



Report on:

**Telecommunities Canada (TC)  
Futures Planning Process**

**March 6, 2007**

**IDRC Research Support Grant 104103-001**

## **Outline of TC Futures Planning Process**

A meeting of Telecommunities Canada board members in Ottawa, October 19, 2006, was intended to allow us to “think through a pragmatic action plan that will enable Telecommunities Canada to increase and sustain the effectiveness of its role as a network for sharing practical ideas, tools and learning among the providers of community-based information and communications technologies (ICTs) in Canada.”

We asked ourselves, “Now that Telecommunities Canada and its constituents, by initiating the CAP protest, have begun to act on “telecom” policy, what’s next? What perspectives should frame TC’s strategies for action? To be able to act within the framework of whatever resources and partnerships are available to us, first we have to understand our strengths.”

The meeting’s summary report is titled:

### **Telecommunities Canada. Moving Forward: Outcomes of the Strategic Planning Session. Ottawa, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006.**

In summarizing that meeting, the Report identified a large number of possible actions and factors that might influence their outcomes. But it left prioritizing those two lists to follow-up work by a committee of board members. The two lists were titled:

- a. Issues that are highly important to us but where the means of achievement and potential outcomes are relatively clear.**
- b. Actions according to policy areas.**

The results of the committee’s re-working of those lists in order to clarify and communicate TC priorities resulted in two documents that now serve to clarify and guide our actions:

- a. Action Areas by Level of Policy Impact. December 11, 2006.**
- b. TC Priority Matrix. December 11, 2006.**

## Telecommunities Canada

### Moving Forward: Outcomes of the Strategic Planning Session Ottawa, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

**Participants:** Garth Graham, Michael Gurstien, David Murdock, Gareth Shearman, Marita Moll, Peter Frampton, Marie Prebushewski    **Facilitator:** Brendan Reimer (CCEDNet)

**The Question:** How does Telecommunities Canada increase and sustain the effectiveness of its role as a network for sharing practical ideas, tools and learning among the providers of community-based information and communications technologies (ICTs) in Canada?

*Understanding our power as a network of practitioners of community development online and acting on it.*

**Based on our awareness of active roles beyond sharing, the question was amended to read :** How does Telecommunities Canada increase and sustain the effectiveness of its roles as a network for sharing practical ideas, tools and learning among the providers of community-based information and communications technologies (ICTs) in Canada and its advocacy for the needs of Canadians online within a Canadian policy framework?

Really we have five roles:

1. sharing
2. advocating (being a credible national voice representing community concerns)
3. connecting internationally
4. being a place for people to lean on for credibility for what they are doing locally
5. policy development

Comments:

From the beginning of TC the role of connecting people to practices was a role of connecting. TC has avoided a hierarchical structure and tried to be a zone to come together whose strength was based upon the numbers that came to the table and what they shared.

Yet TC became incorporated and is formal in its approach – and that balance/paradox has been our strength. (Traditional formality integrated with non-hierarchical relationship with members/community.)

**Significant Moments:**The critical moment was the realization that Policy Drives TC and from that other activities and engagement and learning etc. occur. Within that context there was strong agreement that our role is to be present where community based organizations are not (in terms of policy). Finally a number of bench marks – an evaluation lens – values to guide us emerged which will be very helpful.

**Overview of the day and the process:** We began the day by identifying key factors / drivers / themes / issues / trends / opportunities within our own community ... within the environment we control. We then created a similar list Identifying external trends /forces/ factors driving changes that affect our community but are outside our control.

These were then graded using two factors (See appendix one):

1. Importance to us. Is it high (H), or low (L)?
2. Our uncertainty of the Outcome. ( Where a high (H) rating meant the eventual resolution wasn't clear, and a low (L) rating meant that we are certain of the outcome.)

