” News media can play a role as chroniclers, synthesizers, and facilitators of community conversations. Astute public officials can continue to experiment with ways of making government more accessible and accountable. The Puget Sound region can be a laboratory for a wired community that works.

#### THE NEW MEDIA/COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT



Thousands of companies in the Puget Sound region are developing the infrastructure for future communications. Can they create a system that bolsters citizen effectiveness and civic culture?

#### Outside looking in:

##### COMMON CONCERNS

“There is a concern that fewer people are watching the ‘common things’ in the community. Maybe the Internet will start to do some of the community function... I don’t look for traditional media to be able to do that in today’s environment.”

- Executive director, large Puget Sound not-for-profit

##### STRESSFUL SHORTCUT?

“The opportunity for dialogue [on the Internet] is less and less because both of the speed of communication and the energy it takes produce a tremendous amount of stress in people.”

- Executive director, not-for-profit agency

##### ENERGY DRAIN

“[Technology is] an enormous energy drain... It sucks time right out of your life and it disconnects you from people in real life.”

- Not-for-profit executive

##### INTEGRATED WEALTH

Networked communications can not only help reengineer communities but also integrate them, infusing them with principles of lifelong learning and entrepreneurship which are the modus operandi of the digital age.”

- Craig Smith, author, The Digital War on Poverty

# ENCOURAGING STORIES

## YOUTH AND MEDIA: NEW APPROACHES

The King County Youth Worker Forum recently convened a session in which media representatives brainstormed with youth workers about how youth, youth workers and media can partner to create a community that values its children and youth. Unlike many forums that are problem focused, this approach asked participants to create media campaigns, news stories, ads, and PSAs that portray youth in a positive light. Some ideas generated in small groups include:

- “Our Turn” – KOMO 4 TV would work with South Shore Middle School kids to produce a weekly school news program, which the station would air on Sunday mornings.
- “Safe Futures Urban Garden” – Over time, KING 5 TV reporters would track and report a continuing story about kids working with senior citizens at a garden in south Seattle.
- “Public Service” – high school kids would be trained by KOMO TV to produce public service spots for nonprofit organizations, that KOMO would air.
- “Youth Film Festival” would include teen-produced works and awards for adults and youth.

## CONNECTED COMMUNITY

“In terms of civic participation,” says Tom Campbell, president of SNONET, “another chat forum just isn’t enough.” That’s why the Snohomish County organization is working to explore creative ways for the Internet to serve citizens. For example, in partnership with the local newspaper, the county auditor, and the League of Women Voters, SNONET has set up SNOVOTE (<http://www.snovote.org>), a dialogue-based website where citizens can discuss local election issues in an informed way. This kind of hybrid—linking the three sectors of business, government, and not-for-profits, and providing information to and getting input from citizens—points the way to a better informed, more involved community.

## AIMING FOR ACCURACY

Media stories in 1997 proclaiming the success of new drugs and treatments for people with AIDS gave people the false impression that the epidemic was ending. In fact, infection rates were as high as ever. People were living longer, so death rates dropped sharply. But the new treatments didn’t work for everybody. Several Seattle-area AIDS organizations formed an ad hoc group to counteract the media messages. Together, they crafted common language and developed new stories to correct the media’s perceptions. They put articles in their newsletters, and carried banners in parades. They communicated with each other over the Internet. Gradually, the coverage changed.

## PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY

The *Bremerton Sun* in the early ‘90s led Kitsap County through a public process that resulted in a citizen-written open space preservation plan. The newspaper invited citizens to play a more active role in the community, overstepping the bounds of some journalistic conventions. Last year, the paper held focus groups to find out what people identify as the key issues in education. Out of it came a school district effort to teach children about “values.” Today, the paper covers all news more through readers’ lenses than editors’ conventions. And, it’s one of the fastest growing newspapers in the country.

*The Good News/Good Deeds research identified ways in which improving the citizen information environment can benefit the three key sectors studied. Here are some selected recommendations from the report:*

### **COMMUNITY SECTOR**

Organizations need to improve their communication with citizens. They should:

- Provide communications training for staff and board members.
- Take every opportunity to communicate their organization's and the sector's role, philosophy, and value to constituents and media.
- Become a consummate source on community needs, innovations and activities in the mission area of their organization. In so doing, they will become the sources media and high-tech firms call on when they want information, quotes, ideas or access.
- Collaborate with other not-for-profits to develop communication skills, craft key messages, and buy high-tech products and services.

