GRANTMAKERS IN THE ARTS

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Survey of Digital Opportunities for Arts Organizations and Artists

Panelists: Ted Berger, *New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA)*
Penny Dannenberg, *NYFA*
Eve Smith, *Benton Foundation*

The Digital Divide

Panelists: Cynthia Lopez, *P.O.V.*
David Bolt, *Producer*

Young Media Artists/Youth Culture

Panelists: Dan Bergin, *Twin Cities Public TV*
Alex Rivera, *Artist Producer*

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Morning session

Berger: The project was created in the early 90s by Susan Roberson, Robin Hickman, a local community builder, and me. The idea is basic media literacy, only instead of an artist residency like Tom and I did with those young brothers, this was opening the doors to the public TV station and letting young people – in this case, youth of color from the area – come in and learn about television and have a venue for their voices.

I want to show a piece done recently by a crew member that was aired both on "News Night," our alternative news show here at Public TV, and also in their hour-long special that we produced this spring. It is about a young woman who was going to cast her first vote this year, so she was really into issues of politics and the power of the vote. That developed into a journalistic piece that looks at youth voting rights and other issues. It made for an interesting production. Afterwards, I will just tell you about the process and why it's more empowering than the piece itself.

[video presentation]

That's a little bit of Gina's journalistic work, and that's the kind of work that Hype does.

I was doing a panel on Challenges of Youth Media Workers at the NAMAC conference and someone mentioned that old saying, "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." People bristle at that. It's really unhealthy that young people should hear this. You have great staff here who do and teach and we all try and do that. So let us not use that cliché any more.

Here's a PowerPoint presentation about my residency with Hype. As a product, as a production – clearly it's pretty amazing to have the creativity and the voice of young people. But it's really about the process. This is fresh from our NAMAC coverage. Our young reporter, Hallie Lee, was at the NAMAC conference this past weekend doing interviews with young media makers. In the center is Stephanie Zeno, and she had done a great piece on journalists of color and ethics and she presented that along with some other makers. I just thought this was really cool, and it speaks to the power of the Hype process – Hallie connecting with this sister from Alaska. These two meeting with the camera as the thing that's bringing them together is great. Even in the brief exchange of an interview, learning about each other was really cool.

One downside with Hype is that Twin Cities Public Television is a union jurisdicted shop, so there is not a lot of access to the hands-on use of cameras. I try and make that a positive in terms of getting this collaboration with our videographers. So you do have that corny thing of the white guy over thirty meeting the fifteen-year-old Hmong girl and then them interviewing the Alaska Native. It's very cool, actually, and I really do think one of the great things that the station gets out of Hype is that our staff gets to have this interaction.

In Gina's piece, beginning with an idea and then working with her to formulate that is very dramatic. Again, it's about the process for her. She happened to be someone who is interested in journalism, so to go on a shoot and to be at the Capitol was very important for her. She learned about ENG, or Electronic News Gathering, and the more journalistic approach to filmmaking. It's a good starting point as a young filmmaker to move from. Again, the connection through the shoot itself – her meeting these other young people who are active – speaks to the community-building aspect of Hype and really getting these young people more activist in nature.

There is certainly all of the work ethic stuff that comes with making TV. Also learning about storytelling was an important part of it. One of the things that I did was to adapt the dramatic

film writing approach of note cards and use them to take interviews, and then work with the young people to talk about storytelling, to think about writing. With new technology and nonlinear editing, they are so quick to start to juxtapose sound and image that, frankly, I was getting concerned that we are losing some of the essence of the storytelling. So working with the note cards to outline a piece and then struggling with copy, and news writing – making it not too corny but also accomplishing all of the things that you want to do – is a good exercise and keeps it from being just playing with video. For someone quiet like Gina, doing the narration is a nice way to speak up.

There is a real power in the nonlinear editing and the digital editing. For me, it's a great teaching tool in terms of how to actually construct media. It's also a nice way to sidestep our jurisdictional issues because, with the edit decision list that's created in Avid, in this case, the young person working with me has made all of their decisions to the frame. They get to sit in online at a session when a piece is assembled; meet an editor and kind of kick it with them. They have told their story and they have learned about the magic. Editing is always that point of magic, in terms of media making, but also the dark side and the manipulation.

I was talking yesterday about how I showed one crew member how to clean up some "ums" and "ahs" in someone's sentence, and I came back after break and they had created an entirely new sentence out of their syllables and words. It's pretty scary!

Question: What is nonlinear editing?

Berger: Nonlinear editing refers to computer/desktop-based editing, where instead of going from tape machine to tape machine, inserting images one after another in a consecutive fashion, nonlinear editing allows you to move throughout the line of your story. You could jump to the middle, pull out five minutes, drop in something new, or leave it out entirely and let the rest of the story collapse around it.

Audience: It's the difference between a typewriter and a word processor. But for film and video.

Berger: Exactly. We work as a group, talking about footage and working on critical response and that sort of thing. When they tape their hour-long specials, it's kind of this cool coming together of people in the Public TV station.

In this case, African-American elder Nellie Stone Johnson, who is a 95-year-old activist who formed the DFL Party with Hubert Humphrey and accomplished many firsts for women. They have her and Gina hook up, again, it's another cool side effect of Hype.

Within an institution, using the artist residency mode has been really, for me, an exciting way to reach kids: the only way to stay in Public TV, because I do get to do something like this and be a media mentor in a way that's different from the traditional artist residency. But I do still like to get out of the building and work with different communities.

Thinking about some of those new technology tools is a transition, I think, and especially hearing from diverse communities is maybe a nice transition to Alex and some of his work.

Rivera: It's a nice dovetail between Dan's work and mine.

I will be showing work more from individuals, young people who are trying to make their voice heard. A lot of them are people who maybe don't think of themselves as artists yet. Instead, they are people who think of themselves as activists or as doing market research or as just doing troublemaking with the instinct of a young person. Some of them have come into their own and started to think of themselves as artists.

I am twenty-seven years old so I think I have about three years left to talk with any authority about youth culture. But I also definitely want to hear from the students in the room. It's hard to make generalizations about young people; it's a wildly diverse group and young artists are the same. But basically, I wanted to speak about a few things that I see in, at least, my colleagues and the community of younger artists that I work with. Most of them are in their twenties.

First of all, one of the most important things to understand when looking at the work of young

media artists is that we don't think of media in the same way, basically. I think when media was originally invented – media meaning film or video – there was a relationship between the film, the filmmaker, and the world and that you would make films about the world.

For us, we grew up with media already around us all of the time: watching television six hours a day, on the Web three hours a day, playing video games an additional two hours a day. For us, our world is made of media. The relationship that someone growing up in 1920 might have had with their community, we have with the Internet.

When a lot of us turn and become media makers, we make media about media. I think that some critics or people looking at the work might say, this isn't very original! Why are they stealing images from somewhere else? Why does this look like a corporate Web site when it's really an artist's Web site? Why can't they find their own voice? It's because we don't know the world anymore, we just know media. So as we set out as artists, that's our reference point.

You will see almost all of the artists that I am going to show bringing a wide variety of media – whether it's scraps of media they are reconfiguring in their work, or genres about art, whether it's the corporate Web site or working in the genres like the dance club and the media of a dance club and bringing that into the arts. You see people pulling from various places and bringing it into the arts. So, when you look at it, you might not recognize it as art. Be careful with it.

For that reason we don't think of authorship in the same way. A lot of the work is made of reused materials and working with reused genres, but always with an emphasis on how to say something new and always with a motivation and acknowledgement that with genre comes audience. For a lot of young artists, especially ones interested in speaking about politics or speaking about community issues, there is a discontentment with the strategies of the 60s and 70s of doing Social Issue Media – sort of in caps. Very straight documentaries might get screened on PBS but then who is tuning in, and who is really staying put, and who is on the couch watching it? There is a distrust among younger people about speaking through that vocabulary that limits your audience to people who are already in agreement. You will see that a lot of the artists who work in the show are trying to find new genres and new strategies to use but allow them to speak about the same issues, but in ways that bring new audiences, maybe audiences that don't intend on seeing art but will be caught in the act by accident.

This is a project done by a young woman named Cathy Davies who I went to college with. She did it as her senior project at school. She worked in conjunction with PBS Web Lab to make it a larger project. The idea is that she wanted to address the issue of panhandlers and the fears, stereotypes, and suspicions around that community. The way that she decided to do it was using the vernacular of market research. She is a really talented designer and was working in advertising agencies at the same time as she was doing her artwork. You see a visual representation of the pitch by the panhandler and you can decide to give them a certain amount. You can also hear that pitch. The Web – what a great medium!

You see someone with what is basically a social issue impetus or focus – a focus that's political dealing with an under-represented community – presenting their concerns through the rhetoric of market research in order to reach a new audience, and it was very successful. The site has had thousands and thousands of hits and was reported in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and really created a media buzz for that strange combination of genre and content. There is a lot of information on the site.

Another sort of similar site is ®™mark.com. This project received funding from Creative Capital last year. ®™ark (pronounced "artmark") is basically a group of media activists who do hoaxes for the media – that's the artwork. For example, they did a project a few years ago when a talking Barbie Doll came out that was very sexist. The Barbie Doll said things like, "I would rather be shopping." and "Math is hard!" They were just disgusted so they bought all of these Barbie Dolls and all of these

G.I. Joe Dolls, took them home and surgically switched the voice boxes and then reverse shoplifted them back onto the shelves in time for Christmas. So Christmas shoppers bought the modified Barbie Doll which said, "Let's go kill them!" They inserted a press release inside the box, and so the whole thing became a performance without a stage. It was a performance that happened in the eyes of the media, but for literally millions and millions of people. Again, a genre connecting, guiding, a new audience to the topic.

®™mark.com is the same people who did that project, but this is a shell which they call a corporation. Instead of seeking monetary profit, as a corporation does, they seek cultural profit. So the Barbie Liberation Organization – the BLO – was an example of cultural profit. ®™ark is organized as an investment fund. What the owner did was funnel money from people who have it to projects that need it via this corporate shell that is their Web page. They have organized all of these projects, so people can submit projects into various funds – they call them mutual funds. For example, there is the Frontier Fund. This fund challenges naïve, utopic visions of the global village. They have fifteen or twenty funds of subversive cultural projects, to which you, as an investor, can submit money and fund these projects. It's an open interface so that investors can participate and cultural saboteurs can participate and upload their projects.

Question: At what point did Creative Capital get involved? Was that post-Barbie liberation?

Rivera: Yes. They got involved after the whole thing was online, and I think what they funded was an ®™ark speaking tour. They were going to go to corporate fairs and job fairs and getting their message out that way.

This project was also featured in the Whitney Biennial. From here it doesn't look like art, but it's really a unique combination of video, Web, in front of the eyes of the media as a piece of performance art. A lot of young people, whether it's out of naiveté or strategy, are destroying lines between genres to the point where there really is no one box that could be clicked in terms of describing a project like this.

This is a project by a young woman who wanted to do a film. The subject of the film was a box of letters that she found when she was cleaning out her room. They were letters she had passed to her best friend in high school. She read them as an adult and thought, these are hilarious, these little notes, and wanted to make a film out of it. But again, realizing, in terms of questions of genre, she had no idea how she was going to get it out there. So what she did was to serialize it and made a short video out of each letter. Here you can watch each letter. Being savvy in terms of the fact that some people don't have fast connections, she is presenting it as a video here, as pure sound, or as just a letter.

You can go through and learn a whole story about these two girls' relationship in high school. After reading the story – each story has a topic – you can also post a message about that topic. So the first note is about passing notes, the second one is about bad dates. You can put up your own thoughts about bad dates.

Question: Alex, in order to be a satisfying experience for a viewer, both of these examples have interactivity, right?

Rivera: Yes. That's one thing that I think a lot of Web designers – both the commercial ones and the arts ones – have realized, is that the Web is a really unique place. It's not a place for broadcast, it's not a top-down media.

What makes it strong is that the viewers can participate and put up their thoughts and make their thoughts become part of the experience. That's what drives the whole community-building aspect of a Web site. All of the examples have that horizontal aperture which allows the viewers to talk to each other and use the Web site to get to know each other.

I made the metaphor yesterday of a painting that's on the wall. Compare a Web site that is art to a painting that is art. This is like the equivalent of having a box of markers next to the painting and saying, Hey! Mess it up! Draw on it! As if every painter had to do that to have someone watch, to have someone see the art. It's a really different media for an artist to work in because part of it is getting your vision out,

but a lot of it is opening an aperture for a community to realize itself through your work, and that has to be there or else people will not come back.

Question: One challenge that some of this new venue for art poses for you all, as funders, is that you have this idea of audience and impact. When Creative Capital supported this, did they even say, How many people will see this? The traditional kind of RFP language.

Rivera: Creative Capital is definitely interested in questions of audience and they are also interested in collaborating in terms of promoting the work. Another thing about our Web site is that it's the most public medium, in one sense, but it's a very lonely medium.

You can put up your Web site and the whole world can see it, or anyone who has a computer can see it, but they probably are not going to. To make the Web site actually a piece of public art is entirely a question of promotion, right? From the artist's point of view in speaking of funders, that's a really interesting conundrum because so many funders want to fund the production or distribution. The idea of actually promoting means doing advertising in other media, which means trying to build links to other Web pages. Trying to broker, let us say, a link between this site and the National Organization of Women and ®™ark or to cnn.com. Trying to build the architecture so that artists' sites actually get seen. I think that's a really neglected space in terms of funding options.

All of the artists have chosen these scandalous approaches. Like the site about the panhandlers – her strategy was to make a scandal and send out press releases, and then the press writes about it and that's how traffic arrives at the site. Maybe some of us might not be able to mobilize the press so then how do people arrive at sites like this?

Question: How do you reach someone who is interested in finding out more about what is happening in the media?

Rivera: Somebody who is interested in learning more about art on the Net? They might go to rhizome.org. That's a site that's a new media art hub and newsletter. You might want to check that out. But they are going to be focusing more on experimental Web art. The stuff I am presenting is half between art and activism – that's my particular area of interest, but rhizome.org is a really good place to start to get to know what is going on in terms of art on the Internet.

Audience: It's also important to note that for a lot of traditional media makers, filmmakers even, there are a number of sites where you can stream online through films. There will be festivals, distribution, even production of more traditional media online.

Rivera: This is the last one I want to show before having a conversation. I will show mine after this.

This is a site called IMC – Independent Media Center – maybe some of you have heard of it. This is a giant, really a global, collaboration now that started in Seattle in the context of the protests against the World Trade Organization. Their mission is to try to seek out a totally democratic model for making news. It's really fascinating what they have come up with.

If you dig into this site, what you will discover is that anyone can publish on this site. If you think there is something noteworthy in your community, you can write about it and upload it here. That's pretty easy to do; that's nothing too fancy.

Here is another site and what is really exciting about what they have done is they have created an editorial collective that anyone can join. If you want to be part of their editorial staff, you just send in your email and you become part of it. Every time there is a new article up, you have a chance to rate it as part of the editorial staff. You can give it a number from one to ten. What happens is that the articles that get the higher score move to the front page. Anyone can be one of the editors and anyone can be one of the writers.

As a reader, if you rate something positively, it gets much more attention. So this article must have gotten a lot of high scores. I don't know if this would count as art or journalism. In all

of the projects you see this incredible aperture, this dance between the artists – or makers – and the audience, and shifting the terrain completely.

For the past few years I have been working with computers, not only computers as a tool to make media, but as a set of metaphors and a whole vocabulary, speaking of my main interest which is the politics of immigration and the Latino community in the United States.

Around 1997 I had this tremendous sense of cynicism because there was all of this hype in *Wired* magazine and everywhere about the global village and the global community that was going to come from the Internet. Yet, simultaneously, in California they were passing Proposition 187; the U.S.-Mexico border was being militarized, the budget doubled; affirmative action was being killed. I felt like there was this attack on my community but at the same time the celebration of this global village. It was this irony that made me feel nauseous.

The way I decided to express it was through this initiative now which has manifested itself as a video, now a Web site, and hopefully soon a feature film. The concept is of a future in which instead of physically coming to America, migrant labor stays put in their home country and uses the Internet to remotely control robots which do their work in America. So that the pure labor comes to America and none of the problems of having an actual immigrant in the country exist.

I made a tongue-in-cheek video promoting this idea. Now I have made a Web site which, again like the earlier ones, uses the vernacular of the corporate page. I created a corporation called Remote Labor Systems. The site is designed to tell you the joke which is: In the 21st century the cyber *bracero* program promises to bring manual labor to America via the Internet and tele-robotics technology. That's the joke. It also educates people about the history of these kinds of politics in America.

You can go here and learn about the original *bracero* program which brought Mexican labor to the United States between the 1940s and the 1960s. Basically what that was about was going to the U.S.-Mexico border, picking up workers, bringing them to pick fruit, leaving their wives behind as collateral. The workers were not allowed to vote or do anything when they were in America. They picked fruit and were sent back home again. It was a guest worker system where the workers, who were inside America's borders, had no rights at all. It was the precedent for my kind of high-tech *bracero* program. The site is designed to divert attention to the original true history, and then also spin out this joke. This project was funded by NYFA a few years ago.

