

## THE PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE\*

### **Mission**

The purpose of the Public Telecommunications Service (PTS) is to develop strategies, examples, and an expanding network that aims at regaining control over the new electronic media for the purposes of civic renewal and a vital democracy. The PTS will aid citizens' efforts to use the new media to help build local places, revitalize public life, and deepen the civic skills and identities of individuals and civic institutions.

### **Background**

#### *The Need for Civic Renewal*

America's civil society is under strain, as evidenced by severe declines in voter turnout, trust in government, trust in other people, readership of daily newspapers, interest in public issues, and participation in voluntary associations.<sup>1</sup> Above all, there has been a loss of opportunities for ordinary citizens to do "public work"—to use a phrase defined by Harry Boyte and Nancy Kari.<sup>2</sup> Public work is done by ordinary people, not merely by experts or professionals. It is done in public, using rules, values, and methods that are publicly disclosed. And it is done for the public, generating goods that benefit everyone.

Public work is defined in the AmeriCorps curriculum as the visible effort of ordinary citizens who cooperatively produce and sustain things of lasting importance in our community, nation, or world. It solves common problems and creates common things. It is the action of producing and taking responsibility for the common world in which we live.

Civic engagement as public work is different from common patterns of volunteering. It offers participants opportunities to work on major issues affecting communities and to draw explicit connections between their specific tasks and larger questions. It gives attention to what volunteers are good at, what is important to them, and how they want to be a part of reshaping communities. And it teaches the skills and values that allow a mix of people to work on common problems.

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Americans generally agree that public agencies have a role in addressing community issues – to provide reliable structures, necessary information, funding, and general direction. But they also strongly favor more citizen involvement in community and public problem solving. They believe that citizens are often not involved sufficiently in decision making processes. And they are interested in learning skills for dealing with people outside their own cultural or political group.

Americans believe that their own civic involvement is hampered by a lack of time, a lack of invitations or opportunities to participate, and a lack of structures to facilitate participation. They also cite two important philosophical and ideological barriers:

- Many government-sponsored programs undermine self-reliance and increase dependency; and government has a tendency to intrude too much in people's personal lives.
- Current professional and political leaders and systems are condescending and diminishing about citizen intelligence and capacity. Both public and private institutions fail to recognize the strengths, talents, diversity of ideas, motivation, and willingness of citizens to be involved with community problem solving.<sup>3</sup>

#### *A Nascent Movement*

The new electronic media present us with important new opportunities for doing public work. Many localities, citizens and civic organizations recognize this potential and have launched impressive initiatives. Their projects can be seen as elements of an emerging New Information Commons. For example:

- The same Ford Foundation grant that is funding the creation of this document is also helping to support a demonstration project, The New Information Commons, in St. Paul, Minnesota. This project builds on the work of citizens, particularly young people, in neighborhoods to use both citizen reporting skills and the Internet to create online neighborhood newspapers and other means of information exchange. These neighborhood efforts will be tied together on a city-wide St. Paul Commons Website that will link specific neighborhoods within a civic portal that encompasses the city-wide civic, governmental, educational, and cultural, and entertainment needs of St. Paul citizens. Through partnerships with the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Twin Cities Public Television, KARE-TV and Minnesota Public Radio, the St. Paul Commons will create channels connecting citizens and local media. The New Commons strategy, if successful, will be introduced into additional cities over the next three years.
- Connecticut Public Broadcasting (CPB) has created a "Mapping the Assets" program. Instead of emphasizing the needs and problems affecting neighborhoods around its station in Hartford, CPB has worked with the community to make local *assets* visible. Meanwhile, CPB is consulting with Connecticut's state and nonprofit institutions to decide how they could collaboratively use new digital interactive technologies.<sup>4</sup> Their goal, according to Project Director G. Scott Aikens, is "to transform television and radio

into low-cost, Internet gateways that provide educational, civic, health, arts and cultural services – creating opportunity for all of the people of Connecticut.”<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Wisconsin Public Television is a national center for public journalism and citizen outreach, and has been granted funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to establish a national outreach center. Twin Cities, New Jersey, and Maryland Public Television are adopting similar strategies. National PBS is considering a social capital development strategy that will stress programming that encourages connection and engagement in communities.