## **FIRST STEPS**

### **NEWS MEDIA**

Need to listen to citizens more, and assume responsibility for acting in service to the community. They should:

- Include community sector perspectives in every report examining local issues.
- When covering violence, crime and disaster, explore the causes and enlighten the cures.
- Pay attention to grantmakers and community sector sources as bellwethers of emerging trends in problem-solving.
- Create new forums to communicate with citizens through community-sector organizations.
- Support teaching not-for-profit coverage and civic education in journalism schools.
- Encourage volunteerism among employees to strengthen community connections
- Marry their medium's strengths with citizen needs. Reinvent the public affairs function.

### **NEW MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

Leaders must recognize, then capitalize on their membership in the community and widen the scope of their development interests. They should:

- Partner with not-for-profits to test products, improve community, bridge gaps between information haves and have-nots.
- Set up structures to support strategic communication and stimulate citizen/public interest in new technology.
- Develop applications that support citizen engagement and interaction.
- Continue to set up creative philanthropic experiments to apply their know-how to community building.
- Encourage volunteerism among employees to improve community connections and understanding.
- Work with public libraries to strengthen community databases.

### **COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENS**

Need to pay more attention to their information environment. They should:

- Demand better media coverage by correcting mistakes, writing letters, calling and giving feedback when they see things they like or dislike.
- Use and advocate for public libraries as common information points, technology trainers, and meeting places (real or virtual).
- Conduct assessments of how people get information that affects their lives, whether it's accurate and timely, and how it could be improved.
- Work with high-tech organizations to demonstrate new ways to deliver information in public places, such as kiosks, websites, terminals, bulletin boards, schools, and shopping centers.
- Take control and ownership of community/regional media by starting new publications (on-line and print), or buying those for sale.

REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR *news media organizations and not-for-profit community-sector organizations met in focus groups conducted by The Gilmore Research Group of Seattle.*

GOOD NEWS / GOOD DEEDS

## METHODOLOGY

*They discussed relations among citizens, not-for-profits,*

*media, and new technology. Discussions were also*

*held with key developers and users of new media communication technologies. These conversations*

*considered ways to improve news coverage of community issues, communications practices of*

*not-for-profits, and public benefits possible from new technologies. The researchers built on these*

*findings by interviewing over 100 additional individuals in news media, not-for-profits, academe,*

*and creators of new media, both locally and nationally. They drew on works from other researchers*

*and authors. They attended conferences and meetings where ideas for improving community*

*communication systems were explored. They took on projects and clients in their consulting*

*practices to test some of the ideas and recommendations noted in the project report.*

#### **SPECIAL THANKS TO**

**Good News/Good Deeds** was made possible by people in these organizations: the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation, SAFECO, the Pequod Fund of the Tides Foundation, the Lieberman Family Foundation, the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation, The Gilmore Research Group, Phinney/Bischoff Design House and the Institute for Creative Development. Special acknowledgment is due to those colleagues and friends who served as advisers, critics, collaborators and cheerleaders.

#### **FOR THE FULL REPORT**

The 120-page report, **GOOD NEWS/GOOD DEEDS: Citizen Effectiveness in the Age of Electronic Democracy**, contains detailed research findings and commentary for the community sector, news media, and new media. It also includes bibliography, website listings, and glossary for further exploration of these issues. A print copy can be ordered by sending \$25.00 check or money order to Good News/Good Deeds, P.O. Box 31196, Seattle, WA 98103-1196. (Please allow four weeks for delivery.) It can also be found on the World Wide Web in 1999 at <http://www.goodnewsgooddeeds.org>.

#### **RESEARCHERS**

**Jan Gray** worked in the broadcast industry for 18 years, in marketing, management, and communication positions for NBC and CBS affiliates in Portland, Seattle, and Altoona, PA and for CBS-owned WBBM-TV, Chicago. She is an independent communications consultant. In the community sector, Jan chairs the board of Sound Experience, a not-for-profit environmental education program. She also chairs the legislative-public policy committee of the Seattle-King County Senior Services board.

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