Question: What kind of feedback do you get on this Web page and video?

Rivera: It has been really positive so far. I have been fortunate because the piece is part sci-fi, part United Farm Workers. I am somewhere in between George Lucas and Cesar Chavez. That opens up new audiences, and so I have been lucky to present this work in community centers, in museums, in film festivals, and online to this audience.

Question: I thought you really struck a balance. Using new technology – not to just wallow in it – but to both amuse and inform and entertain. A great story!

Rivera: Yes, exactly. There is a different media to recycle my old ideas. Also, it links to this site called invisibleamerica, which is my personal newsletter and archive of my videos.

What I wanted to lay out is that young makers – especially working on the Web in this new media – are doing work that doesn't provide some of the old pleasures of art. When you go to museum and look at art it's about this visceral experience of staring at the work and being filled with something from the work.

Now you see artists working on the Web that create work that aesthetically, maybe, doesn't offer that much, but what it offers is a configuration of a community, a concept. It's a whole new space for artists to be intervening in. For funders, trying to isolate what that space is, how to categorize it, how to address it, and how to support it in the proper way are a really new set of questions. I think it's time to take all

of the file cabinets and throw them out the window and start again.

Question: Patty said something in the *New York Companion* today that when Stevens first came and she went down to his office to see some of the stuff that he was going to put up on Gallery Nine, she said that her first instinct was to say, Oh, we can't have that, it doesn't look good enough. Visually, it doesn't look good enough. He had to talk to her about things like interactivity, and databases, and the systems underneath the visual Net. And she said she is still trying to come to terms with that, but it strikes me that that's key, right?

Rivera: Yes. Let me show you another thing really quick. That question is essential because on the Internet you have this unique relationship between aesthetics and audience, meaning that the more photos you use, the more videos you use, the fewer people can see it. So again, the relationship, the corollary to a painter would be the more paint they slop on the canvas, the fewer people could see it. What is that about? It's a very strange media to work in, at that level.

For example, I got a small grant from Creative Capital to do this project which I called a digital mural. The idea was to make something that was painterly in its qualities, but use the best of the Internet to continue on with this history of Diego Rivera and the Mexican muralists but online. Obviously, the media has shifted and I am also trying to talk about: instead of the plight of the rural Mexican farmer, to talk more about urban Mexico and the immigration experience. So these are images from Tijuana in San Diego. I went to that region and shot video.

This is totally under construction, totally first draft. On a normal connection, at home, it would take three minutes to download. I'm happy, at some level, at how this looks, I like what is coming out, but it's totally impractical for the audience I want to reach. You get that strange relationship between the aesthetic and the audience which is a new challenge for artists to have.

Berger: Any other questions or comments, anything from our students? Is this the stuff that you guys are excited to sink your teeth into?

Question: I really am excited that that could be a new venue to submit work to.

Berger: That's one of the things Alex and I were talking about. We use the term "digital" a lot and it means different things to different people. But to me it really does mean liberation or access as much as anything. The digital stuff itself is important in terms of technology and even as a creative tool, but the accessibility – and in some cases, affordability – really is one of the things that's exciting also.

Alright. Well, that was great stuff, Alex.

Rivera: Thanks!

Question: What does the budget look like for a project like this? You were saying full-funding against partial-funding.

Rivera: People make silly budgets for Web pages. Obviously, if you are in the business of making Web pages and you need to hire a lot of people, you can make it a very expensive project. I think it depends on the site, but for a site that wants to incorporate a lot of film and video, there are still all of the production costs of going out and shooting it.

As a funder, I would want to look at the plan to make this site known. Putting a lot more money into the promotion, on that end of the budget than we, probably, are accustomed to doing in the old days. It is a relatively cheap medium – relatively compared to other ones – but, again, it's an invisible medium unless it's promoted. It's a hard question to answer.

Question: It has perpetual presentation. So that instead of me saying, "I will show this video here, here, and here." In this case the cost, I would imagine, is to maintain space on a server. The budget may be larger on that line item because you want to keep it up for some time. You have to keep space, keep a presence.

Question: Yes. There must be this need to be working on it constantly, constantly. The whole

idea is that it's happening always in the present. How do you deal with that?

Rivera: Funding that never ends. Because you see, also, the Web sites never end. They become spaces in which many people, including the artist, participate, but it's not controlled any longer by the artist. So that's a really good question. How do you break that down on a budget? I think you see the cost at the beginning for getting it up to a certain level and then the maintenance peters down.

Question: Do you provide links on your sites?

Rivera: Yes, on my personal site I do. I used to have a link to the United Farm Workers, I called them the "opposition" because of this idea that they will be protesting this corporation. But then I thought that it was not believable that this site would link to them.

On my personal page I do have a lot of links to activists but they are worth the pixels they are printed on right now because my site is underlinked as a place for traffic. I am involved in the question with Creative Capital of how to promote these sites and get traffic there. That's the small print underneath the Internet democracy, right?

Question: It also strikes me – when you were going through those things – that there is something about speed that's different generationally. It took me a while, when you put some of the sites up, to get the subtle critique or the slyness of the text. So someone like me would, maybe, page through these very quickly thinking that they were just another corporate text. But I sense that the facility that people have who are younger, who are in front of the media a lot, who are at computer stations a lot, can read these things very quickly and figure out whether it's a corporate site or whether it's something that's really interesting. The way that you keep moving your mouse around! Gosh! It takes me awhile to find and click! So there is a quickness to it that I think is interesting – as an older person.

Rivera: Yes. Some of it's hard for anybody. Look at this. Part of what ®™ark does is they have this piece of software which can download a Web page entirely intact and then they can, on their computer, locally change it and then upload it. They were able to register the domain gatt.org – the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. So they downloaded the World Trade Organization's site, changed it, and then uploaded it here. So it's really confusing because – this is the fake one – if you go to the real one. This is it, okay, they must have redesigned. At one point, this looked exactly like the original.

They very subtly changed it so that it really does breed confusion, and confusion for the press. It became part of a whole subtle media performance and through this site they have actually been invited to participate in a world trade summit. So they are going to Prague to go to some summit there as the World Trade Organization. They really think it's them! So people who are getting involved with this, as pranksters, in this world of imitation – sometimes it's not legible and then that becomes an asset to the art as a piece of performance.

Audience: It sure does.

Berger: We have to get ready for the next session coming in. Thank you, both, very much.

Afternoon session

Berger: We want to thank Cindy Gehrig and Grantmakers in the Arts for the chance to speak with you regarding some of the recent efforts we have been up to in the area of arts and technology.

I am Ted Berger, the executive director of the New York Foundation for the Arts, and I am joined today by some colleagues: Penny Dannenberg, the director of Programs at NYFA, and Eve Smith, the project manager for Open Studio, the arts online of the Benton Foundation.

Penny and I also want to thank Sarah Jarkow, one of NYFA's senior program officers, for her help. Her technical prowess far exceeds ours. And we want to thank Gene Pittman who has been in the booth and helping us all along, for his technical support.

One of my mentors, Kitty Carlisle Hart, was my best technology advisor when she told me to find my light when I give my remarks. That's about as far as I go with technology. That's why Sarah is here and why Gene is here – to really help us.

Penny and Eve are going to talk about what our organizations have been committed to in the past few years, in expanding artists' and arts organizations' involvement in this area. I am then going to discuss some generic patterns and ways that I think arts and technology efforts are being supported. Then we hope that there will be some general question and answers. We are small enough that as you have questions, you should just interrupt and help us answer them. We hope that long after this conference you will call on us if you need further clarification or resources.

We are also rather interested in your sense of what you are hearing from your applicants about this area and what you think are the barriers within your agency to getting more involved with media in general – if you are not involved in it – or with a new medium.

As I said, I am not a techie. I am of the quill pen generation. A lot of this technology stuff has been a new discovery for me in the past years. As the director of an organization that has always been trying to respond to individual artists and arts organizations, about twelve years ago, thanks to Anne Focke, I began to look at issues of new technology with her. I realized the arts community was way behind where the rest of the not-for-profit arts world was at that time.

Since that time, we at NYFA have been working to get people to think this stuff through and to respond to the ways artists are increasingly seeing this as just another tool for their creativity. I have also become acutely aware of how difficult it is to put the resources together to educate, convince, and essentially start to retool our entire not-for-profit community for the 21st century.

We have been doing a lot of different things at NYFA. Penny is going to talk about some of the things we have been doing that we believe are practical ways of looking at this.

Dannenberg: Before we start I want to do this overview about technology at NYFA. We have an important concept about how we are doing it that informs everything we are doing. You will notice in this brochure that there is no section called "Technology Programs" or "Technology anything." Technology is a tool that we are using throughout all of our programs to help us do the work either more efficiently or more globally or allow artists to do their work.

NYFA's Technology Initiatives enable artists to become better advocates for their projects and their careers; provide support for administrative capacity and stability of emerging organizations; and hopefully improve the arts community's access to and understanding of new technologies. NYFA's Technology Initiatives provide direct service, technical assistance, and information to a wide range of constituents providing services locally, statewide, and often nationally and internationally. The programs serve both individual artists and emerging and mid-sized and even large organizations.

I want to first talk about our technology grants. While I am talking, I am going to ask Sarah to show the work of Tennessee Rice Dixon and Jim Gasperini, who are two of our fellows who received Computer Arts Fellowships. This work is entitled "Scrutiny and the Great Round" and I'll just talk over it.

Most of you may know that we have a very large fellowship program. We give $7,000 fellowships to individual artists in New York State; we get over 5,000 applications; and we give out over $1 million each year. One of the areas that we give money and support in is called Computer Arts. We accept applications in which the computer is intrinsic to the work's creation, presentation, or understanding. Emphasis is on work that does not conceptually fit into other existing categories. Examples of work include 2-D, 3-D, interactive installation, and Internet Web art projects, as well as immersive virtual environments, hypertext documents, and computer-employed images, audio, and video.

As you are watching, the most important thing to know about this is that artists who are

working on the computer don't necessarily want the work to end up on a computer. We accept work that ends up on slides, on paper, on other kinds of medium, on audiotape, and on videotape. So the computer is employed as a way of creating something they couldn't do any other way.

The other area that we give grants in is called Arts and Technology Planning Grants. We talk about it a little bit in the brochure. We hope that these awards support informed research and the process of creating a technology plan to guide an organization in the incorporation of new technologies into its programs and operations.

Support is given to a wide range of proposals that enhance an organization's overall technological capacity to administer, communicate, market, collaborate, coordinate and deliver high-quality arts programming. Planning for innovative uses of technology is supported, as well as user-based on successful existing models. So our emphasis, as you are going to hear all of the way through this presentation, is on planning and how technology permeates the entire organization.

The next area that we use technology through is in services. We have a program called TechTAP – Arts and Technology Technical Assistance Program. Our TechTAP Program provides funding for New York State arts organizations who wish to have a consultant come in, who wish to travel to a place that's doing something that they want to install, who need staff training and/or professional development. TechTAP-funded projects address problems and issues specific to integrating technology into arts management, production, and services.

The next area that we go to in our services area is a program called KIT – Knowledge in Technology. This is a program that uses NYFA's online communication service – ArtsWire – to help small and mid-sized arts organizations with the beginning understandings of what is technology, how technology can be used, and to help them begin to prosper in the fact of this new technology since it's not going away.

The Technology Planning Workshops focus on skills organizations need to develop effective technology plans. The technology capacity may be a key to success even for the smallest organization, and these workshops help organizations cope with technology. All attendees have an opportunity to do hands-on interactive experiences during each of the workshops.

I won't go further with KIT but to tell you that we are developing a curriculum. If any of you are interested, we can certainly share it with you. We are in our second year of the KIT program. We totally re-purposed the curriculum from our experience of the first year, and now we are getting a chance to do it again this year and we will be doing it for two more years. So by the end of that I think we might have our curriculum down.

For those of you who want a quick fix about it, if you go to the ArtsWire site and you look up "Spider School," you will get a quick fix on technology planning.

I want to move forward with our services to tell you about our Web page called Educate by Design. It's the Web portion of an entire initiative called Design Education. This Web-based database is a resource featuring exemplary design education sites and an assessment tool that identifies individual goals and suggests appropriate design education programs. The site functions as a filter page.

Does everyone know what a filter page is? No? A filter page is a trend in Web sites and a way in which a great deal of information can be managed. Information related to design and to education has been collected, then sorted, so that it can be presented online in a more manageable and usable format. That's what a filter page does and that's what we hope this site will do. It serves as the first step toward creating even more accessible resources, ultimately contributing to the implementation of design courses in schools, inspiring educational reform nationwide.

The next area of our services is our online service, ArtsWire, which I think most of you know about, so I don't need to go into that except to say that we feature free access to current news and information relating to the arts. We Web-host individual artists and small arts organizations' Web sites, provide email

addresses, a database, and a library of resource materials, as well as the latest listings of grants, exhibition opportunities, and jobs in the arts.

The last area – which is new for us and which we just launched a week and a half ago – is called our Online Residency Project, which is a model of 21st century classroom learning introducing media literacy to sixth grade students in rural and urban New York State settings in a shared virtual classroom on the Internet. The online artist residency is an accessible archetype that demonstrates how to use the Internet to bring professional artists into the classroom, equip teachers with comprehensive technical support, and incorporate new media into an in-school curriculum with the ultimate goal, always, of enhancing student learning.

The last area that I want to talk about is how we are using the Internet to provide information to the public, to artists, to organizations. First, of course, is our Web site which we created using a team approach at the Foundation. Believe it or not, we even used our own advice through Spider School and through our curriculum in Knowledge and Technology.

On our Web site, you will come to a page called the Visual Artists Information Hotline. This operates throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Marianas, and American Samoa. The Visual Artists Information Hotline is a free information service for individual artists working in all visual arts and media. The Hotline empowers visual artists by providing them with complete information about resources to facilitate their work. Hotline resources have experienced a 90 percent user increase due to their availability online – and that's only in one year, a 90 percent increase.

On the Visual Artists' Hotline we have four portions. There are Information Fact Sheets that offer detailed information on thirty-three topics in the fifty states and more detailed in four cities.

We have a column called "Ask Dr. Art" and in this column, the Visual Artists' Hotline Coordinator writes practical information based on the questions that he has been getting over this past quarter. Whatever the most questions are, that's what we write about.

We have the Hotline Directory which is a comprehensive listing of all organizations, publications, and other programs listed on the Visual Artists Hotline fact sheet. It's like a searchable database in case you want to find something that you know the name of, or you know the place of, but you may not want to have to scroll through everything.

Next, we have a Digital Directory which was the physical manifestation of a conference we gave three years ago called the Governor's Conference on Arts and Technology. It is just for New York State consultants, but certainly the information is good for everything.

Last, we have a computerized balloting system that we have been using with our fellowship review process since our first venture into technology in 1984. We have since re-vamped it, made it current, and taken it out of the database process and into an Access platform. But we are still going at it.

I'll be glad to answer any questions later. Just remember that technology, we hope, infiltrates all of the parts of the foundation.

Berger: Thank you, Penny, for helping us to understand it.

Getting any new initiative going in the arts in general, but also in arts and technology, on a national basis requires an enormous amount of patience, political savvy, and resources – something the Benton Foundation has long been committed to. So Eve Smith is going to discuss Benton's Open Studio project.

Smith: I thought I would give you an overview about Open Studio. My role at the Benton Foundation is both national project manager for Open Studio and also senior associate in the capacity building area of the Foundation. So I am also looking at other nonprofit issues and how to help nonprofits use technology.

What is interesting, and why I am so happy that we are talking today about arts and technology is that the New York Foundation for the Arts and Open Studio are at ends of the spec-

trum. We represent the spectrum of what is being offered. There are a lot of other initiatives out there as well to help artists and arts organizations have tools and resources and understanding about the Internet and Web.

I would like to talk to you about Open Studio and then just raise a couple of the issues that we have had, as a funder, in terms of what we have learned from this three-year program with Open Studio.

If you heard Alice Myatt's talk this morning, she was mentioning the role of the artist and moving from drawing with a stick in the sand to television to digital technology. I love that kind of arc of thinking about technology. We certainly understand that artists and arts organizations are our cultural historians, our storytellers. With technology, we have been finding that artists have been able to recreate the communal, active art experience in an age when entertainment is often a passive, isolating experience. Cultural workers and organizations have had a profound impact on both the real and digital landscapes. These contributions can only be possible when arts and arts organizations have had the tools, and the support, to fully utilize technology. Since 1996, Open Studio has been doing just that.

Open Studio is a joint project with the Benton Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. There are currently eighteen active training sites in urban and rural areas that were funded to provide free Internet access and Web site development training to artists in nonprofit arts organizations across the country. Our training sites include Space 111, a small arts center in Birmingham, Alabama; Lewis-Clark State College, which is in Lewiston, Idaho; Nebraska's and Colorado's State Arts Councils are training sites, as is the Seattle Art Museum and a dozen other media arts organizations. At these locations, members of the arts community are taught how to use email, how to search the Web, and how to develop a basic Web page. More than 1,000 artists and arts organizations in 28 states have received training through Open Studio and that number is expected to rise to about 1,200 by the end of this current training cycle at the end of 2000.