- The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) has worked in over 1,000 localities to help build public spaces that support community, including parks, plazas, public buildings, and markets. The PPS uses a “community/place-based approach to planning and decision-making” that “involves looking at, listening to and asking questions of the people in a community about their needs and aspirations.”<sup>6</sup> The PPS homepage is an integral part of its strategy, providing advice and images and an easy means to contact the organization.
- The Seattle Community Network (SCN) is a service “conceived for community empowerment.” It provides a portal through which hundreds of interesting local sites can be reached. It is run by volunteers, with a great deal of public deliberation about its priorities and values. Since 1994, it has provided free services such as an “education program which teaches computer and email usage to those new to computers; a helpdesk and voicemail service for our user base; hosting for small regional non-profit organizations, including web page mentoring; community pages showing current and ongoing community activities; [and] dozens of volunteering opportunities.”<sup>7</sup>

### *The Need for a Network*

These examples demonstrate the powerful potential of electronic media for public work. But such efforts are still somewhat scarce. They would benefit greatly from regional and national networks that would provide mutual support and training and generate models and material for general use.

In addition, some localities, citizens, and organizations that have tried to use the new information technologies to do public work have encountered severe difficulties. Thus a second purpose of the new networks would be to address common barriers to civic activity using electronic media. The following cases illustrate some of these barriers:

- In Charlotte, NC, a community computer network called “Charlotte’s Web” was born at a town meeting in 1993. For several years, it offered free email and Web access to at least 6,000 people, including residents of public housing projects and homeless men. Hundreds of local churches and civic groups created pages for the Charlotte’s Web site with help from volunteer Webmasters.

Even in its heyday, Charlotte’s Web was not easy to find. It was unable to use easily remembered addresses like [www.charlottesweb.org](http://www.charlottesweb.org) or [www.charlottesweb.net](http://www.charlottesweb.net) because these names were held by investors. (The latter is still for sale at \$14,000.)

Search engines did not direct people to the site very effectively, nor could it afford to advertise offline.

In any case, private companies soon offered the same basic services, and the *Charlotte Observer* started its own Web site devoted to “community.” As a result, government grants for Charlotte’s Web dried up, which made the bank executives on its board decide that it was no longer viable. The *Observer* offered to join forces and was rebuffed by the volunteers at Charlotte’s Web, who were suspicious of a corporate enterprise. But when Charlotte’s Web ran out of funds, the *Observer* bought all of its assets and canceled the free Internet access program. The new commercial site, [www.charlotte.com](http://www.charlotte.com), offers 24-hour access to community information; but it controls the content, uses banner advertising, and places “cookies” on its visitors’ computers.

- Neighborhood associations, voluntary organizations, religious congregations, and other groups that do public work at the grassroots level – often within geographical communities – have benefited from establishing Web pages. But most of the actual sites that these groups have created amount to simple online brochures, very difficult to find with search engines and no more valuable to their visitors than printed posters would be. Experts have inspiring ideas about how to run more interactive sites, but their suggestions are impossible without time, expertise, and money.

Thus most of the engaging content of cyberspace is now generated by a relatively small number of institutional actors: firms, governments, and big nonprofit organizations. Most people who surf the Web take no part in creating it. On the basis of a national survey, Stanford University researchers concluded: “For the most part, the Internet today is a giant public library with a decidedly commercial tilt. The most widespread use of the internet today is as an information search utility for products, travel, hobbies, and general information.”<sup>8</sup>

- Parents perform the crucial civic task of raising the next generation. The Internet has the potential to help them: it can give their children access to valuable information, technical experience, and human contacts. Indeed, many parents fear that they may damage their children’s prospects if they *fail* to have an Internet connection at home.<sup>9</sup> Amy Waldman recently reported from a troubled block in Harlem that “some impoverished mothers here, terrified by [the education] gap, have begun leasing computers for their children.”<sup>10</sup>