A list then emerged of issues that were a high priority for us, but we were uncertain of the outcome and perhaps what to do next. Thinking about priorities within this list can force our thinking forwards. The list included:

- Resources to do what we want to do
- Identify participation and how we are going to invite participation - Membership, partnerships .....Engagement
- Better Internal Communications – more Darlenes
- How much is TC's direction determined by the players, rather than the players determined by the direction – need to go beyond people's comfort zones – issues drive the agenda
- Knowledge of the issues – the learning curve is enormous.
- The Sky is Falling – scope of change & intersection of the next four. – how much can we handle
- Internet Governance – changes a foot – Open Networks
- ICANN – under threat
- Telecom Policy – move to oligopoly
- Perception that we have bridged the divide – and gone far enough - Deepening Divide - It is about use of technology (the divide) & marginalized communities are using ICT – but if people don't keep up with technology – the lag time for them is even greater.
- Have and Have not gap – role of ICT – connection to social policy as loss leader.
- Relevance of all this to “Shot Gun Ally”
- Ideological Change leading to massive funding cuts
- Vacuum is emerging across sectors as government abandons intermediary organizations – government role in structure – CDN vrs USA experience – alternative voices and actions

Producing this list surfaced a number of broad based statements that we later removed because it became apparent that they really were descriptions of who we are, what our role is, and many of the values that guide us. These “principles” had a very high degree of consensus:

- **Need clear vision – elevator pitch – consistent**
- **Brand Recognition**
- **We are advocates for Civil Society where they are not present – within the ICT environment – where government and business are strong players.**
- **Cant do economic development without ICT**

A discussion of ranking these two lists brought a sort of TC “scenario story” into focus:

The sky is falling. The policies and politics related to the Internet are all changing and people are taking the consequences of those changes for granted without critical examination. In the face of the complexity of change, people lack a capacity to respond. TC can and must play a role as advocates for civil society in a situation where there are now no advocates – a counterbalance to government and business positions on socio-economic and political change. But we ask ourselves, “How much is TC direction determined by the players other than the players determined by the direction?” It is the issues that must drive our agenda, beyond the issues that each of us has.

The final outcome of all this listing was that we have now identified a number of issues that are a high priority for us where we are certain of the outcome (we think we know what we need to do to accomplish things.) The Board needs to review this list / prioritize it and initiate through volunteers.

We then tried to map out the issues against areas of organizational activities, and what came out of that discussion came clarity that TC is driven by policy and from that other activities emerge. This statement is in sync with the values and perceived value of Telecommunities Canada.

### **Our message at the Alternative Telecommunications Policy Forum**

The ATPF followed our own meeting with a session on the evening of October 19<sup>th</sup> and then all day sessions on October 20 and 22. Board members were active participants. Our representation (Our “position” on Telecommunications policy reform) to the draft Cabinet Directive to the CRTC was highly visible in the ATPF proceedings. That position includes:

- Harmonizing National ICT policy around the question of the uses of ICTs for development, but with ensuring that the telecommunications sector is a means to Canada’s goals for socio-economic development and not an end in itself.
- Saying “Yes” to a new department that merges telecom and broadcasting, but only if that department is focused on understanding and extending the Internet’s impact
- Defending Internet Protocol as a public good
- Socio-economic development policy, not industrial/technological policy
- A bottom-up and community-based approach to a national ICT use strategy with real broadband as a key element
- A digital opportunities strategy to build on the CAP learning related to community-based approaches

### **Critical Findings:**

Overarching Issues/Values:

1. The role of TC is to be at tables and Policy discussions where community based participation is often absent. Therefore policy discussions drive our memberships and partnerships. We will forever be pushing the boundaries and learning’s of our core membership.
2. TC must remain relevant to marginalized communities.
3. We must remain connected to the social policy issues, leveraging the expertise of others.
4. Grounding principals (Focus of our work) is the intersection of Technology and Community Economic and Social Development.

So For TC we have overarching issues re our membership:

- relevance to social issues on the ground
- resources
- partnerships (to accomplish goals)

For TC we have some organizational overarching issues

- resources
- partnerships (to accomplish goals)
- organizational development (clear vision, values, policy positions)
- engagement strategies
- clarity of communication in a manner that is relevant to grass roots.