What makes Open Studio unique is that it's more than just a grant-making program; we don't just give funds out to the field. We have developed a national information-sharing network that connects the training sites, their trainees, and others who are involved in arts and technology initiatives. That network now totals nearly 2,000 people and organizations. Through online discussion, conference calls, and in-person meetings, the site strategies and lessons learned are documented by national project staff and distributed to the network through the project's email, newsletters, online publications, and Web site. Further, these stories and resources are shared with other Benton Foundation projects, helping to inform the nonprofit sector about the arts community's successful practices in using technology.

The project Web site guides visitors to over 500 training resources, tools, and materials used by the sites and recommended by project staff and trainers. The Web site attracts about 6,000 visitors a month.

Finally, while you may know there is a wealth of technology training material that's out on the market, there is little that's designed specifically for training artists and arts organizations to use the Internet. The Open Studio sites are helping to fill this void by creating arts-focused curricula and training activities focusing on the Internet and Web development training.

Truly, none of this would have been possible without initial investment by the NEA. The NEA's financial support over the past three years has been $1.5 million – $500,000 each year. That has been nearly tripled through local and national funding of upwards to $4.2 million. At the national level, we received funding from the AT&T Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, and the Ford Foundation. Together with the NEA's support, this funding helped sites gain support for their local programs through in-kind donations and financial contributions from local and regional funders, businesses, and arts councils.

Open Studio demonstrates that the public/private partnerships at the local and national level can work and can be a model for other programs. It also shows that a relatively modest

investment on the national level can go a long way.

I want to briefly show you three examples of how Open Studio is impacting the field. The first example is how Open Studio is inspiring individual artists to integrate technology into their endeavors.

This is Joan Gold. Joan Gold is a 76-year-old painter and visual artist living in Northern California. Joan never learned to use a typewriter or computer before Open Studio. Due to training at the Ink People Center for the Arts in Eureka, California – which is one of our training sites that raised more than five times their initial award of $25,000 – Joan was inspired to purchase a computer, scanner, and the necessary applications to explore the possibilities of art on the Internet. She developed an online gallery of her work, and is now working on a second Web site to further showcase her artwork to audiences and others who would not normally see it. Her gallery is part of a whole online gallery that Ink People's Center has developed for all of their artists in the region.

This is one of the interesting outcomes of the Open Studio program, the way in which the Open Studio is changing artists' perception and use of technology and helping them to touch audiences who are increasingly faced with a barrage of commercial sites when they log onto the Internet. Joan's experience is not unique. Before coming to many of the training sites supported by Open Studio, artists like Joan had never used computers before, much less imagined the ways in which computers could help them express their artistic visions. However, they quickly overcame their uneasiness about technology and proved to be among the most enthusiastic and committed participants in the program.

In addition to developing Web pages, several artists found the Internet to be an effective tool for showcasing their artwork. By simply having an email address and a Web site, they were more accessible to potential patrons and curators interested in purchasing and exhibiting their work.

As a second example, I would like to tell you how Open Studio is helping organizations use technology to reach more people beyond their limited geographical region and share their cultural traditions. In rural Idaho, Lewis- Clark State College developed the Joining Rivers Rule Arts Initiative for its Open Studio Program. More than 45 arts organizations collaborated in implementing the initiative from recruiting artists to hosting training sessions to providing access to training labs and marketing the program. By involving local organizations, Lewis-Clark State College offered over 75 workshops in basic and advanced Internet and Web design in ten rural communities. In all, they reached more than 200 artists and ten arts organizations in a geographically isolated region.

One trainee of the program is the Lapwai Arts Council of the Nez Perce Tribe. Through Open Studio, tribal leaders learned how to use the Internet to share information about their culture, tribal events, and artistic product. Mary Emery who is the director of the Community Development Program at Lewis-Clark State College, said, "This project has encouraged artists and arts organizations to learn more about technology resources locally and to look for ways to collaborate." Now in its second year, the Idaho Open Studio project is working with the State Arts Council to enroll Open Studio artists in an online gallery on the development for the state and is assisting artists in showcasing their work using e-commerce tools and techniques.

The last example is one in which Open Studio is helping to develop arts and technology leadership in the field. My example is the Seattle Art Museum. I am not sure how many of you are familiar with the fact that the Seattle Art Museum has entered into a really unique partnership in collaboration with the City of Seattle and the Seattle Arts Commission to launch an arts resource center for the city. The role of the Seattle Art Museum is that they have learned lessons from their Open City experience about not only digital literacy for arts, but what is required in terms of this integration of arts and technology. They are able to go to the city and be a partner at the table to talk about this arts resource center for the city which I believe is going to be launched in 2001. It is the only one of its kind in the nation right now

that's going to be a studio, workshop, public space where technology is going to be integral to the center. The Seattle example is one in which Open Studio is helping arts organizations to reposition themselves in their communities. They are no longer seen just as arts organizations but as community-wide resources and are being asked to serve in a variety of different ways: civic committees, working with the mayor's office, serving on boards, expanding the role of arts organizations.

Some of my examples demonstrate that Open Studio is helping the arts to define and shape the future of the digital environment. That environment needs a diversity of voices, a place where commercial interests are not dominant and where creative expression is encouraged. There really is no better community in the United States to enrich this space than the arts community and Open Studio is helping to do that.

As one of our training site representatives said, "The arts can give the Internet a soul." I love that quote and I think it's a noble cause, but the time for that's fairly limited. As funders, we need to continue to seek ways to collaborate on the national and local level. We need to find ways that we can provide training to artists and arts organizations to have robust Web sites and cultural content online. We need to provide artists and arts organizations with the tools and the skills to be able to tell their stories powerfully to the new digital media.

We learned that it is really more than just giving out the money. The network becomes a two-way channel where we are learning and understanding what is happening with arts and technology and how the organizations are integrating the technology into their mission to serve their communities. That integration is helping to shift their organization and create their resources.

The other thing we learned is that we need to be flexible as a funder. We couldn't have rigid categories. Open Studio was really an experiment in what happens as you try to get artists and arts organizations to go online.

In the first year of the program, we set guidelines where they were to train a certain number of people to build Web pages. They were taking folks who had never used technology before – did not even have an email, didn't know how to use a mouse – and within a few months, had to have them have a Web page up. So this huge arc of, how do you take someone who has never used a mouse to doing HTML coding, was really quite daunting.

After the first year of the program, with feedback from the sites and from people in the arts field, we have restructured the program and are going to have a more gradual approach to the training. Instead of coming right to building a Web site, we now help them set up an email account; search on the Web; and begin to get comfortable with technology. In the next year, the current funding year that we are in, they are now helping folks to develop their Web pages. So flexibility was a real key to this program.

I want to reiterate the idea of a modest investment going a long way. The grants in Open Studio were $35,000, $25,000, and $15,000 depending on the funding year. Those need to be matched one-to-one by in-kind or cash and in this last year two-to-one by the sites. It could be local, regional, or national funding. It was not a lot of money going out the door but certainly high impact, and in many cases the sites leveraged those awards three to five times what we gave them in order to implement their programs through their own initiatives.

Before handing it back to Ted, I wanted to mention two resources that I brought with me that we can pass around for you. One is the *Use of Online Technology in the Arts Field*. We do periodic summaries for our network about just what is happening, and this is three summaries we put together from this summer about streaming media on dance Web sites – who is using the Internet to project images and various things. Another summary is on museums on the Web from the Museums on the Web Conference that happened a couple of months ago. It includes some really interesting papers about the issues in the museum field regarding the influx of the Internet and how they are dealing with that. In addition, there is a section on Webcasts that are happening in the arts community. These are provided to give you a

sample of what is happening in the arts if you want to go check it out online.

This sheet is a listing of Web sites and resources that we use at Open Studio when we want to track information and add information to our Web site. There are sites that are about technology and about the arts and about nonprofit technology resources. I encourage you to check out those.

I'll just plug both of our newsletters. Penny mentioned *ArtsWire Current*, which many of you may be familiar with. Open Studio has a weekly digest that goes out every Monday as well. We cover arts and technology news and funding opportunities and exhibitions and things like that. There are two complements to the newsletters and we encourage you to sign up for it.

Berger: Thanks, Eve. Open Studio is an extraordinary resource for us all. I believe the examples we are telling about are really about basic field research. True R&D on behalf of the entire field. We are trying to demystify the technology, understand the complexities of the issues involved, and trying to think about the arts and technology in very practical and realistic ways. While I think we recognize that there are major, major policy issues that surround us, we have to get our community at the table. These are some of the ways that we have been trying to do it.

As responsive funders, I think that the ways we are doing it fall into traditional arts funding patterns.

Here are some examples and patterns that I think are happening. Before I have all of you yell at me, let me put in a disclaimer. The first page is an overview of a more detailed matrix on the second page. The detailed matrix is, as it says at the top, "selected applications." This is not a comprehensive listing. Indeed, I don't think there is a comprehensive listing and it's one of the problems that we have because there is so much activity here. My second disclaimer is that my East Coast knowledge probably makes some of the examples I am using very East Coast oriented. But, in fact, there are many, many others.

One of the other things is that these categories often morph together. But I am just looking at it for purposes of discussion.

One of the key areas that's an increasing trend is the use of the computer for the grant application process itself. NYFA has been using a format which allows our applications to be downloaded. Last year, 3,200 applications were downloaded just in our fellowship program. You can get it directly from our Web site on a PDF file. We don't allow submission online because you have to submit the fellowships with direct support material. On the other hand, the first step of Creative Capital's review process allows direct, online application. Ruby Lerner has said that of the 1,800 applications they received, 1,100 were received online.

Many, many state art agencies have anticipated this idea and Jonathan is here so he can probably tell us many more than the ones I am going to tell you about. Pennsylvania, working in conjunction with Carnegie Mellon, did pioneering work in this area, building in an e-grant program. Similar efforts are now underway at the Minnesota Arts Board.

These are screen-shot images of what is here. This is the e-grant program that many states are adopting. This is a list of applications that are available. The next page is the start of the actual application. The next page is a sample of the various fields on the budget page that people would be filling out directly online. This is part of an e-grant process that Carnegie Mellon has developed. I believe that Colorado is going to be using it. Jonathan?

Jonathan: There's about half a dozen states exploring it.

Berger: I think that a lot of this goes to the use of Web sites as interactive tools. NYFA's Website isn't yet really that; we are about to go into the next planning phase which will make our site a much more interactive Web site. But I do think it's the second stage of Web site development in the grants. Many foundations, many state arts agencies do have Web sites. I tend to think of them as "electronic tombstones," kind of glorified brochures that don't

do very much. I think we are beginning to see a lot more that's happening.

Now as Penny said, we are actually using the computer in our review system itself.

One of the issues we are facing is that while there is money starting to be out there for new technology, it suffers from the same problems that old technology did. Film, video, really have never been that well supported, right? New technology initiatives, at least in the arts, are really just in their infant stage of funding. The sustainability of many of these efforts is a challenge for us all. I think that's probably an issue we will return to. But nevertheless, there is starting to be some money put into this and that goes to this matrix.

The first and foremost, which is how we started this, is there needs to be more money for just art making, for arts projects, for artistic development. As Penny said, it's going to come in all different ways: CD ROMs; two-dimensional work. You don't know what it's going to look like but there is amazing work out there all over the country.

A major area is in what we have all been talking about: capacity building. Most grants in this area tend to be more directed towards organizations, both large and small, and include support for planning.

I want to highlight the need to support planning efforts. I said that the first session. Just as artists are given fellowships to make mistakes, organizations need similar kinds of organization fellowships to do the right kind of planning before they get into this. It has been our experience that organizations have needed to establish detailed methods, sometimes board/staff committees, relationships to an outside community. These are new things that often have not happened before in an organization. There needs to be a written document about how to implement all of this. So supporting planning is critical because it provides a way of preparing organizational readiness.

One of the difficulties, however, relates to how much funding is ultimately available. Organizations are, in fact, planning very well. They are starting to feel frustrated that there is not enough public or private money yet available to shorten the lag between their plan and their need to find implementation funds. In the meantime, the technology keeps changing and they feel that they are out-of-date. It is a serious issue and, yet, because of the minimal funding, people are creating plans that are more achievable with short-term goals in them, so that they can get some realistic funding into it.

Another category with this grantmaking going on is in the exhibition and presenting, and audience development area. The State Arts Council of New York began a series of grants in this area. An example has been the Bronx Council on the Arts which created a cyber gallery from an actual gallery. The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council has created an exhibition program. Many people are probably familiar with the Web site for the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS. Their virtual gallery is an extraordinary effort in using very interesting, much more sophisticated technology than most galleries that I have seen.

Increasingly, museums are digitizing their collections. One of the more interesting documentation initiatives is AMICCO – The Art Museum Image Collection Consortium – which is an open membership, not-for-profit consortium of art collecting institutions throughout North America. They are creating a digital library of the documentation of their collections and making it available for education use.

This issue of education is critical to what the arts community has been doing – both in terms of K-12, as more and more schools are wired, and as many states are looking at virtual residency programs such as Penny described. Many of us have heard about distance learning and there are lots of distance learning examples around. But thanks to Cindy Gehrig, I am going to show you one of the more intriguing examples around.

This is Dance Partners here in Minnesota. Marsha Chapman, of Ballet Arts Minnesota and Rick Hauser, an independent producer, have created an interactive digital project which allows us to see dance through the wires.

[presentation]

The next area is in community building and networking and there all kinds of examples of state-wide conferences, of workshops, of written materials. It is an extension of education initiatives. More and more arts organizations are working in tandem with social service organizations, libraries and schools as a true community effort. These governor's conferences that have taken place in New York, in California, in other states, have helped to set an agenda within the state and sometimes within the region.

While this is all about technology, what still needs to be supported is people connecting to people through workshops, through training efforts, through planning initiatives, and then finally the technological connections. These efforts are empowerment efforts, what the funders in the arts community have always been concerned about: building relationships that can last long after the technology inevitably changes.

A new granting initiative is about to be launched. For the first time in a long time we have the National Endowment for the Arts in this game, besides what they are doing with Benton. This is a new grants program called "Resources for Change" that's finally getting underway at the Endowment. It opens up more opportunity for the entire field.

Other categories are new ventures, entrepreneurial efforts, and e-commerce. These usually don't fit any guidelines. We are, as you may know, a large fiscal incubator, we are a fiscal sponsor of hundreds of projects. We have been fortunate enough to be involved in three projects in this new area. Three Legged Dog has received funding from the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation to really support an innovative theatre effort involving new lighting efforts for small theatres.

Web Lab, which is now called Digital Innovations Group, is the brainchild of P.O.V. founder Mark Weiss. Web Lab has been taking Web site development into a whole new realm. Similarly, another emerging innovative effort is Rhizome, a total online magazine – nationally and internationally. Often these efforts fall on profit/not-for-profit borders but they are interesting and very important to watch.

The McKnight Foundation is exploring with the Walker the possibility of an e-commerce site for Minnesota artists, a Web site that promotes the purchase of work as well as contracting and commissioning artists. Steve Dietz, who heads the New Media division at the Walker, is also working on an online box office design for the Walker, and many of us are interested in that.

These are but a few examples. If you are like me, you probably are both fascinated and frightened by the power and the horror of this world of technology. It's kind of like nuclear energy, it's going to take years to understand whether these changes that we are in the midst of are good, terrible, neutral, or a mixture of it all. But one thing is clear: our lives are all being radically affected by it. The arts and artists must remain at the forefront of this changing world in the same way that we have always been at the forefront of other changes in society.

We want to hear from you and we want to hear what you are facing, what you are hearing, what things we have left out, any comments, questions, any of the above. Don't sit in silence. Yes?

Question: I can't tell you how useful this is. When I go home, I have to do a write-up on an application from a museum that wants a planning grant to look at its technology. I want to make this grant but need the ammo. One of the things I mentioned in a previous workshop is that I have put together three sessions for the Donors Forum of Chicago, Arts and Culture Taskforce. The first time we had the people from Intel come and show us the ghost site and their work for the Whitney. The second time we had Near Life – do you know Near Life? It's a for-profit company. And the third was Mark Tribe at Rhizome.

Audience: Rhizome. He is so cool.

Audience: He is so great! All I know is what I learned from those three presenters over those three weeks. They were great but that's all I know. When I went out to museums and started to talk and listen and just drop a pin,

"Have you heard about this, thought about that?" Zero. I was really shocked! I was kind of connecting them and I consider myself just a total beginner.

Berger: Any responses?

Dannenberg: I am not surprised. I am curious of why you think that is. Is it because it seems so out of reach? Or is it just, Where do you even begin to think about the information and who has it? Not for you, I mean, but for the group that you are working with.

Audience: The funders did not show up for these meetings but the museums showed up.

Smith: Well, that's good! So, you made an impact!

Berger: The entire field has come to this party very, very late. Jonathan will remember, Anne Focke and I used to come to the NASAA Conference, to the NAO Conference, to Grantmakers in the Arts, and we would do demonstrations of what was happening with ArtsWire. People thought we were crazy! I kid you not. There started to be a small, little group.

Then when the Web came into being, a lot more people said, oh, yes, there is something here. On the one hand, I think there is an overwhelming amount of information and yet there is not enough very concrete information. I also think there are generational divides; I represent that generational divide. As I said, I don't think funders ever got with the old media. Now, they are suddenly talking about new media.