However, along with all the excellent material that the Internet brings into the home comes advertising, data-mining, false information, hate speech, violent games, pornography, and even cyber-predators. So parents and guardians must assume a new and difficult job of monitoring and guiding their kids online, in addition to all the other forms of supervision that they already provide. They can purchase screening software and other technological devices to keep out the worst material and to protect their children’s anonymity. But these rather crude methods do not tap parents’ knowledge, energy, and judgment to make specific choices, nor do they help families to *collaborate* in shaping and controlling the Internet. Furthermore, they focus on the worst evils, without addressing subtler problems of commercialism and mediocre material.

The Internet’s problematic role in the home is just an example of broader trends. The University of Minnesota’s William Doherty says, “Today, parents see themselves as competitive providers of services to children, while children are over scheduled in a

frantic pursuit of experiences and opportunities for personal enrichment and advantage over peers.”<sup>11</sup> As long as they must compete with other families and with outside sources of entertainment, parents cannot control their children’s environment in order to nurture future citizens. But by working together, families could make communications media safer and more enriching.

- Project Vote Smart Web provides information about every candidate for a huge array of public offices across the USA; citizens can find the relevant data by calling a 1-800 number or by visiting a Web site. The Project’s information includes biographies, campaign finance data, and each candidate’s answers to more than 200 specific policy questions. Project Vote Smart imposes strict rules on itself that are intended to serve the public interest. For example, it gives equal space to *every* political candidate in the country.

Private firms have tried to duplicate the Project Vote Smart database. If they succeed, they may advertise and draw most of the political audience, while Project Vote Smart will have difficulty attracting donations. Sooner or later, the for-profit sites will cut costs by dropping their expensive commitment to complete fairness and comprehensiveness. Politically-oriented firms have recently lost much of their capital, so the competitive threat to Project Vote Smart has receded somewhat – but it could return at any time.

- From somewhere in America, a self-described “ten-year-old kid” has formed the Clean and Green Club” for young environmentalists. Her Web page offers art, links, and messages contributed by other children.

Unfortunately, the existing architecture of the Internet makes it impossible for the owner of this site to determine whether her visitors are also children. Most of the postings on her message board are plaintive requests for pen-pals. Some could be posted by predatory adults. Indeed, we have no way of knowing whether the operator of the site is actually the 10-year-old child that she claims to be. There are severe dangers to forming personal ties as a result of this kind of site.

- America Online hosts, monitors, and regulates 180,000 simultaneous discussion groups, many of them devoted to mutual support or deliberation about important issues. These groups can be viewed as little non-governmental organizations within the AOL domain, and they serve a valuable civic purpose. Sometimes AOL shuts down groups for incivility or removes obnoxious or irrelevant postings, explaining that “its objective is to maintain a sense of community.” This is a valid objective. But because AOL is a commercial venture, some participants feel distrustful and disenfranchised when they are subject to adverse decisions.

Furthermore, the architecture that AOL has established allows it to communicate with all of its customers and to know their real names. But users cannot address more than the maximum of 23 other people who may participate in any given discussion group, nor can they contact fellow users offline. Hence they cannot organize to press for changes in AOL’s policies. As Lawrence Lessig notes: “There is no public space where you could address all the members of AOL. There is no town hall or town meeting where people can complain in public and have their complaints heard by others.”<sup>12</sup> Renee Rosenblum-

Lowden is a user who was disciplined for writing – during a debate on abortion – “If you can’t stand the heat get out of the kitchen.” She says: “The question is, who gets to decide”<sup>13</sup>

- People seeking community ties or opportunities for public deliberation may find themselves visiting sites like Talk City ([www.talkcity.com](http://www.talkcity.com)), which presents itself as a public forum for discussing politics, relationships, and many other topics. To a casual visitor, this site looks similar to an AOL chat room or even the Seattle Community Network. But a company press release explains that Talk City is basically devoted to surreptitious advertising. It uses a:

new time-based advertising format called Chat Intermercials which aims to greatly increase advertising effectiveness on the World Wide Web. Unlike typical Web ‘banners’, the Chat Intermercial features a full-length (1- 2- or 4- minute) advertising format, giving advertisers the creative flexibility to tell a story and promote meaningful interaction and real-time dialogue with customers. ... In addition to Intermercials, Talk City offers a variety of unique advertising and marketing vehicles which are based on its enhanced-chat Community environment. These include sponsorships, Infochats (the chat equivalent of Infomercials), online market research, and custom Community programming for advertisers who wish to build Community around their product.