***It would appear that for TC Policy Issues lead to advocacy which leads to engagement and learning which is supported by clear communications, and is underpinned by our vision and values.***

**Items we need to prioritize and act on immediately:**

Who Should we outreach to - Membership	Our core relationship right now is with CAP sites. We have begun to create a database of contacts through advocacy work. Our ability to reach out to individual organizations is critical to our success. Our ability to show this is critical to our credibility. Doing this is critical to developing our Brand.
Who should we outreach to - Alliances	This will be driven by Policy priorities and funding opportunities. (see next list)
Realizing our potential – we have the power – claiming our accomplishments and being proud of what we have done with little or no resources – communicating success.	With the database we need to develop a communications strategy that shows how active we are.
Bilingualism	The more the better – resource driven.
Web Site	Needs to be more modern and active – but also needs to be tended and we have had a caregiver for the past 10 years!!!
How do we engage with technological (ict) change – How do we identify and react to technological change – eg. Open Networks, Customer Owned Fiber, Open source Understanding Policy and advocating for it in relationship to existing technologies.  The strong reality of making ICT's actually work.	A lot is buried in this one. Some advocacy lends itself to this discussion.  Undercurrent is being a place to share technology knowledge. (Perhaps a partnership with PovNets E-rider list serve)
Policy Framework – broad based – concise points & point to what we believe – common understandings	This will be incorporated in the next session.
Getting beyond Garth Documents – Engagement around documents	Limited by pressure of time, we will be successful based on choosing and engaging on relevant issues.  That means we also have to be present on the Social Policy front and ensure our members know we are.
Values – Statement	Come with each policy.
Cost Benefit of our Actions	Lens to decide priorities.
Institutional changes (Actual and Required) – give openings for involvement especially those where there are integrated ICT Strategies.) (eg. Internet Governance Forum – ICANN)	May become a driver in prioritizing
Building local capacity to integrate stove pipe \$, mentality, partners (to transcend stovepipes)	? Celebrating that capacity? CAP sites leverage over 150million annually
Understanding the questions about change/cuts and partnerships that other organizations are asking	Common Ground leads to Common Allies.

## **Actions According to Policy Areas** (Requires Prioritizing from the Board)

### **Telecom Policy – The Panel Review Report**

- next steps – engagement
- fact sheets
- leverage all the good work done – get it out into communities

Two Audiences – Community People and Other Partners and Government Levels

To build numbers at the grass roots – we need to get the information to a level of the average guy and from there point of view. The easiest group to integrate with is CAP.

### **Open Networks Issues**

- resides in telecom policy in Canada and Internet Governance
- TC has a position paper on this.
- Leverage the good work done – get it out into communities

### **ICANN**

- no policy statement here. Reality of ICANN is hard to follow and heavy laden in external, international politics
- they may have the money.

### **CAP Funding Cuts & Vision for the future.**

- position paper exists
- advocacy underway

### **Open Source as an area of Policy**

#### **Nationalized ICT Strategy (sub set of the TPRP Report)**

- huge ambiguity in the report
- therefore an opportunity
- telecentres must be an integrated part of that strategy.

#### **Computer Literacy – Defining the deepening Divide**

- links to the literacy movement
- Essential Skills ?
- “report card” – this has consistently come out of the CAP movement BTC (Before TC)
- Links to Telecom Policy and the National ICT Strategy
- Supporting CAP Sites with Leads to other funding.

#### **Community Controlled Broadband**

- to some degree a subset of Open Networks (or open networks a subset of ...?)
- underpinned by telecom policy again
- critical to affordability and control

#### **E-Governance**

- emerging trends

#### **WSIS – World Summit on the Information Society – Gurstien is helping it morph**

- everyone shudders
- TC engaged around this.

#### **International – understanding and leveraging the international dimensions - Collaboration**

- TAP
- American Federation of Community Networks
- Telecentres.org
- Need to document them – and brag about them

## **Prioritizing**

– against the following criteria:

- ◆ Grass Roots Impact
- ◆ Resources available
- ◆ Work done.

Once prioritized we need to:

- Leverage work done (and considerable work has been done in each area.
- Develop accessible language review of issue.
- Seek out alliances that can support engagement with our members
- Collate into a POLICY HANDBOOK.
- Develop an engagement strategy.
- Integrate learning and sharing into that engagement.

Can we develop a template for rolling these out based on zero resources?

## **Emerging Opportunities:**

In talking to Brendan a common theme emerged about our work and that is how government interacts with citizens and how they should be doing these types of consultations (it is abhorrent that they are done in a manner that is by industry for industry and citizens are excluded). There are many natural allies based on this, and possible supports from Unions and the like.

He suggested – on the CAP front – that we link with HRDC (Social Development Branch (they get it)) and say your CAPYI program will go – and turn them into advocates, and that we should investigate doing a study through The Literacy Branch with peer learning aspect.