And then I think with funders, they look at how they are responding – the staff – and then they say, "How the hell am I going to sell this to my board?" – when you add all of that generational stuff. Jonathan?

Jonathan: I think one of the things that happened is that in our first dialogue about these things it was so early in the technology that it was all text-based.

Dannenberg: That's right. Yes, it was.

Berger: That's right.

Jonathan: What it looked like was more work to do.

Berger: Exactly!

Jonathan: But it became icon-based.

Berger: Exactly! That was a major change.

Jonathan: That was a big difference. The youth museums are really interesting in this regard.

Audience: That's where I started to work and to talk, you are right. They have to, they have to, it's Disney quest.

Jonathan: What I suspect is that the initial kinds of applications that you are going to get from the more traditional museums are going to be about cataloguing their collections or those kinds of things. That's nowhere near as interesting as using the technology for the learning experience. The youth museums are there and have been for years.

Smith: Nowhere near as deep as they are going to need to be if they are going to have technology permeate the whole museum.

Jonathan: They don't have resources.

Berger: What is interesting is if you are working with artists, artists have been doing this for thirty years or more. They keep you very close to what is happening because they are canaries in the mine in a sense. Those institutions that are not close to an artists' community are often coming to this much later. Our whole thing really started because we heard artists were getting at this. One of the reasons that even the Endowment is coming to this late is because they are not in touch with an artists' community the way that they used to be. Mary?

Judge: One of the ways that I use to sell this to my trustees – and the first really big grant we made to a museum for this work – was there was a little write-up in *The New York Times* "Circuits" section. I read that religiously. When he saw it in *The New York Times*, and then we had a VCR tape, he went, "Wow!"

Dannenberg: You know, we did exactly that same thing when we were trying to get our Computer Arts Fellowship category. We had the artists who were doing computer arts give a history of computer arts – there is quite a long history, who would have ever known? A history of it, how it could be evaluated, what we are going to use as evaluation tools. Are they different than what you use for painting, are they the same, how do they work? We did a survey and research on it in New York State: who was using it, who wasn't and why. It took over two and a half or three years to get all of this together to present to our board.

Smith: From the Benton Foundation's standpoint, one thing to mention is that all nonprofits and funders are dealing with it and all have the same questions. We are all trying to figure out what is going on. It has happened so quickly that we are all running and trying to catch our breath. In some ways, the arts are not alone – we are all behind the curve trying to, frankly, come to the commercial level, what industry is doing in terms of technology.

One of the reasons I mentioned that is because I was thinking, after the morning session, of an example. One of my colleagues came back from a social policy and technology conference on the West Coast, in Silicon Valley. Somebody who was representing social workers brought an example forth from the healthcare field and they were talking about the application of technology. I can't quite remember the story but they were talking about what if social workers could have a FedEx-like scanner. When they go out in the field, social workers have to record so much information about their clients. FedEx drivers don't have to write anything. Think of all the applications if the way that FedEx tracks information could be applied to a nonprofit model. However, the person representing the nonprofits sitting at the table said, Oh, that will never happen. We will never be able to do that. There is this mindset that nonprofits are never as good as commercial and industry and that we will never get up to the bar. There are some assumptions and myths that we run with as nonprofits, and technology could be one of the ways that we break out of that kind of pessimistic "we are never going to be good enough" judgment.

Berger: Right.

Smith: Across the nonprofit sector and across the funding arena, everyone is just collectively going, "How do we do it?"

Berger: Yes?

Question: I have a lot of different thoughts. I consider myself, personally, fairly technically savvy. I came to this session hoping to hear less about organizations, more about individual artists using, benefiting from, opportunities. And about the best I saw, was some good links to get information and eventual applications for fellowships online. We have a long ways to go there if this represents where we are at.

Berger: I think that individual artists who have been working in this area are struggling. Many are going towards the profit sector, I think.

Question: You say individual artists have been working in this area for thirty years and somehow are on the leading edge of this. I would say, well, maybe they are on the leading edge of it but they are not making art anymore in any traditional sense. I am a Luddite in the art sense of painting.

Berger: Well, I would disagree. We brought three work samples. We have done two cycles of fellowships in computer arts.

Dannenberg: We have had over one thousand applications.

Berger: The work is staggering! And this is just New York State. My sense is, you build it, they will come. There is work all over and it is work, in my opinion – not that I am that knowledgeable of commercial ideas – but what we are seeing is such exploratory work that, eventually, the commercial sector will get into this. The way artists have always done it.

Supporting those projects that they come up with after they get a fellowship has been very difficult. It's hard for funders to sell it. Right

now, we don't even have enough exhibition spaces to show the work properly.

So you should put Tennessee's up there. Because people are selling their CD-ROMs, you know, they are doing things like that. But it's still a hard thing.

Question: I am wondering where the individual artist in all this is. I am looking at painting and sculpture and there was nothing I saw here that's going to help a painter or sculptor.

Dannenberg: Help a painter how? I don't understand.

Question: Where they work. When they are in their studios.

Smith: I guess we are not understanding the question. Do you want to see them do that creative process digitally?

Question: For example, Open Studio in my part of the world is where people go into artists' studios, sometimes buy the works, sometimes look at the work. A gallery – again in my Luddite part of the world – is where you actually experience an individual piece of art. I didn't get much of a hit here as to how we are using this new tool to deal with existing kinds of work. The examples that you are showing are excellent examples of a new media and a new form of art. I am trying to make the connect.

Berger: What we should be showing you are Web sites of individual artists. Many artists are putting their work up online.

Audience: Yes, I have looked at a lot of those.

Berger: The commercial sector has come in and they are creating these galleries and they will sell works. We haven't yet really created a not-for-profit. That's why some of this work that the Walker is doing for artists to sell their work may be of interest. Other states have created galleries online. There is a lot of very traditional work that gets put on the Web so that others can see it.

Question: Have you seen anything that excites you enough to want to fund it?

Berger: We give fellowships in computer arts all of the time.

Smith: What we are finding is that technology is a tool in a variety of ways. Artists are using it for creative expression, they are really exploring new ways to develop something through digital technology.

Technology is also a tool for showcasing and marketing their work. I can give you an example at Open Studio in which we had trainees who are in North Carolina put up a Web site about what they do as artists. In one case, an artist got a contract to work as a graphic artist for a firm in Michigan to design a logo for them. The fact that they had a Web page and an email address got them a job.

It also happened for an artist from Eureka, California who was in an online gallery of eight people, and someone sees his work. He has two shows – one in Chicago and one in Florida – from that. Otherwise, he would have had to send out his portfolio and maybe slides. So those are ways in which technology is helping.

We could talk to you afterwards about other examples. This is really geared towards the funder audience of trying to just show a landscape of what is out there and what might cross a funder's desk at some point.

Berger: Artists can receive basic information online. People downloaded nineteen thousand of those fact sheets from our Visual Artist Hotline.

Question: I know. I applaud that. I am more concerned with the word "studio" and the word "gallery."

Dannenberg: Do you mean in the traditional sense or in the e-sense? In all senses?

Question: Yes. I understand "studio," I understand "gallery," and the Web version of it – there is a total disconnect.

Dannenberg: The interesting part of that, for me anyway, is that the Web is challenging the notion of audience. It's challenging that notion from beginning to end.

Audience: Absolutely!

Dannenberg: That's another discussion, and a very interesting one, that we might want to have.

Question: How do you make aesthetic judgments about this?

Dannenberg: I'll tell you that in our Artist Fellowship Program, artists review all of the applications, so every panel has its own group of artists. In the computer arts category, within five people, we make sure that we have someone who is knowledgeable about interactive work; someone who is knowledgeable about work on the Web directly; someone who has some experience in work that comes out 2-D or 3-D using the computer. We try to cover all of the areas. The reason I gave you the application, if you got it, was to show you what kinds of material we allow people to send in for their support material.

But then, the conversations revolve around, how am I responding to the work? What is good about it? What I feel moves the genre forward. How it moves me as a person. I will tell you that I remember the conversation about this work, and the quality of what you saw on the screen plus the intelligence of the layering all of the way down, digitally, it was an incredibly interesting discussion. It was four years ago and I really remember the things. They talked about how the mouse moved and when it clicked and when it was supposed to and then the layers that happened after the click and why. And just what it looked like on the screen – the repetition, the contrast – all of the things that you look at in a visual art. Plus how the computer makes that deeper, fuller, and richer.

Berger: But the questions asked are probably no different from questions asked in other disciplines. Mary?

Judge: I'll just make a comment, because my foundation gives grants in five fields: dance, theater/performance arts, music, visual arts, and poetry. So we have one area called Visual Arts. Our grants are given by nomination process. We think of our nominators in the fields that they represent but they are actually allowed to make recommendations in any of the five fields.

And two years in a row, one year out of twelve grants, we gave one grant to an artist working with a computer as a visual artist. Someone had recommended her, they spoke very clearly about her work. You see the work. You don't have to be a computer expert to be able to see the work.

Dannenberg: That's want Ted was saying before. The computer is integral to the work but not the work in itself.

Jonathan: This is coming at your question in a different way, but I am seeing the emergence of categories in which the aesthetic judgement is a smaller and smaller portion of the grant-making process.

For instance, if you are talking about projects that develop technology, you stop talking about the container for the arts, for one thing, as something that you are pushing and making artwork accessible for people and providing resources to artists. You are talking more about formats and about the means of doing things than you are about the product and the aesthetic judgments about it. I am seeing the emergence of categories whose purpose is to link the sectors, to link the technology sector with the arts sector.

The Michigan Arts Council has a category jointly with the Michigan Technology Council. What are the grants for? They are for things that link the sectors. So, it can be an engineer working with a computer company. It can be a visual artist working with a software company. It's more about the relationship that's being built that will be a platform for other artists to work with this sector than it's about the aesthetics of the artwork.

I am not saying that we forget about aesthetics – especially when you are looking at grants to individuals – but I am saying that this is an interesting emerging category. I think it's really valuable for the government agencies and the foundations to talk about this stuff because we may have different roles in this; or we may not.

Question: I hate to do this but this is an entirely anecdotal observation. My husband is a painter and so there is a little educating of me going on at the moment. Being in the studio, the occasional visit by a curator or collector or another artist, is one thing. What I am seeing in him, over the last few years, with access to the Internet, is forming of communities that are not contingent on the commercial or the gallery world, among a variety of artists. My husband is writing about other artists who are in their studios, not waiting for it to emerge into a gallery context.

It has been extraordinarily empowering – in a certain sort of "How do I view myself and my career?" – a feeling of being less contingent that I find fascinating and really healthy.

I don't know that funders necessarily feed the artists directly in that way. I think that for individual artists, content is and probably should always be difficult. But I think it's different for funders. For example, the organization that sponsors the online magazine that the artists started happens to be a freestanding nonprofit. So the ability to fund that nonprofit that, in turn, is sponsoring something that's created and run by individual artists is, basically, a very fruitful relationship. It's called the Creative Alliance in Baltimore and they happen to be a participant in our mid-sized stabilization program. But the online magazine is called *Peek*. And it's very healthy. They have correspondents. This is a little Baltimore community but they have correspondents from New York and Houston.

Dannenberg: Everything is global.

Audience: It's all global. I see it happening overnight in someone who was a Luddite, basically, with the brush of my hand, I'll make use of a keyboard. So it has been wonderful!

Question: Has his studio practice suffered?

Audience: Not in the least.

Berger: Yes?

Audience: I also think that this is at a very early stage in terms of video art. What could that possibly be? I have seen installations and corridors of incredible images that we never expected to see and it turned out to be in the Venice Biennale, and in the Whitney, and in the Walker, and everywhere else in the world.

I think that if the artists played until the ground was laid, there's some really outstanding work to be done. I don't know where we are in the evolution of this but it will be an art form.

Berger: Well, I do know where we are in the evolution of this session. This conversation could go on and on but thank you for coming!

Smith: Thank you!

The Digital Divide

Panelists: Cynthia Lopez, *P.O.V.*
David Bolt, *Producer*

Morning Session

Bolt: I am David Bolt. I am here today to talk about the Digital Divide as the author of the first and only book on the subject and the first and only TV series on the subject. However, there are many more in the pipeline.

The Digital Divide – and Cynthia, who will introduce herself, is from P.O.V., a wonderful Public Television series that has been a very supportive organization for independent producers for a long time.

We wanted to talk to you about the concept of the Digital Divide and what it means for grantmakers and artists. In the realm of digital technology, virtually all of the discussion tends to be focused on the capacities of digital technology, the potential of digital technology, and the upside of it all with very little corresponding discussion about the sociological impact of this technology. The idea behind the series and the book was to try and have a discussion about what the sociology of this technology is.

And one of the problems about trying to do that at the outset is that the field is very young. From an historical context, it is very early to try and draw some conclusions. I am reminded of the Chinese historian when somebody asked him about the French Revolution and he said, it is too early to tell. So it is certainly too early to draw some lasting conclusions about digital technology, but we can draw some initial conclusions. That's what we are going to talk about today.

We will try and relate it and tie it back to the relevance of the subject for artists. In L.A. they say, if you can't pitch it in a sentence, you do not have your pitch. Well, if I were to describe this in a sentence, I would say that traditional disparities in American society predate computers, predate digital technology, whether it is gender, or race, or class. Obviously, computers didn't create any of those infrastructures. But computers are exacerbating those in new and unusual ways, in ways that we are only beginning to understand now.

At the same time, the computer field itself is changing so dynamically, so rapidly, that as soon as one draws one kind of conclusion, you have to turn around and revise that conclusion. I use the example of gender.

Five years ago, there was tremendous disparity in the initial studies that were done by a group of people at the American Association of Universities. It simply focuses on numbers of people online. Circa 1995, if you had taken that snapshot, you would have found about 75 percent male, 25 percent female in terms of who was utilizing the Internet. The Internet was dramatically different at that point in time. The graphical base portion of the Internet – the Worldwide Web – was in its infancy. The most recent studies on gender show that women outnumber men. Does that indicate some gender equality in terms of computer technology? If you go to other critical variables like the number of women in the computer profession; the number of programmers and analysts in Silicon Valley, for example, women are probably somewhere around the 5 percent figure. If you want to talk about race in these factors, only .5 percent of the programmers in Silicon Valley are Latino and less than 1 percent are African American. So while some things change for the good, it is also true, at the same time, that other kinds of disparities exist.

When we started going to foundations in the mid-90s, approaching them about the idea of mitigating the Digital Divide, we had to spend most of the time explaining the concept. Now the terminology has entered the common lexicon, but sometimes that can obfuscate as much as clarify it. The number one mistake most people make when they think of the topic of the Digital Divide is that they think of it as solely an issue of access. Who has a computer? Who doesn't have a computer? Who can use a computer?

That's an extremely important starting point, because, after all, if you do not have access to the computer, all of the rest of the discussion is moot. But in terms of parameters of the discus-

sion, the question of what we are using the tool for is as important as who has access to it.

So we looked in the series at four areas. We looked at gender, race, education, and employment. In the education level segment, for example, we noted that it is no longer simply the question of, Oh we've got to get computers to all of our children or else they will be left behind. We have, in fact, dumped billions and billions of dollars into technology into the schools. Does that mean that all of our schools have adequate technology infrastructure? No. Far, far from it. We have… In a period of time when other, traditional disciplines like the arts have been dramatically cut back, even things like physical education have been eliminated. At the same time, we have been dumping billions of dollars worth of new technology into the schools without an intent to answer some of the more complex questions that go along with that technology.

I have spent many years working in the field – I have been a vice president of an arts college for technology; I've been on the board of an educational foundation. I have been hands-on with this stuff for a long time. To use the example of education, once you have brought computers into schools, spending billions and billions, you face three critical issues right away.

The first and most obvious is the training. It does you little good to drop millions and billions of dollars in computers in educational institutions with inadequate training for the teachers. This has been, I think, the most glaring of the mistakes.

Immediately following on the heels of that – anybody who has worked in the private sector with digital technology will tell you that there are ratios. But I have never encountered a school district that came even remotely close to those ratios. All too often, the very teachers who are inadequate in training in the first place in how to utilize the tool, are expected, in turn, to be able to maintain these tools.

But probably the most difficult and thorny issue of all, and most important to me; if you get down to the nuts and bolts of a third grade math teacher, a sixth grade history teacher, a ninth grade biology teacher who actually uses the tool of the computer in the classroom, you run up against enormous problems.

The first of which – for people that understand public education – the teacher doesn't just walk into the classroom and start making it up. There are standards that they have to teach by. Virtually every state has rigorous standards, and the federal government has them as well. So the teacher is constrained by a complex set of variables that they have to keep within. The result of that is, it's difficult to find software that comprises all of those standards.

So what ends up happening all too often is that the computer is basically a glorified reference tool. It sits there in the classroom or in the computer lab where people use it for Internet connectivity, which is great. But using your computer for the search engine alone is just the beginning of the process and that's how the vast majority use it.