Visitors to this kind of site provide free content as a kind of public work. But their comments, ideas, and stories are mixed with commercial speech and transformed into an exploitable commodity. David Wilson, a marketing executive, explains that by “using interactive discussions, businesses can infuse electronic commerce sites with community, thereby ... enhancing perceived trustworthiness”<sup>14</sup> “Perceived trustworthiness” is no substitute for *actual* trustworthiness. As the two become difficult to distinguish, the public needs accountability and control over spaces that claim to be “communities.”

- Some citizens who are angry at a particular corporation or political candidate have established Web pages with their target’s name (or a close and often insulting variant of it) in the address. Potential customers who look for the official corporate Web site may find these disparaging pages on the list of search results. This is the online equivalent of picketing outside an office or factory. It appears to work – judging by the number of random visitors who contribute their own comments to these parody sites.

Critics who place their complaints in juxtaposition to official sites can serve civic purposes by spurring debate and building citizen networks.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, sometimes citizens cannot find material that does legitimate public work because it is buried under parody sites. For instance, there were so many anti-Al Gore Web pages by February 2000 that only 10 out of the 18 major search engines returned the candidate’s real Web page as one of their top ten results.<sup>16</sup>

The use of trademarked names in Internet addresses has provoked a legal and legislative struggle. But an appropriate response would not merely consider how domain names should fit into a regime of intellectual property. Using satirical Web page addresses is a haphazard and clumsy way to do what citizens should be able to do

routinely: disseminate their ideas to chosen audiences and find the material that they need.

- Citizens seek out news and conversation in order to inform themselves before they act. But the Internet increases the likelihood that people will only talk to others who hold the same beliefs and values.<sup>17</sup> This is because it is easy to stay within congenial sites and discussions online, whereas users of traditional media (such as televisions and newspapers) are forced to confront uncomfortable facts, ideas, and perspectives. The result may be a balkanization of Americans into narrow groups whose members have no experience in dealing with alternative perspectives.

It is also easy under such circumstances for outright falsehoods to circulate widely within particular subcultures, without the rest of the population even being aware of their prevalence. For instance, many people who are opposed to gun control have encountered the following quotation more than once online, although it appears to have no historical basis whatsoever:

This year will go down in history! For the first time, a civilized nation has full gun registration! Our streets will be safer, our police more efficient, and the world will follow our lead into the future!

[Attributed to] Adolf Hitler, *Berlin Daily*, April 15th, 1935, Page 3 Article 2.<sup>18</sup>

- Public libraries have long served a crucial civic purpose in disseminating high-quality ideas and information to everyone, even the poorest citizens, while safeguarding intellectual property and allowing authors and publishers to make reasonable profits from their work. With the new digital technologies, this civic task could become immeasurably easier—or else almost impossible. Depending on how software and statutes are written, digital material can either be copied at no charge (and without benefiting the author) or else it can be protected from all unauthorized uses (even the most reasonable ones). Intellectual property norms and laws are still evolving, but problems have already developed that civic actors must address. For instance, nonprofit groups and individual citizens who used to rely on subscription payments for their operating expenses are now under pressure to distribute material free. On the other hand, authors and publishers sometimes refuse to make their best material available online because they do not want to give it away.

### **The PTS as a Response to these Concerns**

In principle, there are several ways to respond to the problems illustrated by these examples. One way would be to let the new electronic media be shaped by the market, on the ground that the market reflects free individual choices. But such an approach might fail to protect civic values, to teach civic skills, or to treat citizens equitably.

A second way would be to identify specific “market failures” (for instance, goods that the economy has failed to generate), and then impose policies designed by powerful public figures or appointed experts. This top-down, regulatory approach has little prospect of success as long as

very few citizens are involved in civic uses of the new media. Only if many people create and use material of civic value will they feel a desire to protect it. In any case, the regulation of any communications medium always raises serious constitutional, financial, and practical concerns. And this approach would leave untapped the civic capacities and knowledge of ordinary citizens.

The PTS reflects a third way. Building on the successful local projects discussed above, it will support and train people to create a new voluntary network with norms, rules, and priorities that they choose for themselves.

The primary functions of the PTS will be to:

1. link local New Information Commons activities into regional and national networks;
2. identify and develop local content that could be aggregated in these networks (Some of this material will be intended for entertainment and recreation, not for explicitly civic purposes, but it will have positive civic effects.);
3. assist communities, organizations, and citizens who want to provide content of civic value and who need money, equipment, or training (The funds will come from private donations, perhaps matched by federal and state appropriations.);
4. work with groups such as a Community Information Corps (CIC) to provide training (This organization will place a particular emphasis on attracting young people, perhaps as a section of AmeriCorps. CIC members will build information capacities of communities and contribute to public life. They will show citizens how new technologies can be used to bring people together, rather than to isolate people. CIC will function as a kind of “citizenship school for the information age” (drawing on the legacy of the civil rights movement), teaching information skills and skills of public work, facilitation, and partnering.);
5. create a new public space on the Internet—a national portal or even a whole region of cyberspace which we will identify in this document as the “  
suggestion regarding the best way to organize this space. A second-level domain, such as .civ.us could also work. Some of the details of this function are discussed later in this document.);

Taken together, these efforts will create a “New Information Commons,” a public domain involving the Internet, broadcast media, and some traditional providers of print media.

### **Basic Principles of the PTS**

Membership in the PTS will be open to everyone. Members will elect a governing structure, which will be responsible for the main tasks described above. It will have a central budget to identify and support local projects of civic value, to fund training programs, to design free software for use at the grassroots level, and to organize various convening and network-

building functions (sometimes using communication technology and sometimes bringing people together face-to-face).

Since it will be up to participants to govern the PTS through democratic procedures, we will not describe its work in detail here. Giving people an opportunity to build and guide an important new institution is one of its purposes. However, we would expect the PTS network and its affiliates and products (collectively, “The New Information Commons”) to strive for these characteristics:

- It should be *accessible to, and usable by*, all Americans, including children, people of low and moderate income, members of minority cultural and ethnic groups, people without specialized or up-to-date skills, disabled people, and people living in remote or under-served areas.
- As a result, it should be culturally, linguistically, and ideologically *diverse*.
- It should encourage widespread *creativity*. Not only should everyone have access to material, but everyone should have a real opportunity to contribute texts, images, video, music and software for others to use.
- It should be a space for *public work*. Public work can be done by companies, by the government, by private voluntary groups, and by individuals. For instance, when ordinary citizens post free, accurate, and useful information on the World Wide Web, they are doing public work. But there is a general shortage of public work in America – and not enough of it in cyberspace.
- It should encourage *discussions about public issues* that bring together people of different backgrounds and perspectives. Participants will sometimes reach agreement as a result of such discussions. More often, they will come to understand one another’s views, to respect everyone’s right to participate, and to recognize the values that they share. Such deliberations lessen the burden on government to settle disputes in a pluralistic society.
- It should be a *safe* place for children and other vulnerable people to explore, without fear of encountering highly inappropriate material.
- It should allow people to build strong and durable *human bonds*, so that they create the “social capital” (i.e. habits and networks of trust and cooperation) necessary to solve problems together.
- It should benefit, rather than threaten, *traditional civic and political organizations* – from religious congregations to newspapers and political parties.