We are talking about a system where we've blindly thrown billions at this problem because we know it's a big deal. Why is it a big deal? Well, the Department of Labor says that right now today, 70 percent of all jobs in America require computer literacy. That figure is going to rise to the 90th percentile. So we are not just talking about something that it would be nice to know. We are talking about something that's going to condition your economic future more powerfully than any other thing outside of literacy.

Once you have taught somebody how to read, the second most important variable in determining their ability to make their way in the current marketplace is computer literacy.

This is making very basic assumptions about education. And some educators – and rightfully so – say school is about teaching creative thinking, school is about conceptualizing, and vocational aspects can come later.

If you…consider for a moment that the vast majority of Americans do not get a college degree. The vast majority of Americans do not go on to attain a BA. They may take community college classes, they may even get an AA. So then the majority of Americans are going to have to make their way, in this digital economy,

based largely on the skills they have acquired in the K-12 training period. The K-12 training period, right now, is not going to be able to give proper training. There are a lot of issues within our educational system, but it is certainly not able to deal with reform quickly.

So what we have is this two-pronged approach, where on the one hand, there are some serious pedagogical issues about how we use computers in the classroom. At the same time, we have millions of teens who have yet to really put their hands, in a meaningful way, on a computer. So we will have to approach that problem on two different levels.

One is access. Every child in the United States should have, by the time they have graduated from high school, a meaningful exposure to this tool so they can make an informed decision for themselves as to whether they want to learn how to utilize this.

When you get into other areas like gender or race or employment, a lot of these same dynamics are at play. But in the interest of a brief presentation, what Cynthia and I thought we would do today is divide it up. I will speak about fifteen or twenty minutes and she will speak about fifteen or twenty minutes and then we will have a question and answer session.

I want to show you part of the series. This is an Independent Television Service funded series. We were very fortunate to get a national program series. For those of you who understand the PBS system, there is a big difference between going to your local PBS station and getting them to put something on, versus having a national system put something up. When you go through the national system for prime time broadcast, you can develop a comprehensive, national outreach and promotional campaign. You can have articles in *Time*, in *Newsweek*, in *The New York Times,* in *TV Guide*. You can purchase ads that run in national publications. We have had a very large audience with us, we've had a good run in prime time, we've had PBS working with us and were able to do a national campaign.

Our Web site is pbs.org/digitaldivide. It has had millions of hits. So we are very gratified that were able to get this and interject it into the political discourse during an election year. But there is a lot more to be said. So I am going to let the opening of the series talk for itself.

Just a couple of production notes. We thought it was really important to have a voice that would resonate, not only with the adult population, but also with students in classroom. We ultimately have been urging teachers in the hundreds of thousands to download it for use in their classrooms.

The narrator is Queen Latifah. Working with her, we were aiming for that most difficult of demographics which is trying to go broadly between urban areas and the suburban areas. It is a difficult balancing act both in terms of terminology and in development of the script. Based on the feedback we've been given, folks seem to think it worked.

Question: And the rural audience…

Bolt: Yes, and the rural audience as well. PBS tries to cover all of those things simultaneously. I am going to try and run this for just a few minutes. Like any producer, I would just as soon show you all of the four hours.

[video presentation]

Before I turn it over to Cynthia, what I would say to media funders, to arts funders, is that there are a number of federal government programs that have arisen in the last two to three years to try and fund community technology centers. These community technology centers, or CTCs, have Department of Commerce programs, Department of Education programs, Housing and Urban Development programs, all specifically providing the funds. The schools may be under-equipped with computers in locations where the percentage of computer ownership in the home is extremely low. These community technology centers try to provide a place for people to go and be exposed to these digital skills.

Most analysts have all but come to the conclusion – and you can do the simple math if you want – that ultimately, there is no substitute for home computer learning. If you take the child to, hypothetically, a wonderfully equipped

school – which are few and far between but we will use it – that child in the course of the regular school day would actually spend one to two hours in front of the computer. Then, at the end of the school day, they might go to one of the technology centers – it might be a library. Let us say there they have another one or two hours.

Well, children who have a computer in the home – and I am not necessarily saying that this is a good thing, in fact some analysts would say that this a bad thing – but children who have a computer in the home spend more time on it. You add that to the school time and the technology center time. If you add that up in the entire K-12 experience, you are talking about an enormous leg-up, an enormous advantage that those young people are going to have when they go to college or go into the job market.

Look, for example, at how the SAT uses it. The SAT is now given on the computer. Students walk into that auditorium with its banks and banks of computers. They sit down and take the SAT but are not, themselves, comfortable with how a computer operates, the software. We are talking about not how well they do on the SATs but their computer fluency. That, in itself, can ensure a lower score.

So we are talking about some structural barriers that have been created in the last twenty years, that are widening some of those gaps, not closing them.

If you listen to the computer company rhetoric, they would have you believe that the way we are going to solve this problem is just by simply buying more computers. But it is far more complex than that.

Consider, for example, that there are only 2.1 percent of all Web sites in Spanish. Yet, in the State of California, which is my home state, there is a massive K-12 program around the computer. What does it mean to shove young people into a medium where they not only do not see themselves reflected in that medium, but they will not even be able to be fluent or even comfortable with the language that the tool uses. So there are linguistic issues and cultural issues galore.

I could speak all day on this, but in the interest of brevity, what we wanted to do today was simply raise the issue that computers – as wonderful a tool as they are – also bring social problems. In fact, they create new social problems at the same time that they are transforming our economy.

A final note about our economy. When I was a young man getting out of high school, a tremendous number of my classmates went into good-paying, blue collar, union jobs. The largest non-governmental employer in America when I graduated from high school was General Motors. It had good pay scales, benefits, and pensions.

But, today, the largest non-governmental employer in America is Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart is not General Motors. So, how do you deal with this new economy where the service sector offers people low-paying, non-union jobs? The digital sector shimmers as this new hope. People say, oh, well, our children will be able to learn those digital skills. They can work on Web sites. To a degree that's right. But it is a loser.

For example, in the State of California real wages for the entire population have staggered. In the last ten years, real wages in the state have not risen. That's at the same time the Silicon Valley has created 250 thousand new millionaires. Why?

But the media focuses on Silicon Valley. The media will have you believe that every twenty-something is going out and getting a dot-com job. In actuality, they are very few in number. We are going to have to take a long, hard look at what kind of an economy we really are creating. What kind of options we really are providing. That's just the beginning of what I think will be a long – and hopefully serious – discussion about the social role of this technology in our society in lieu of the mindless cheerleading that has, for the last ten or twenty years, been the case.

So thanks, and I will turn it over to Cynthia.

Lopez: Thank you, David.

As David said, my name is Cynthia Lopez. I am a communications director at P.O.V. – that was

the longest-running Public Television non-fiction series.

I'll give you some personal background. I was an A-student in high school, and went on to college. My parents wanted me to be a doctor. I was at Hunter College taking all of the courses, when I realized that I didn't really want to be there. I loved college but the whole notion of being a doctor, was not something I wanted to do. I kept on saying, there is something happening in our society in terms of how science is used, how information is exchanged, and I can use my quote/unquote "interest in science."

So, in my fourth year at college I was two steps from trying to go to medical school, and I decided I didn't want to do that. Everybody was like, What are you, crazy? This is what we want. We want you to do this. I said, No, no. This is not what I want.

I want to understand media and I want to learn how to use media. My father kept on saying, What do you mean? Media what? What does that have to do with anything? I kept on saying, There is an information revolution happening and we – the Latinos – are going to be left behind. I want to insure that all people have access to information. He says, Why do you have to work for the channel that makes no money? I am building public infrastructure. And that's what I will talk a little bit about. This digital divide.

So when I embarked on the media route, I wanted to see – in the mid-80s – what different groups were doing to look at access – not only the access to technology – but the use of technology. How information was used and power and about getting groups of people to do innovative things. We basically put out programming via satellite that was distributed through public access channels and was also distributed and bought from PBS satellite time. People would say, we do not understand what you do. Why is there an interest in understanding telecommunications?

Is anyone here from the National Science Foundation? One of the projects that I wanted to talk about today is a project funded by the National Science Foundation, and it was a collaboration with another organization that comes out of the State of New York.

A very good friend of mine who also was studying to be a doctor and dropped out, became the head of this project. She basically said, I want to raise money to figure out a comprehensive plan whereby girls have equal access. She went to an alumni party and found that, at this engineering party, there were three women. She was the keynote speaker and she said we are in 1990-something, how could there be three women here? So she figured out a program that would really make use of the training of and collaboration with girls in urban areas.

So the National Science Foundation funded the project for three to five years. They offered technical support. The girls could take the computers to their homes. They could do different kinds of interactive searching on the Web. So the goal of these projects was to *maybe* instill an interest in engineering or some kind of technical skill that would then be connected to the woman.

A couple of the girls, as I mentioned to David, did end up in jail. A couple of the girls didn't finish high school. A couple of the girls went on to finish college. A couple of the girls actually are seeking education in math/science fields. In terms of how I would evaluate it, I think it is a success, a new level of looking at how technology is used to solve the digital divide problem.

However, on another level, they were not all that good in talking to other peers, in other places. They were not all that good in talking to other foundations. So I think while it is an excellent model, distribution, dissemination, lessons learned, and things that they should learn from their mistakes, not to recreate those mistakes – I think part of that's the program – should have taken a critical look at that.

The second example that I wanted to give you was the Neighborhood Network. Have any of you in here attended a Neighborhood Network? Interesting! About seven years ago in New York City we sat down and said, we want to bring together academics, community activists, public activists, educators, etc. to form a coalition to apply for some public money –

the TRA actually – to see if we could create an installation on the first floor of a public building so that there would be a living room set up with couches, computers, and stuff. At the end, we were not given funding that year to do that. That helped to kick off the idea that we could try to figure out how to access the people who live in the projects, who are part of the digital divide. They do not get access to technology in other ways. At this time public libraries were not as "computer literate" as they are now.

I have an example here that I can pass out – the Neighborhood Network's Web site. This is seven years ago and in some areas it was a somewhat failed attempt. But, there is one site uptown that actually did it. They have 633 sites around the country. The site…whether they have one computer, whether it is eighteen computers…is that with some of the work that has been done is: How do you maintain curriculum? How do you maintain appropriate personnel? You have eighteen computers in a room and expect that people are going to be able to learn the necessary skills to use that equipment. So that's the downside of it.

The upside is: There are still artists out there – again, looking at the matter creatively – who at the time, at least in the New York coalition – we did some outreach to artists but we didn't do all that much. Because some of those sites were public housing – they are very stark, they are very ugly, they are very sterile. They are working on the technology component of it. We should work with these community artists to work on the video component. We worked with another group on dance, exercise, or other things.

Often I have seen over the year, because I have done fundraising, I have done advocacy, and I have done promotion. For a foundation, I hope that you would consider when you are developing grants – guidelines for your technology in arts projects – to fund experimentation, to fund not only education and information but to fund entertainment.

I did a program on P.O.V. that took a critical look – and it was the first time that the cameras were allowed behind the scenes – at INS, the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Subsequent to the airing of this program, we got calls from Washington, from various agencies, from the Chairperson of the INS who said, we just found out that there was a program that aired on PBS that looked at how we do our immigration policy and we have to get a copy of the program! It really took a critical look, I believe – I would love to hear your opinions – at both sides of the table. It looked at the officer who was granting naturalization, as well as the person who was an immigrant, who was not legal. And it kept on going back and forth.

So one of the things that appealed to me was that what it had to do was to influence, engage, and promote dialogue about these issues. You have to agree whether this person who came illegally should stay in this country or not. I just wanted to show you a little clip from the show.

[video]

The reason I show this clip sometimes, again, is because it's important for us to see. To me, when I first saw this program it was like, Oh, that big, bad political person that's not allowing that Mexican who does all of this stuff to get across the border – dah, dah, dah, dah, dah – to stay in this country. And that's not so. This is a different kind of reality. And it's a game that we try to instill in the P.O.V. Web site, we hope that gives this back and forth.

The other thing that I had a big bone of contention with when we were sitting and having meetings… I kept on saying, Well, I gotta say, I don't know a lot of immigrants that are getting online to have conversations. So, you know, we'll see what portion of folks participate from different ethnic groups. I was completely wrong. Our department had done so much outreach to grassroots organizations nationally, they were going to those sites to play the game or to make comments about the program.

So, I will stop there. I think that there are innovative solutions to the problems that David has talked about. I think that there needs to be more media like the Digital Divide series. I think it is really important. I know that he is working on a continuation series. That's something that should be in our libraries.

One of the statistics that we gave was looking at the labor, you know, Ford versus Wal-Mart, and I always said there are 16,000 public libraries in America, there are more public libraries than there are McDonald's. We have to figure out a way. If the housing people cannot do it, if the schools are not able to do it, we have got to figure out a way that we can add it to the public infrastructure.

Bolt: There were some things I didn't mention in my presentation that I would like to just briefly touch on.

I didn't mention the outreach for the series; working with the ITVS. We have had a year-long outreach program where we have met in 100 different cities with 100 different PBS stations and done outreach to the community technology centers in those communities and have actually ended up altering local legislation, in two different states altering state-wide legislation. The ultimate point of all of this media is to change the world, not just simply to comment about it. I think, ultimately, that's what P.O.V.'s model is and that's what this booklet is about. So when we talk about our media projects, an important part of it is to not just simply stop at the viewing experience but to try and go beyond that with outreach and activism, to try and impact on the very issues that we are commenting on.

The second thing is, earlier I was talking about community technology centers getting the funding. Well, who is not getting the funding? Just coming from the National Alliance of Media Arts and Culture is that media arts centers are not getting any of this funding. It's a schizophrenic phenomena, because the community technology centers are, of course, very deserving of the funding that they have gotten from the federal government.

But arts centers have largely – not 100 percent – but largely art centers have not been the recipients of this federal funding. So I don't want to leave folks with the impression that all of this federal money has been flowing to arts centers, because it has not. And that has created some problems because many CTCs are new and they grapple with all of the problems that brand new nonprofit organizations grapple with.

On the other hand, media arts centers, in many cases, are decades old. In fact, this is the 20th anniversary of NAMAC and they have largely been bereft of this funding. So I think it's going to take private foundations stepping into that funding gap and, hopefully, augmenting and working with governmental funding sources. But I certainly didn't want to leave the impression that there was all this fed money for *all* technology centers. It has been primarily for CTCs.

This morning we had a panel on convergence. At one point there was an overhead projection and people sort of went, "Whoa!" Because you have got a multiplicity of digital phenomena right now. You have got the Internet and the increasing capacity of that infrastructure to carry moving images, audio, etc. You have got the digitization of television, which is to say the cable infrastructure and wireless are all going to be moving towards a high-definition standard within the next decade. Sometimes all of that can seem overwhelming. But I would just return to the old joke about heroin dealers: that the first one is free. That's what so many of these corporate give-away programs have very cynically been: an attempt to inculcate a demand on the part of an audience by first giving them – their community – large amounts of free gear.

This one thing that I saw over and over again was a public school that a local corporation had given a large number of computers to. Photo opportunity: corporate president and principal, handshake; local, front-page news.

I certainly don't have to tell a room full of funders – all funding ends at some point, particularly this kind of corporate funding. So the school gets used to having this computer lab, gets used to having that level of infrastructure, and then the plug gets pulled, the time for the grant comes to an end. The principal then ends up having to go into full-time fundraising mode to maintain the gift that was originally without strings.

And I bet I talked to a hundred elementary school principals that were pulling their hair out because if they didn't do that, the computers would break and they would eventually be

pulled out. And the principal would be seen as the person who couldn't keep the computers in the school. So, on one level, you have got real problems with the sort of long-term implications of these corporate computer give-aways to our educational institutions.

But that's just one slice, I think, of the question you were asking. The "Where it is all going to go?" I will tell you a brief story.

My company has been making new media for quite awhile; ten years ago we were doing touch-screen kiosks and CD-ROMs and such. The Mayor of San Francisco, ten years ago, asked about a dozen companies to come together and project the future of this new media for the City of San Francisco.

And so, my company is fairly small fish, but we were invited to sit around the table with a bunch of the big fellows and we all projected what, a decade out, the future of this new media would look like for the City of San Francisco. And not one person sitting around that table predicted the Internet – not one! We were talking about kiosks and disc-based this. And predicting the future of digital technology is a highly risky practice.

So, having said that, having given that anecdote, my son is a Web-designer and his line is that laptops and desktops are so 20th century. That the future lies in much smaller, handheld devices.

In Europe they are actually leap-frogging over some of these things that we are used to. They have cell phones that are also PDAs that also have infrared that can trigger a vending machine and pay for your coke by debiting an account. That sort of convergence is, I think, ultimately the future.

We are going to look at these things the same way that we look at those old TV sets that were huge and had a little screen, as a sort of amusing byproduct of a bygone era. But in the meantime, this is what we mainly use and these things are relatively new.

So, for people doing community work, community organizations, schools, libraries, it doesn't do you any good to get out on the cutting edge or – as folks in Silicon Valley say – the bleeding edge of this stuff, because you can make the wrong decisions. It is very easy for the best and most experienced people to simply make the wrong call when it comes to acquiring new technologies.

That's one reason, by the way, why Microsoft is so big. Back in the 60s and 70s the line was "Nobody ever got fired by buying IBM;" the idea was that this big monster-thing couldn't go wrong. Well, Microsoft is much the same way. So there is a degree of inertia – that is we tend to go back to the same thing over and over – but I think, ultimately if I had to get a crystal ball out, it's going to be the wireless, small, portable devices and not the big desktop/ laptop computers.

Lopez: The other thing that I would say with this is that it depends on where you live and what you want to do. I live in a condominium in a somewhat middle-class neighborhood. And the library is now getting wired. We have a telecommunications station that's right in front of us that has five satellite dishes on the roof. But it is not wired!

The other thing, too, is I was at a huge convention in Japan five years ago where they were totally saying, "In three years there is going to be a cell phone, television, Web-this, everybody is going to be using it." You know, it is eight years later and the product just sort of never took off. So…

Bolt: Thanks, Cynthia.

Those of us who were working in this field twenty years ago were reminiscing. Twenty years ago, the debate – with eerie echoes to our contemporary situation – was about cable television. The big hope at the time was public access television. It's funny to look back on it now, but at the time we said, we'll be equal; we'll have a channel and NBC will have a channel. We'll be able to stand on even ground with the biggest corporate communications in the world. We'll have our great programming and they will have their programming and we'll ultimately win out over them because people will see that our artistic expression and diversity and everything will be better than the

crummy stuff that NBC puts out. Of course, it didn't work out that way.

And the critical variable, as anybody will tell you who works professionally in media, is that you have to utilize the other media to draw people to the media that you use. What do Web companies spend their money on? Television, radio, print. What do television channels spend their money on? Radio, print, and so on.

In fact I heard Bill Gates say just a couple of weeks ago, well, it's all equal. Anybody could have their own Web site; I have my Web site. It is all the same. Of course, he has the largest corporation in the world behind him and they spend billions to draw people to their Web site. I or an artist of color in a neighborhood, theoretically, can put up a Web site; it is a wonderful thing. But we would be deluding ourselves to say that we're going to have the equal draw because of all the rest of the infrastructure necessary to draw audiences to it.

Now, I do not mean to put down public access cable channels, they're wonderful and I think they play a good role. But it's important to realize that when we first were working on them twenty, twenty-five years ago, we didn't understand the role of all this other associated media in drawing a significant audience to the cable channel. I think that's an analogy with the Web as well.

I think we probably have room for one more question before we go.

Question: I have a question about teachers.

Bolt: That's a good point. I don't know if folks are aware of this but there *is* at present and there is going to be an even larger, a huge demographic shift in the teaching force, workforce of America. And a lot of folks who have been teaching for a long time are going to leave; there is going to be a lot of new blood coming in.

We have looked some at teacher training programs. We are currently developing new episodes of the series that are going to look at other issues, but I would say this about teacher training programs – and it is not just true of education institutions, it is true of media arts centers, it is true of community technology centers, it is true of any non-commercial endeavor that utilizes digital technology. There is a built-in contradiction which is that as soon as you have trained people properly, as soon as you have actually adequately prepared them to utilize all of these modern tools in an efficient and well-rounded manner, they are going to have to be highly altruistic to stay in their institutions.

Question: Right.

Bolt: Because they can double, treble their salaries by simply walking down the street to the dot-com and the tel-coms. So I am not suggesting that there are not altruistic people, but they are outweighed by all of the folks that, you know, they have to think of their kids, they have to think of their families. So that's one of the built-in problems when you succeed with the training – and I have seen examples of this – the people will be bought away out from underneath you. And it's a real dilemma!

We should say in closing that we are going to do this tomorrow again. So you could come by at the end of the thing and ask your question that you didn't have a chance to. We will also be around, both of us will be around tomorrow as well. Thank you for coming. We appreciate your being here.

Afternoon Session

[…]

Bolt: It's one of those topics that mean many things to many people. I am reminded of the Hindu parable of a group of blind folks touching an elephant and each one thinks the creature as a whole is defined by the part that they are touching. How your community, or your institution, or yourself personally may be affected by this problem goes a long way towards positioning the way that you look at it.

This is our PBS site – pbs.org/digitaldivide. This is the introduction that we give to the topic. We look at four in the PBS series. There is

also a companion book that I have written and promotional materials.

What we have tried to do, both in the series and book and in an extensive outreach campaign that has taken place all during this year, is talk to these four topical areas and speak to what the divide means in each of them – in an attempt to get people to understand a little bit more about the role that this technology is playing.

Now, as arts funders, this is a two-edged sword, because, on the one hand, these technologies are wonderful. Part of the point of bringing folks here today is to talk about these new tools and to encourage media funders to use these tools. Both Cynthia and I have a long history of using these digital tools, so it is probably important to say at the outset that this is not about technophobia or a condemnation of technology, per se. In fact, these are incredible tools that are increasingly conditioning not only the society we live in but their economic undertakings.

I will show you a clip in a little bit where Pat Ramson of the Urban Technology Center quotes the Department of Labor as saying that 70 percent of all jobs in America today require some conversancy with digital technology. That figure will rise within a decade, probably, into the 90th percentile. It is not a luxury, it is not a nice thing to have, it is a basic tool to participate or not participate in the economy that is developing around us.

What we wanted to look at was how people positioning these variables in education, by gender, by race, and in the workplace are affected by their access or lack of access to technology. Having said that, it is important to say from the very beginning what has evolved in people's understanding of the digital divide in the last five to six years. When we began working on this series and raising funds for it in the mid-1990s, the real emphasis among people working around the digital divide was simply access. Five years ago, if you looked at it all sorts of variables came into play. Percentage of computers in classrooms, number of people who had access to the Internet, and so on. Those figures have dramatically shifted. In that period of time, there has been increasing emphasis on the content of the technology and not just the access to it.

Gender is a good example of that. When we began working on this series five years ago, the statistics for women on the Internet hovered in the 20 to 30 percent range. And that was due to a variety of factors. Today of the majority of people in the United States using the Internet are women – 51 percent. Does that imply gender equality? No, because if you look in other critical areas like the number of programmers, the number of system analysts, the figures hover in the low single digits. The problem with trying to assess this phenomena, because it is rapidly changing, is that any sort of analysis or attempt to quantify it today could be outdated tomorrow.

The single best report that has been done to date – certainly the most comprehensive – is the Department of Commerce study that gets updated periodically through the Net. The Department of Commerce literally included tens of thousands of people in their research group; it is available at the Department of Commerce Web site. We link to it on this site but it is very simple to remember, it is just digitaldivide.gov. The changes in the content of that study have been dramatically changing over the last four years they have been doing it. It's a question of looking at a phenomena that is changing so rapidly that a lot of the traditional social science tools prove almost inadequate.

As arts educators, as people making art, as arts administrators, I think there is a particular angle on this that is important to talk about. As we went around the country both producing the series and with our outreach, one of the things that really struck home to us about the arts on our community level was that parents had seen a tremendous gutting of the arts curriculum in public education.

Today, as opposed to ten years ago, there has been a tremendous diminution of the availability of the arts in public schools K-12. At the same time, parents have seen a tremendous explosion of digital technology in the classroom. There have been billions and billions of dollars spent on it. It is easy to assume that

there is a causal relationship between the two. Frequently people will say, Well, the reason arts funding has been gutted is because of computer technology. I think that is not an accurate comparison to draw on. I deplore the absence of the arts curriculum in our public schools, but it has been two parallel phenomena.

One of the things that has driven the explosion of digital technology in the classroom has been parental fear that their children are going to be left behind if they are not exposed to these tools. As I said at the outset, since we are now at the point where roughly three-quarters of all jobs in America require some level of digital conversancy, it's not an unfounded fear; it is a real fear.

But the problem has been a wholesale adoption of digital technology in haphazard fashions in our public school systems without any comprehensive assessment or evaluation of the real efficacy of those tools. Now you are beginning to see something of a backlash. This, I think, all is to be expected in the adoption. There are historical patterns of adoption of new technologies and computers are no exception. In the early phases, that is in the first few decades of the technology, there are usually two dramatically opposite poles: the dystopian and utopian poles. On the one hand, the utopians predict fantastically wonderful things for the new tools and the dystopians predict horrible, dire consequences for the adoption of new technologies and it is usually somewhere in between.

This particular series was broadcast nationally on PBS and primetime earlier this year, and then throughout the rest of the year our outreach program is heading around the country where we have PBS stations re-broadcasting the program and bringing together community groups working on this technology under the aegis of the local PBS station. We did it here in Minneapolis, we have done it in all fifty states in almost a hundred PBS stations.

And one enduring characteristic that we've had as we tried to mobilize people to share resources and work together on this, is that people are very concerned about how these tools – how these digital tools – are going to impact on their children's education, not just simply in a very pragmatic sense of learning the keyboard and learning how to use word processing and access the Web, but in a much more qualitative way that puts the impact of all of this on the curriculum.

So I would summarize, at least as far as the educational aspect of this digital divide, that there are three key areas above and beyond simple access. For the folks that came in late, I was saying that one of the problems with understanding the divide is that it began earlier in the decade as a struggle around, simply, access. Because we still, as we speak, have dramatic disparities in our society – particularly in our public schools – in terms of who has access to these tools. As the decade has gone on, more and more people have begun to ask questions about the use and content of these tools. So the educational episode in the series, for example, is entitled "Wired for What?" That's increasingly a question that people are asking. Not just simply, can you use these things, but towards what end are you using these things?

For arts organizations, I wanted to direct you to the homepage for the Digital Divide series at PBS. If you go to the learning tools section, you will see these teacher guides, which is a fairly common phenomenon in PBS programming. That is to say you develop a guide that allows classroom teachers to use the program which, hopefully, they have recorded off-air free of charge. In the classroom, then, these guides allow the teachers to develop lesson plans and other things.

What is unique with our programs is the Community Reader's Guide. We developed this because it was not simply a classroom situation, but also a situation where these community technology centers and organizations like the Urban League and the Boys and Girls Clubs had been active in addressing this issue around the country, and we wanted to give them a guide analogous to what a teacher would have a Teacher's Guide for. It's got a parents' glossary, it's got a number of things to allow these community technology centers to do outreach to their communities. These guides are available in PDF file format so you can instantly download them.

The Spanish-language versions are being used by the City and County of Los Angeles and the public housing projects by the City of New York and the City of Miami and by national organizations. We have been attempting with this series not simply to show a program but also to try and impact on the community.

Having said that, I would like to show you a brief clip from the beginning of the series and talk a little bit more about the implications of it for the arts world.

[presentation]

From an educational standpoint, the three variables that we found above and beyond the simple access – and again this is not to imply that access has been solved, it hasn't; there is still enormous disparity in access. But beyond the simple issue of access and from an educational standpoint, there are three critical variables. One is teacher training. There has been an enormous number of computers dumped into public schools without adequate provision for teacher training. This is not universally true but true in many areas.

The second is that in the private sector there is a formula for technical support. Roughly, thirty, sixty, maybe even eighty desktop or laptop computers to a technical support person. I have never, in my crisscrossing of this nation, encountered a school district that even remotely begins to approach that ratio. What happens is the same teachers, who are not adequately trained in the first place in how to utilize these tools, are also called upon to provide the technical support for these same tools. It is one of the big problems confronting educators.

The third variable – and probably the trickiest of all – is something that educators like to call curricular inspiration. Simply put, we can talk all day about how wonderful this tool is, but if you want to get down to the brass tacks that a third-grade math teacher, or an eighth-grade science teacher, or a tenth-grade history teacher has to do, it gets quite complicated.

First of all, teachers cannot just make anything up off of the top of their heads, there are standards they have to conform to. Although there is a plethora of educational software companies out there, it is very difficult for educators – particularly working through the bureaucracy of the school districts – to identify, acquire, install, and utilize the appropriate software for their discipline. All too often what happens is that the computer becomes a glorified reference tool; it sits there primarily for Internet access. While that is wonderful, using the search engine and all, it is just scratching the very surface of how to utilize this thing. Obviously, college-level is different, but we are really focused in this series on the educational component of K-12.

Most people working on the Divide would urge funders to fund these new tools. There is a whole generation of artists coming up now utilizing these tools and I think that they should be supported and acknowledged.

It is also very important to understand how these tools are different than tools that have come before.

The Department of Commerce study for the Net, draws this parable. If you want to think of the socioeconomic spectrum as a ladder, as you go up that ladder, the apex of the ladder – the wealthiest 10 percent – there is no differentiation at all based on either gender or race in terms of using the tools. Wealthy African Americans, wealthy Latinos, wealthy European Americans all basically use the tools at the same rate, and the same thing is true for gender.

But as you go down the socioeconomic spectrum, as you get into more and more poverty, the divide does indeed become more and more pronounced among both racial and gender lines. So, it is a complex phenomena that mirrors many of the problems in American society. But ultimately, the good news is that there are a lot of people working on this.

Now the first and the obvious group is technology corporations, and they would love to – not universally, but most of them would love the dialogue to simply stop on the issue of access. Because if the answer is simply to buy more computers, then we buy the products and we solve this complex social problem. But obviously it takes far more than that. And that's where the whole other group of national

organizations has come into play. The Commerce Department has a number of Web sites that deal with this. In the last five to ten years, there has been a real explosion of organizations trying to address this problem and come up with a solution. So, it is not to suggest that there aren't people doing anything about it.

What we wanted to do, however, was to bring those efforts and the issue to a national television audience. So in the last year we had about twenty million people see the series both through the primetime national broadcast and re-broadcasts. The Web site at PBS that I was showing you has had literally millions of hits. The outreach materials have been distributed in the hundreds of thousands both in hardcopy and downloads off the Web site. That is our particular contribution to a much larger effort that many people are making.

So having said all of that, and certainly we will have time for questions and answers, I am going to hand it over to Cynthia Lopez.

Lopez: Hi! I am Cynthia Lopez, the communications director at P.O.V. I have been with P.O.V. since February, and am responsible for the communications program. I am working with technology, I am working with looking at quote/unquote "communicative power" that has been engaged in trying to solve the problem of technology access and use.

I wanted to just explain the context, as David said, before my particular take on this. During the 80s, English television was one of the first groups to distribute programming via satellite to public access channels in our country. In addition to doing that, they provided programming to PBS and to other sources that distribute information. During that time, there were many of us who said, Gosh, we know that we are on the information revolution cusp. What can we do to bring our skills to bear in this way? And there were a couple of things that folks did recently to attempt that.

One project that I wanted to talk about that really fostered experimentation, innovation and passion, was a project funded by the National Science Foundation. The Center for Children and Technology embarked on a project called a Telemetry Project whereby – the project took over a seven-year period – it closely looked at this issue of access. A friend of mine spearheaded and wrote the grant and obtained the money from the National Science Foundation, her name is Dorothy Bennett. She had gone to her alumni party and found that there were three women in the audience who were women engineers and said, "Gosh, who is being focused on, looking at this issue of women and science. We need to figure out that why is it that, in the 1990s, there are so few women in the field of science."

She then developed a proposal that really was strategically apt – it wasn't just access to technology but rather how to support and foster ongoing engagement online, etc.

Part of what the grant did was to give 175 girls in New York City laptops with an extended training program and curriculum and technical assistance. The girls had to participate in workshops, etc. While they were doing the infrastructure setup, they also contacted mentors, who were Latina women and black women and white women from different races and places, etc., to act as mentors in other states. Yu had a woman who is an engineer at NASA communicating with a young girl who lives uptown, and they found very quickly that not only was training necessary for the girls who were living uptown and having access to technology for the first time, but that there needed to be training programs for the mentors themselves. The person who was at NASA wanted to send a laundry list of 27 tips on how to succeed as a woman in the sciences. But this wasn't enough for the girls uptown. So the conversations needed to be fostered in a different kind of way.

Many things were learned in that project – and there is information on the Telemetry Project on the Center for Children and Technology's Web site. Among them were that there can be generational ignorance of technology and access to information via these types of programs, i.e., the young girl who is learning the laptop quickly found that her mother said, "Can you email your cousin in Puerto Rico and ask her to ask your great-aunt for the recipe of such and such because I am forgetting an important

thing? Can you find that out quickly without me calling?" Quickly meant there was another layer of who is using access to the technology in the home. Women were asking for information to contact relatives back home, and the men tended to look for sales around technology, cars, radios, etc.

If you look at what David was talking about, that technology is created from new venues for distribution of information, but it really knows a kind of current problem or sometimes solution that society has in terms of our infrastructure. So I think that there are some creative lessons to be learned from this.

The Moment of Silence project cost four million dollars and was completed over ten years ago. At the end of the project, there wasn't a lot of publicity and marketing done throughout all of the stages of the project, and therefore, many people do not know about the model. So, a lot of folks are reinventing the wheel now with Telemetry Project and art projects in this way of mentoring artists. The lessons have not been shared. That is one issue that I feel needs to be improved upon in terms of this model.

The other thing is how people with this particular model, when we look at the quote/unquote "evaluation" there were some girls in this research group that, basically, did end up in jail, that did drop out of school. But there were other girls that went on not only to higher education but to science careers. So how people evaluate that and why, etc.…they are yet to do the big study. NSF did give a large amount of money to this project, and there are different ways in which they evaluated this, and that is on the Web site.