Several of these features are in tension. For instance, encouraging adults to express themselves freely and creatively is not always compatible with giving children safe access to television or the Internet. To increase trust and social bonds, one might require people to divulge their true identities. However, anonymity protects freedom of speech by allowing people to

express any thought without government officials, employers, or family members knowing what they have said. Restricting access to a computer, cable, or broadcast network can cause individuals to be excluded unjustly, but it can also allow communities to address problems without outside interference. Censorship is the opposite of free speech, yet an uncensored medium may be inappropriate for schools and families. And so on.

These tensions underline the importance of one final value for a New Information Commons:

- There should be continuous, inclusive, *public deliberation* about the choices and tradeoffs necessary to manage communications networks in the public interest. Those who manage these networks should be *accountable* to informed public opinion.

### **The .Civ Domain**

As indicated above, one of the functions of the PTS will be to organize a .civ domain on the Internet, which is a means of building ties among local civic projects.

Anyone will be able to create Web pages and other content for the .civ domain, but their products will have to serve public purposes and obey rules that are determined by the PTS. Thus anyone accessing a Web sites or participating in a discussion in this domain will be assured of its civic and public value. On much of the rest of the Internet, the rules are decided by major software and hardware companies and other commercial and private groups that do not necessarily act in the public's interest.

Within .civ domain, participants will be encouraged to experiment, creating a space very different from the rest of the Internet. It will be up to them to decide how to govern this domain. They could, for instance:

- Require the ten most popular .civ sites to carry links to a random selection of little-known sites.
- Design a special .civ search engine that would use fair and transparent procedures. It might, among other things, allow people to find sites by entering standardized criteria such as geographical location and purpose.
- Channel all visitors through a single, public Web portal that would help them find the material that they needed.
- Give individuals the right to "picket" a .civ Web page by submitting an email message that would be automatically sent to a random subset of the site's visitors.
- Impose what Paul Starr calls "copyleft" on the domain. That is, visitors would be allowed to copy text and pictures without charge, but they would have to acknowledge the original authors and could not profit financially from what they took.

- Develop software to allow authors to capture reasonable amounts of revenue from certain uses of their work, while enabling citizens to get free access to the same work under appropriate circumstances.
- Develop software for online deliberation and make it available to any sites that wanted to host public discussions.
- Certify that self-described children really were under 18. Web sites that obeyed appropriate conduct rules could then restrict admission to kids.
- Make public the real names and addresses of those responsible for any .civ Web site.

### **The Appeal of the New Information Commons**

It is crucial that the New Information Commons promoted by the PTS is not marginal, appealing only to very civic-minded people and organizations. Fortunately, many individuals and groups will have reasons to participate:

- *Grassroots organizations and religious congregations* will apply for funding and technical assistance to create exciting, interactive material. They will also have access to free software developed by the PTS for such purposes as moderating discussions. And they will imitate excellent material developed by other PTS members.
- *Families* will be able to steer their children toward material created or endorsed by the PTS, assured of its safety.
- *Young people* will gain experience and serve their communities by designing and maintaining Web pages and broadcast and print material, through the CIC.
- *Individual citizens and groups* who want to disseminate ideas will choose to establish Web sites within .civ domain, because the search engines and directories operating there will work fairly and rationally. Thus participants will be able to reach appropriate audiences at low cost.
- *Major civic actors*, such as public television and radio stations, libraries, and existing community networks, will play central roles in designing the New Information Commons from the beginning, making sure that it serves their needs.
- *Everyone* will have opportunities to influence the architecture and norms – even the basic “look and feel” – of the new electronic media through discussions and public work.

Of course, having a reason to use the civic domain doesn't mean that people will use it. That is why it is important that the PTS work with other organizations to motivate the use of the New Information Commons.

## **The Relationship of the New Information Commons to the Rest of the Electronic Media**

Although the New Information Commons will hardly encompass all American communications media, we believe that the PTS can acquire a broader influence by, among other things:

- setting an example of alternative norms;
- producing content that is fundamentally entertaining and appealing (not just material intended for a small and highly civic audience);
- ultimately attracting a significant portion of the total audience to its projects;
- developing software and best practices that can also be used outside the New Information Commons;
- collaborating with other actors, such as nonprofit and civic organizations, libraries, corporations, computer professionals, and reform groups around the world to change laws and commercial software;
- imposing on itself experimental rules that could later (in certain appropriate cases) be given the force of law or else be included as design features in widely used software or hardware.
- developing a new generation of people with a combination of media skills and civic ideals.

<sup>1</sup>See the Final Report of the National Commission on Civic Renewal, *A Nation of Spectators*, at [www.puaf.umd.edu/Affiliates/CivicRenewal/Default.htm](http://www.puaf.umd.edu/Affiliates/CivicRenewal/Default.htm).

<sup>2</sup>Harry C. Boyte and Nancy N. Kari, *Building America: The Democratic Promise of Public Work* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

<sup>3</sup>These are consistent findings in the research of the Kettering Foundation, the University of Minnesota's Center for Democracy and Citizenship, the Harwood Group, and the National Commission for Civic Renewal, among others. See also Andrew J. Polsky, *The Rise of the Therapeutic State* (Princeton University Press, 1993) and Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>4</sup>Steve Behrens, "Mapping the Assets: a Systematic Partner Search in Connecticut," originally published in *Current*, July 5, 1999, available at [www.current.org/pb/pb912c.html](http://www.current.org/pb/pb912c.html).

<sup>5</sup>"Connecticut Public Television & Radio and IBM Research to Link Public Sector Institutions Using [www.netnexus.org/mail\\_archive/global/0108.html](http://www.netnexus.org/mail_archive/global/0108.html).

<sup>6</sup>From the Project for Public Spaces homepage at [www.pps.org/](http://www.pps.org/). PPS, collaborating with the Heinz endowment, is increasingly using the new commons information concept in its work with public spaces.

<sup>7</sup>Quoting from [www.scn.org/](http://www.scn.org/).

<sup>8</sup>Jeffrey I. Cole, "The UCLA Internet Report: Surveying the Digital Future," [www.ccp.ucla.edu/pages/internet-report.asp](http://www.ccp.ucla.edu/pages/internet-report.asp).

<sup>9</sup>Already in 1999, 43 percent of American parents polled by the Annenberg Public Policy Center agreed: "Children who do not have Internet access are at a disadvantage compared to peers...." Joseph Turow, *The Internet and the Family: The View from Parents, The View from the Press* (Philadelphia: Annenberg, 1999) p. 25.

<sup>10</sup>Amy Waldman, "An American Block: Life on 129th Street," *The New York Times*, Feb. 19, 2001, pp. A1; A12.

<sup>11</sup>William Doherty, "The Work of Building a More Vital Democracy: Families' Civic Work," at [www.publicwork.org/case/build6.htm](http://www.publicwork.org/case/build6.htm).

<sup>12</sup>Lawrence Lessig, *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 68.

<sup>13</sup>Amy Harmon, "Worries About Big Brother at America Online," *The New York Times*, January 31, 1999, sec. 1, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted by Chris Werry in "Imagined Electronic Community: Representations of Virtual Community in Contemporary Business Discourse." *FirstMonday*. See [www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue4\\_9/werry](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue4_9/werry).

<sup>15</sup>See Oscar S. Cisneros, "*Bally Total Fitness Holding Corp. v. Faber*," 15 *Berkeley Tech.* 229, at 239.

<sup>16</sup>Danny Sullivan, "Can You Find Your Candidate?" [www.searchenginewatch.com](http://www.searchenginewatch.com) (2000). See [searchenginewatch.internet.com/sereport/00/03-president.html](http://searchenginewatch.internet.com/sereport/00/03-president.html).

<sup>17</sup>Cass Sunstein, *Republic.Com* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), especially pp. 51-103.

<sup>18</sup>See [www.urbanlegends.com/politics/hitler\\_gun\\_control.html](http://www.urbanlegends.com/politics/hitler_gun_control.html) for a rebuttal.