The second project that I wanted to talk a little bit about is the Neighborhood Networks project. Many of you probably have heard about this project, but about seven years ago I sat on a committee in New York City where grassroots organizations, artists' organizations, activists, just social workers, etc., we sat on a committee and said, We know the FCC is giving some money around technology and infrastructure and we want to figure out how we can get a piece of that money. We know that libraries, that public information sites, are places where certain monies are being given but we want to think more creatively. How do we ensure that access to technology is done in different ways to make sure that we go to where the "people" sort of are rather than reinventing the wheel again.

One of the main issues that we saw was that public housing sites in different parts of New York had no access to technology at all. One idea that came up was developing a social club/computer room that would be filled with computers, that would be where people would want to go. Our initial project was not funded. However, since it was a great idea, HUD subsequently took a piece of this idea and developed it over the last ten years. To date there are 633 centers in operation in public housing sites throughout the United States, and another 264 public housing sites and property that are thinking about this notion.

The third example I wanted to talk about was a program called "Well Founded Fear," and it really took a critical look at the INS – the Immigration and Naturalization Service. It was the first time that outsiders were ever granted access to the INS offices and they taped interviews with the people who grant political asylum as well as people who were seeking political asylum. It's a two-hour feature and we worked really hard to engage non-traditional communities online. One thing is to do outreach, as David said, to national organizations, and encourage them to encourage their people to get information on the Web and to talk about the issues of the program. Our goal is not so much to talk about P.O.V. but to be talking about the issues that the program highlights.

There are different ways that you can approach participating on the Web site. One of the questions, when P.O.V. initially took on the program, was that we wanted some discussion about how people come to this country, why they are seeking political asylum, etc.

One of the things that I've learned over the years in these different projects, is that over the years there have been many solutions to this whole issue of the digital divide. And I don't think that any of them has been, in totality, the one way to go.

But there are ways, now, that we can learn from different projects and figure out creative solutions together. I would hope that foundations would strongly consider experimentation. For instance, I was the first one to say, when we were sitting down having initial meetings around "Well Founded Fear," if you're an immigrant are you really going to get on the Web site to discuss your issues or to talk about and engage in specific dialogue in that way? What we did find was that with the extended outreach, many people did sign on to say, 'oh my gosh, this is the first time I've seen a program like this and yes, I want to participate in having this kind of dialogue.' I'll just show a two-minute clip of "Well Founded Fear."

[video]

So in closing, in terms of P.O.V., we're not approaching the huge problem of the digital divide in the very concrete way that David has with his book and his materials, but we are trying to figure out ways in which constituent-based organizations can use our materials and distribute information to their constituents in a way that we know that there is a virtual community to be talking to.

Question: A question for Cynthia. On the telementoring, you mentioned the figure of $3 to $4 million. You mentioned a cohort of 175 people. Is that correct?

Lopez: One-hundred and seventy-five girls.

Question: So the cost per girl was?

Lopez: In terms of the exact budget, I don't have that information.

Question: But if you the divide the 175 into $4 million you get a really big number.

Lopez: This was not only for the computers. The staffing, and it wasn't a one year project. It was over – it was a couple of million over several years. I think in the end it was like six years. And then it stopped. They tried taking that model and disseminating it throughout schools in the United States. It had 25 sites, so it also went for infrastructure development, company institutions, there are several things that I didn't discuss – because of time – in terms of how they try taking that model and distributing that information and trying to get other sites to use it. One of the things that I talked to my friend about is, can the National Science Foundation take a certain amount of the information that she provided and make that available to other foundations, because it was one of the first foundations to put that kind of money into something that was still experimental. But yes, the cost was high. Part of it was because of the infrastructure in that they really had someone go to each of the girls houses every week – I mean they really had tech support in the way that would make the project function.

Subsequent to that, the Center for Children and Technology is embarking on a project called Imagination Place with some books out of MIT. They are again focusing on roles, learning how to become programmers, using technology Web-based tools. The National Science Foundation has put a chunk of money into that project that started about two years ago.

Question: I'm for getting the content and learning from the experiments that have taken place. You know, they spend so many times… $4 million. In trying to understand, there's always something happening.

Bolt: I think there's several ways to do that. Of all of the entities that have received funding in the last, say, twenty-five years, probably the single largest chunk of funding available has been a combination of Department of Education and National Science Foundation. There have been appropriations from all these federal agencies. Now the question is, to go back and look at what combinations are going to work. One of the problems is that computers are not cheap and you're talking about something like the Urban League where they have hundreds of centers that they normally fund for tens of thousands of computers. The initial investment costs are quite large. But one of the other problems is that, as a technology administrator, you should basically get a new computer generated on an on-going basis year after year after year.

So the question now is how do you assess these programs. The Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, has had a special program around workforce training because one of their issues with the welfare to work transition is that the people be made familiar with computers. Traditionally you have private industry organizations responsible for welfare recipients in job skills to gain employment. Traditionally you would have as much as a year allocated to train skill sets like, say, custodial. The idea in the last several years is to visit several community organizations with computer training. If you're going to spend a year and you're going to allocate so much money, we could take that same money and in the same time frame we could train people on the computer.

But I think your basic question is valid. How do we measure success. BAVC, for example, initially replaced people in dot-coms – that would be an obvious area to place workers, into that kind of setting. But herein lies the rub. The corporate culture of a dot-com is very antithetical to 9 to 5 work. This is the basic cultural problem, the dot com work pace, and so BAVC no longer places welfare to work trainees in the dot-coms because of these excessive number of hours that are expected. It had resulted in real clashes with their parents. The people were good workers but didn't want to work more than forty hours a week, let alone seventy hours.

And that's very much a problem. So BAVC switched their emphasis toward banks and other kinds of larger institutions that didn't have the same issues as the dot-coms. So I guess the long and the short answer to your question is, we're still in the period of assessing this, and this is true not only in the money spent on CTCs, but in the larger sense on the entire educational world. There have been a number of controversial reports that have come out in the last year that said, essentially, we still can't show much for the billions of dollars spent on education technology. But it's still true that we don't have any quantitative measurement of the efficacy of these programs for education. You can point, for example, to dramatically increased test scores.

If they don't get the training and the skills in school, they don't get the jobs, then where do they go to get these skills? We're essentially looking at the prospect for a huge amount of the American work place not being conversant in these skills, at the same time that technology companies have shortages of qualified workers. People are calling immigration departments, so they can import highly skilled workers, because there are a lot of good people in other parts of the world.

Lopez: There are more lessons learned in terms of children and technology. The Center for Children and Technology put out various reports, that you can get either on line or from the main office, that look at their different projects and what they consider to be their lessons learned.

Bolt: A desktop computer and laptop computers are so 20th century, in that really what we're thinking about in the future is these information systems that are wireless in mode, portable devices, combination cell phones/DVAs – they can have infrared interaction. One of the problems of this discussion is, it's not just a discussion of what can we do to date, but what we'll probably be.

Interesting for me from my perspective, because I sat on a number of Department of Commerce panels giving grants to the technology centers and a great many of these community technology centers have arisen in the last few years to address the issues. They have almost a purely vocational orientation. They are aimed largely at young people, to expose young people.

This panel is entitled "Arts and the Digital Divide." I think one of the real issues is where is the funding for the arts component of this effort because to date, there hasn't been federal funding for that. Most of the federal funding has been saved for vocational training, which is very good, I'm not saying it's a bad thing. Couple that with arts curriculum in public schools. Part of the digital divide equation isn't simply access, but also a content issue.

I think this is one of the real challenges facing both educators, administrators, arts funders –

to come up with some kind of approach to this for all the groups that are trying to look at this. There have been a couple of recent tries to address this issue, but nobody's come up with the solution.

As of yet there hasn't been any attempt at a comprehensive vision of what that would look like.

Audience: Is there some conversation going on with the NEA?

Audience: We're doing nothing with MCIA at all. It's very unclear, where the Endowment is in relation to this, in terms of the infrastructure.

Lopez: Yes, it's sorely needed. How do we figure out, given the arts curriculum, where there is collaboration. I don't have an answer to that other than perhaps we could get information from agencies about what they are doing. Unfortunately, HUD work is really very interesting, but outside of the HUD work that I've seen over the years is that each community, since there is a community discussion that takes place, decides and figures out how they want that local site to work. And it's not integrated and it's not uniform. I think that sometimes could be a negative, because there are so many bits and pieces missing from different places.

I think it's really important to look at the digital divide and look at how technology plays a role in the communities of people of color. Yesterday, we got into the discussion about if an artist wants to work with particular equipment, how do you evaluate a funder, is this extravagant, is it not, etc. It's not just having more gadgets, it's thinking about how the gadgets that we have deliver information and sorting them in a way that would be helpful.

In terms of arts funding, I used to work for an organization where I did public awareness campaigns and raised quite a bit of money for local libraries, and there are some libraries that are being planned in this next phase. I know the Connecticut Public Library will be completed in 2003, and they've worked on a collaboration with National Public Radio – and the library and the public access channels, so it's a new site. Each of those institutions was going to be able to get a piece of technology money, depending upon where they were. A foundation was going to come through with lots of computers and they were trying to build a new studio. So it took them years to figure this out, to come to an agreement on the architecture, the price, the whosit, the whatsit, but by 2005 I'm pretty sure that's gonna be one of our test sites of these three public institutions sharing this kind of common infrastructure and dealing very closely. When they decided that it would be better to pool their money and to work out a comprehensive plan.

Question: It seems like it's a problem as far as people – school districts and you name it – just get ripped off because there's no place for them to go where they can feel safe in terms of getting what should this work like, what is a reasonable amount of money to spend on this.

Bolt: I think that one of the largest dilemmas facing not only educators, but all nonprofit organizations working with technology, is as soon as you train personnel to be able to deal with that high professional level with these tools, they would have to be highly altruistic to remain with the nonprofit organization at least at this point. So you have enormous turn-over in the arts, in the school districts.

Lopez: The other thing too is that there has been a lot of effort to try to set up guidelines. Six months later and those guidelines are obsolete. And this has been driving a lot of folks crazy because they say, "but I thought we were still in the middle of finishing and getting this proposal funded for this amount of money for this technology plan," and by the time we get the money a year-and-a-half later, it looks different. The federal government, the FCC, had a portion of their Web site that also listed technical guidelines for schools, libraries, but it failed. They didn't promote this site, so nobody knew this information was there. So that's a long-standing problem.

Question: When you showed the piece of your film about the teacher in front of the classroom… It strikes me, when I think of the model for people really learning in schools, that it has nothing to do with classrooms, some kind of

organic thing about people gathered around a computer or something. I'm wondering if people who really look at sort of the organic way that kids – I mean, I know that kids who are excelling in this have surpassed their teachers by tenfold and they're teaching each other and there's something else going on here. I'm wondering if we're capitalizing on that.

Lopez: What we found was extreme difference of how boys use technology and how girls use technology. Boys can get on individually to a computer and start pushing any button, and girls will start looking and another girl will come, she'll start looking and another girl will come, and unless they find an excuse or they think they can get something out of it, they're not going to touch the buttons. The National Science Foundation published a paper about the socialization of the use of computers and searching for information. It's really interesting too – it also looks at culture and women versus men in how they use this stuff, in terms of efficacy of time. For a woman, if it takes too long, she's going to go off and do whatever the other thing is she needs to do, where a man will stick with it.

Bolt: I think we're up against the end of the session, so thanks to everyone for coming. We sure appreciate your comments in the session.

Young Media Artists/Youth Culture

Panelists: Dan Bergin, *Twin Cities Public TV*
Alex Rivera, *Artist Producer*

Bergin: The project was created in the early 90s by Susan Roberson, Robin Hickman, a local community builder, and me. The idea is basic media literacy, only instead of an artist residency like Tom and I did with those young brothers, this was opening the doors to the public TV station and letting young people – in this case, youth of color from the area – come in and learn about television and have a venue for their voices.

I want to show a piece done recently by a crew member that was aired both on "News Night," our alternative news show here at Public TV, and also in their hour-long special that we produced this spring. It is about a young woman who was going to cast her first vote this year, so she was really into issues of politics and the power of the vote. That developed into a journalistic piece that looks at youth voting rights and other issues. It made for an interesting production. Afterwards, I will just tell you about the process and why it's more empowering than the piece itself.

[video presentation]

That's a little bit of Gina's journalistic work, and that's the kind of work that Hype does.

I was doing a panel on Challenges of Youth Media Workers at the NAMAC conference and someone mentioned that old saying, "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." People bristle at that. It's really unhealthy that young people should hear this. You have great staff here who do and teach and we all try and do that. So let us not use that cliché any more.

Here's a PowerPoint presentation about my residency with Hype. As a product, as a production – clearly it's pretty amazing to have the creativity and the voice of young people. But it's really about the process. This is fresh from our NAMAC coverage. Our young reporter, Hallie Lee, was at the NAMAC Conference this past weekend doing interviews with young media makers. In the center is Stephanie Zeno and she had done a great piece on journalists of color and ethics and she presented that along with some other makers. I just thought this was really cool, and it speaks to the power of the Hype process – Hallie connecting with this sister from Alaska. These two meeting with the camera as the thing that's bringing them together is great. Even in the brief exchange of an interview, learning about each other was really cool.

One downside with Hype is that Twin Cities Public Television is a union jurisdicted shop, so there is not a lot of access to the hands-on use of cameras. I try and make that a positive in terms of getting this collaboration with our videographers. So you do have that corny thing of the white guy over thirty meeting the fifteen-year-old Hmong girl and then them interviewing the Alaska Native. It's very cool, actually, and I really do think one of the great things that the station gets out of Hype is that our staff gets to have this interaction.

In Gina's piece, beginning with an idea and then working with her to formulate that is very dramatic. Again, it's about the process for her. She happened to be someone who is interested in journalism, so to go on a shoot and to be at the Capitol was very important for her. She learned about ENG, or Electronic News Gathering, and the more journalistic approach to filmmaking. It's a good starting point as a young filmmaker to move from. Again, the connection through the shoot itself – her meeting these other young people who are active – speaks to the community-building aspect of Hype and really getting these young people more activist in nature.

There is certainly all of the work ethic stuff that comes with making TV. Also learning about storytelling was an important part of it. One of the things that I did was to adapt the dramatic film writing approach of note cards and use them to take interviews, and then working with the young people to talk about storytelling, to think about writing. With new technology and nonlinear editing, they are so quick to start to juxtapose sound and image that, frankly, I was getting concerned that we are losing some of

the essence of the storytelling. So working with the note cards to outline a piece and then struggling with copy, and news writing – making it not too corny but also accomplishing all of the things that you want to do – is a good exercise and keeps it from being just playing with video. For someone quiet like Gina, doing the narration is a nice way to speak up.

There is a real power in the nonlinear editing and the digital editing. For me, it's a great teaching tool in terms of how to actually construct media. It's also a nice way to sidestep our jurisdictional issues because, with the edit decision list that's created in Avid, in this case, the young person working with me has made all of their decisions to the frame. They get to sit in online at a session when a piece is assembled; meet an editor and kind of kick it with them. They have told their story and they have learned about the magic. Editing is always that point of magic, in terms of media making, but also the dark side and the manipulation.

I was talking yesterday about how I showed one crew member how to clean up some "ums" and "ahs" in someone's sentence, and I came back after break and they had created an entirely new sentence out of their syllables and words. It's pretty scary!

Question: What is nonlinear editing?

Bergin: Nonlinear editing refers to computer/desktop-based editing, where instead of going from tape machine to tape machine, inserting images one after another in a consecutive fashion, nonlinear editing allows you to move throughout the line of your story. You could jump to the middle, pull out five minutes, drop in something new, or leave it out entirely and let the rest of the story collapse around it.

Audience: It's the difference between a typewriter and a word processor. But for film and video.

Bergin: Exactly. We work as a group, talking about footage and working on critical response and that sort of thing. When they tape their hour-long specials, it's kind of this cool coming together of people in the Public TV station. In this case, African-American elder Nellie Stone Johnson, who is a 95-year-old activist who formed the DFL Party with Hubert Humphrey and accomplished many firsts for women. They have her and Gina hook up – again, it's another cool side effect of Hype.

Within an institution, using the artist residency mode has been really, for me, an exciting way to reach kids. The only way to stay in Public TV, because I do get to do something like this and be a media mentor in a way that's different from the traditional artist residency. But I do still like to get out of the building and work with different communities.

Thinking about some of those new technology tools is a transition, I think, and especially hearing from diverse communities is maybe a nice transition to Alex and some of his work.

Rivera: It's a nice dovetail between Dan's work and mine.

I will be showing work more from individuals, young people who are trying to make their voice heard. A lot of them are people who maybe don't think of themselves as artists yet. Instead, they are people who think of themselves as activists or as doing market research or as just doing troublemaking with the instinct of a young person. Some of them have come into their own and started to think of themselves as artists.

I am twenty-seven years old so I think I have about three years left to talk with any authority about youth culture. But I also definitely want to hear from the students in the room. It's hard to make generalizations about young people; it's a wildly diverse group and young artists are the same. But basically, I wanted to speak about a few things that I see in, at least, my colleagues and the community of younger artists that I work with. Most of them are in their twenties.

First of all, one of the most important things to understand when looking at the work of young media artists is that we don't think of media in the same way, basically. I think when media was originally invented – media meaning film or video – there was a relationship between the film, the filmmaker, and the world and that you would make films about the world.

For us, we grew up with media already around us all of the time: watching television six hours a day, on the Web three hours a day, playing video games an additional two hours a day. For us, our world is made of media. The relationship that someone growing up in 1920 might have had with their community, we have with the Internet.

When a lot of us turn and become media makers, we make media about media. I think that some critics or people looking at the work might say, this isn't very original! Why are they stealing images from somewhere else? Why does this look like a corporate Web site when it's really an artist's Web site? Why can't they find their own voice? It's because we don't know the world anymore, we just know media. So as we set out as artists, that's our reference point.

You will see almost all of the artists that I am going to show bringing a wide variety of media – whether it's scraps of media they are reconfiguring in their work, or genres about art exists, whether it's the corporate Web site or working in the genres like the dance club and the media of a dance club and bringing that into the arts. You see people pulling from various places and bringing it into the arts. So, when you look at it, you might not recognize it as art. Be careful with it.

For that reason we don't think of authorship in the same way. A lot of the work is made of reused materials and working with reused genres, but always with an emphasis on how to say something new and always with a motivation and acknowledgement that with genre comes audience. For a lot of young artists, especially ones interested in speaking about politics or speaking about community issues, there is a discontentment with the strategies of the 60s and 70s of doing Social Issue Media – sort of in caps. Very straight documentaries might get screened on PBS but then who is tuning in, and who is really staying put, and who is on the couch watching it? There is a distrust among younger people about speaking through that vocabulary that limits your audience to people who are already in agreement. You will see that a lot of the artists who work in the show are trying to find new genres and new strategies to use but allow them to speak about the same issues, but in ways that bring new audiences, maybe audiences that don't intend on seeing art but will be caught in the act by accident.

This is a project done by a young woman named Cathy Davies who I went to college with. She did it as her senior project at school. She worked in conjunction with PBS Web Lab to make it a larger project. The idea is that she wanted to address the issue of panhandlers and the fears, stereotypes, and suspicions around that community. The way that she decided to do it was using the vernacular of market research. She is a really talented designer and was working in advertising agencies at the same time as she was doing her artwork. You see a visual representation of the pitch by the panhandler and you can decide to give them a certain amount. You can also hear that pitch. The Web – what a great medium!

You see someone with what is basically a social issue impetus or focus – a focus that's political dealing with an under-represented community – presenting their concerns through the rhetoric of market research in order to reach a new audience, and it was very successful. The site has had thousands and thousands of hits and was reported in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and really created a media buzz for that strange combination of genre and content. There is a lot of information on the site.

Another sort of similar site is ®™mark.com. This project received funding from Creative Capital last year. ®™ark (pronounced "artmark") is basically a group of media activists who do hoaxes for the media – that's the artwork. For example, they did a project a few years ago when a talking Barbie Doll came out that was very sexist. The Barbie Doll said things like, "I would rather be shopping." and "Math is hard!" They were just disgusted so they bought all of these Barbie Dolls and all of these G.I. Joe Dolls, took them home and surgically switched the voice boxes and then reverse shoplifted them back onto the shelves in time for Christmas. So Christmas shoppers bought the modified Barbie Doll which said, "Let's go kill them!" They inserted a press release inside the box, and so the whole thing became a performance without a stage. It was a perfor-

mance that happened in the eyes of the media but for literally millions and millions of people. Again, a genre connecting, guiding, a new audience to the topic.

®™mark.com is the same people who did that project, but this is a shell which they call a corporation. Instead of seeking monetary profit, as a corporation does, they seek cultural profit. So the Barbie Liberation Organization – the BLO –was an example of cultural profit. ®™ark is organized as an investment fund. What the owner did was funnel money from people who have it to projects that need it via this corporate shell that is their Web page. They have organized all of these projects, so people can submit projects into various funds – they call them mutual funds. For example, there is the Frontier Fund. This fund challenges naïve, utopic visions of the global village. They have fifteen or twenty funds of subversive cultural projects, to which you, as an investor, can submit money and fund these projects. It's an open interface so that investors can participate and cultural saboteurs can participate and upload their projects.

Question: At what point did Creative Capital get involved? Was that post Barbie liberation?

Rivera: Yes. They got involved after the whole thing was online, and I think what they funded was an ®™ark speaking tour. They were going to go to corporate fairs and job fairs and get their message out that way.

This project was also featured in the Whitney Biennial. From here it doesn't look like art, but it's really a unique combination of video, Web, in front of the eyes of the media as a piece of performance art. A lot of young people, whether it's out of naiveté or strategy, are destroying lines between genres to the point where there really is no one box that could be clicked in terms of describing a project like this.

This is a project by a young woman who wanted to do a film. The subject of the film was a box of letters that she found when she was cleaning out her room. They were letters she had passed to her best friend in high school. She read them as an adult and thought, these are hilarious, these little notes, and wanted to make a film out of it. But again, realizing, in terms of questions of genre, she had no idea how she was going to get it out there. So what she did was to serialize it and made a short video out of each letter. Here you can watch each letter. Being savvy in terms of the fact that some people don't have fast connections, she is presenting it as a video here, as pure sound, or as just a letter.

You can go through and learn a whole story about these two girls' relationship in high school. After reading the story – each story has a topic – you can also post a message about that topic. So the first note is about passing notes, the second one is about bad dates. You can put up your own thoughts about bad dates.

Question: Alex, in order to be a satisfying experience for a viewer, both of these examples have interactivity, right?

Rivera: Yes. That's one thing that I think a lot of Web designers – both the commercial ones and the arts ones – have realized, is that the Web is a really unique place. It's not a place for broadcast, it's not a top-down media.

What makes it strong is that the viewers can participate and put up their thoughts and make their thoughts become part of the experience. That's what drives the whole community-building aspect of a Web site. All of the examples have that horizontal aperture which allows the viewers to talk to each other and use the Web site to get to know each other.

I made the metaphor yesterday of a painting that's on the wall. Compare a Web site that is art to a painting that is art. This is like the equivalent of having a box of markers next to the painting and saying, Hey! Mess it up! Draw on it! As if every painter had to do that to have someone watch, to have someone see the art. It's a really different media for an artist to work in because part of it is getting your vision out, but a lot of it is opening an aperture for a community to realize itself through your work, and that has to be there or else people will not come back.

Question: One challenge that some of this new venue for art poses for you all, as funders, is

that you have this idea of audience and impact. When Creative Capital supported this, did they even say, How many people will see this? The traditional kind of RFP language.

Rivera: Creative Capital is definitely interested in questions of audience and they are also interested in collaborating in terms of promoting the work. Another thing about our Web site is that it's the most public medium, in one sense, but it's a very lonely medium.

You can put up your Web site and the whole world can see it, or anyone who has a computer can see it, but they probably are not going to. To make the Web site actually a piece of public art is entirely a question of promotion, right? From the artist's point of view in speaking of funders, that's a really interesting conundrum because so many funders want to fund the production or distribution. The idea of actually promoting means doing advertising in other media, which means trying to build links to other Web pages. Trying to broker, let us say, a link between this site and the National Organization of Women and ®™ark or cnn.com. Trying to build the architecture so that artists' sites actually get seen. I think that's a really neglected space in terms of funding options.

All of the artists have chosen these scandalous approaches. Like the site about the panhandlers – her strategy was to make a scandal and send out press releases, and then the press writes about it and that's how traffic arrives at the site. Maybe some of us might not be able to mobilize the press so then how do people arrive at sites like this?

Question: How do you reach someone who is interested in finding out more about what is happening in the media?

Rivera: Somebody who is interested in learning more about art on the Net? They might go to rhizome.org. That's a site that's a new media art hub and newsletter. You might want to check that out. But they are going to be focusing more on experimental Web art. The stuff I am presenting is half between art and activism – that's my particular area of interest. But rhizome.org is a really good place to start to get to know what is going on in terms of art on the Internet.

Audience: It's also important to note that for a lot of traditional media makers, filmmakers even, there are a number of sites where you can stream online through films. There will be festivals, distribution, even production of more traditional media online.

Rivera: This is the last one I want to show before having a conversation. I will show mine after this.

This is a site called IMC – Independent Media Center – maybe some of you have heard of it. This is a giant, really a global, collaboration now that started in Seattle in the context of the protests against the World Trade Organization. Their mission is to try to seek out a totally democratic model for making news. It's really fascinating what they have come up with.

If you dig into this site, what you will discover is that anyone can publish on this site. If you think there is something noteworthy in your community, you can write about it and upload it here. That's pretty easy to do; that's nothing too fancy.

Here is another site and what is really exciting about what they have done is they have created an editorial collective that anyone can join. If you want to be part of their editorial staff, you just send in your email and you become part of it. Every time there is a new article up, you have a chance to rate it as part of the editorial staff. You can give it a number from one to ten. What happens is that the articles that get the higher score move to the front page. Anyone can be one of the editors and anyone can be one of the writers.

As a reader, if you rate something positively, it gets much more attention. So this article must have gotten a lot of high scores. I don't know if this would count as art or journalism. In all of the projects you see this incredible aperture, this dance between the artists – or makers – and the audience, and shifting the terrain completely.

For the past few years I have been working with computers, not only computers as a tool to

make media, but as a set of metaphors and a whole vocabulary, speaking of my main interest which is the politics of immigration and the Latino community in the United States.

Around 1997 I had this tremendous sense of cynicism because there was all of this hype in *Wired* magazine and everywhere about the global village and the global community that was going to come from the Internet. Yet, simultaneously, in California they were passing Proposition 187; the U.S.-Mexico border was being militarized, the budget doubled; affirmative action was being killed. I felt like there was this attack on my community but at the same time the celebration of this global village. It was this irony that made me feel nauseous.

The way I decided to express it was through this initiative now which has manifested itself as a video, now a Web site, and hopefully soon a feature film. The concept is of a future in which instead of physically coming to America, migrant labor stays put in their home country and uses the Internet to remotely control robots which do their work in America. So that the pure labor comes to America and none of the problems of having an actual immigrant in the country exist.

I made a tongue-in-cheek video promoting this idea. Now I have made a Web site which, again like the earlier ones, uses the vernacular of the corporate page. I created a corporation called Remote Labor Systems. The site is designed to tell you the joke which is: In the 21st century the cyber *bracero* program promises to bring manual labor to America via the Internet and tele-robotics technology. That's the joke. It also educates people about the history of these kinds of politics in America.

You can go here and learn about the original *bracero* program which brought Mexican labor to the United States between the 1940s and the 1960s. Basically what that was about was going to the U.S.-Mexico border, picking up workers, bringing them to pick fruit, leaving their wives behind as collateral. The workers were not allowed to vote or do anything when they were in America. They picked fruit and were sent back home again. It was a guest worker system where the workers, who were inside America's borders, had no rights at all. It was the precedent for my kind of high-tech *bracero* program. The site is designed to divert attention to the original true history, and then also spin out this joke. This project was funded by NYFA a few years ago.

Question: What kind of feedback do you get on this Web page and video?

Rivera: It has been really positive so far. I have been fortunate because the piece is part sci-fi, part United Farm Workers. I am somewhere in between George Lucas and Cesar Chavez. That opens up new audiences, and so I have been lucky to present this work in community centers, in museums, in film festivals, and online to this audience.

Question: I thought you really struck a balance. Using new technology – not to just wallow in it – but to both amuse and inform and entertain. A great story!

Rivera: Yes, exactly. There is a different media to recycle my old ideas. Also, it links to this site called invisibleamerica, which is my personal newsletter and archive of my videos.

What I wanted to lay out is that young makers – especially working on the Web in this new media – are doing work that doesn't provide some of the old pleasures of art. When you go to a museum and look at art it's about this visceral experience of staring at the work and being filled with something from the work.

Now you see artists working on the Web that create work that aesthetically, maybe, doesn't offer that much, but what it offers is a configuration of a community, a concept. It's a whole new space for artists to be intervening in. As funders, trying to isolate what that space is, how to categorize it, how to address it, and how to support it in the proper way is a really new set of questions. I think it's time to take all of the file cabinets and throw them out the window and start again.

Question: Patty said something in the *New York Companion* today – that when Stevens first came and she went down to his office to see some of the stuff that he was going to put up on

Gallery Nine, she said that her first instinct was to say, Oh, we can't we have that, it doesn't look good enough. Visually, it doesn't look good enough. He had to talk to her about things like interactivity, and databases, and the systems underneath the visual Net. And she said she is still trying to come to terms with that, but it strikes me that that's key, right?

Rivera: Yes. Let me show you another thing really quick. That question is essential because on the Internet you have this unique relationship between aesthetics and audience, meaning that the more photos you use, the more videos you use, the fewer people can see it. So again, the relationship, the corollary to a painter would be the more paint they slop on the canvas, the fewer people could see it. What is that about? It's a very strange media to work in, at that level.

For example, I got a small grant from Creative Capital to do this project which I called a digital mural. The idea was to make something that was painterly in its qualities, but used the best of the Internet to continue on with this history of Diego Rivera and the Mexican muralists, but online. Obviously, the media has shifted and I am also trying to talk about, instead of the plight of the rural Mexican farmer, to talk more about urban Mexico and the immigration experience. So these are images from Tijuana in San Diego. I went to that region and shot video.

This is totally under construction, totally first draft. On a normal connection, at home, it would take three minutes to download. I'm happy, at some level, at how this looks, I like what is coming out, but it's totally impractical for the audience I want to reach. You get that strange relationship between the aesthetic and the audience which is a new challenge for artists to have.

Bergin: Any other questions or comments, anything from our students? Is this the stuff that you guys are excited to sink your teeth into?

Question: I really am excited that that could be a new venue to submit work to.

Bergin: That's one of the things Alex and I were talking about. We use the term "digital" a lot and it means different things to different people. But to me it really does mean liberation or access as much as anything. The digital stuff itself is important in terms of technology and even as a creative tool, but the accessibility – and in some cases, affordability – really is one of the things that's exciting also.

Alright. Well, that was great stuff, Alex.

Rivera: Thanks!

Question: What does the budget look like for a project like this? You were saying full-funding against partial-funding.

Rivera: People make silly budgets for Web pages. Obviously, if you are in the business of making Web pages and you need to hire a lot of people, you can make it a very expensive project. I think it depends on the site, but for a site that wants to incorporate a lot of film and video, there are still all of the production costs of going out and shooting it.

As a funder, I would want to look at the plan to make this site known, putting a lot more money into the promotion, on that end of the budget, than we probably are accustomed to doing in the old days. It is a relatively cheap medium – relatively compared to other ones – but, again, it's an invisible medium unless it's promoted. It's a hard question to answer.

Question: It has perpetual presentation. So that instead of me saying, "I will show this video here, here, and here," in this case the cost, I would imagine, is to maintain space on a server. The budget may be larger on that line item because you want to keep it up for some time. You have to keep space, keep a presence.

Question: Yes. There must be this need to be working on it constantly, constantly. The whole idea is that it's happening always in the present. How do you deal with that?

Rivera: Funding that never ends. Because you see, also, the Web sites never end. They become spaces in which many people, including the artist, participate, but it's not controlled any longer by the artist. So that's a really good question. How do you break that down on a

budget? I think you see the cost at the beginning for getting it up to a certain level and then the maintenance peters down.

Question: Do you provide links on your sites?

Rivera: Yes, on my personal site I do. I used to have a link to the United Farm Workers, I called them the "opposition" because of this idea that they will be protesting this corporation. But then I thought that it was not believable that this site would link to them.

On my personal page I do have a lot of links to activists but they are worth the pixels they are printed on right now because my site is underlinked as a place for traffic. I am involved in the question with Creative Capital of how to promote these sites and get traffic there. That's the small print underneath the Internet democracy, right?

Question: It also strikes me – when you were going through those things – that there is something about speed that's different generationally. It took me a while, when you put some of the sites up, to get the subtle critique or the slyness of the text. So someone like me would, maybe, page through these very quickly thinking that they were just another corporate text. But I sense that the facility that people have who are younger, who are in front of the media a lot, who are at computer stations a lot, can read these things very quickly and figure out whether it's a corporate site or whether it's something that's really interesting. The way that you keep moving your mouse around! Gosh! It takes me awhile to find and click! So there is a quickness to it that I think is interesting – as an older person.

Rivera: Yes. Some of it's hard for anybody. Look at this. Part of what ®™ark does is they have this piece of software which can download a Web page entirely intact and then they can, on their computer, locally change it and then upload it. They were able to register the domain gatt.org – the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. So they downloaded the World Trade Organization's site, changed it, and then uploaded it here. So it's really confusing because – this is the fake one – if you go to the real one. This is it, okay, they must have redesigned. At one point, this looked exactly like the original.

They very subtly changed it so that it really does breed confusion, and confusion for the press. It became part of a whole subtle media performance and through this site they have actually been invited to participate in a world trade summit. So they are going to Prague to go to some summit there as the World Trade Organization. They really think it's them! So people who are getting involved with this, as pranksters, in this world of imitation – sometimes it's not legible and then that becomes an asset to the art as a piece of performance.

Audience: It sure does.

Bergin: We have to get ready for the next session coming in. Thank you, both, very much.

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