The whole Stories that Travel aspect came up again and the fact that there is preliminary interest from Microsoft. This would be a natural next step for CCEDNet and, if Microsoft was interested, CCEDNet has the capacity to take this further. (that needs an OK before moving forward)

On the ICANN front – there was a guy from Quebec, Luc Faubert, President of ISOC Quebec, at the Alternative Telecommunications Policy Conference who has the same interest as we do and also has had strong indications that ICANN may be open to investing in Canada around community based engagement. He is hosting a meeting on November 23<sup>rd</sup> that Marita will attend to propose a Canadian Council on Internet Governance. We indicated TC interest and participation from the Conference floor.

## **Finally we need to consider the old OLT Office now ALESP:**

- National Programming
- focus is on adult learning and literacy.
- we are not certain how our essential skills programming will look since there are other initiatives that exist already. We do not want to duplicate efforts. In this regard, we spoke about the Essential Skills Initiative (ESI). Peter Frampton promised to send some information (Due Nov 6h)
- projects must be research projects that test a learning hypothesis; the development of learning tools is secondary to the research (i.e. we want to see the results and impact for the learners in increasing their literacy levels, skills levels, confidence levels, etc.)



Appendix One:

**Internal Issues:**

Issue	Importance	Uncertain Outcome	Ranking
Why are they not here?	H	L	
Resources to do what we want to do	H	H	4/3
Alliances – TC understands them – and terminology encompasses all – Scope Evolution – No Longer just free nets	L	L	
Alliances	H	L	
Need clear vision – elevator pitch - consistent	H	?	7
Need a common strategy (how to get there)	H	L	
Capacity to adapt and change (eg. Realizing full potential of CAP) – to apply the tactics to opportunities	L	L	
Identify participation and how we are going to invite participation Membership, partnerships .....Engagement	H	H	1/1
Realizing our potential – we have the power – claiming our accomplishments and being proud of what we have done with little or no resources – communicating success.	H	L	
Brand Recognition	H	?	2
Tee Shirts – metaphor for much more	L	H	
Better Internal Communications – more Darlenes	H	H	0
How much is TC's direction determined by the players, rather than the players determined by the direction – need to go beyond peoples comfort zones – issues drive the agenda	H	H	2/6
Who should be here that is not?	H	L	
How do we attract Atlantic Canada – How do we unblock representation	L	L	
Bilingualism	H	L	
Knowledge of the issues – the learning curve is enormous.	H	H	4/5
Who are the Allies – Sectoral, policy, education	L	H	
Web Site	H	L	
How do we engage with technological (ict) change – How do we identify and react to technological change – eg. Open Networks, Customer Owned Fiber, Open source Understanding Policy and advocating for it in relationship to existing technologies. The strong reality of making ICT's actually work.	H	L	
We are advocates for Civil Society where they are not present – within the ICT environment – where government and business are strong players.	H	?	8
Policy Framework – broad based – concise points & point to what we believe – common understandings	H	L	
Getting beyond Garth Documents – Engagement around documents	H	L	
Values – Statement	H	L	
Cost Benefit of our Actions -	H	L	

## External Issues:

Identifying external trends /forces/ factors driving changes that affect our community

Issue	Importance	Uncertain Outcome	Ranking
The Sky is Falling – scope of change & intersection of the next four. – how much can we handle	H	H	2/5
Internet Governance – changes a foot – Open Networks	H	H	1/3
ICANN – under threat	H	H	
Telecom Policy – move to oligopoly	H	H	0/2
Social Policy – The loss leader	H	L	
Perception that we have bridged the divide – and gone far enough - Deepening Divide - It is about <u>use</u> of technology (the divide) & marginalized communities are using ICT – but if people don't keep up with technology – the lag time for them is even greater.	H	H	0/3
Have and Have not gap – role of ICT – connection to loss leader above.	H	H	
Evolving Technology and the sets of actors = players, constituencies. Eg from Dial up to wireless cloud meshes	H	L	
Institutional changes (Actual and Required) – give openings for involvement especially those where there are integrated ICT Strategies.) (eg. Internet Governance Forum – Digital Strategy in New Zealand)	H	L	
Overcoming Stove Pipes – Horizontal Policy Lens – inclusive of ict	L	H	
Building local capacity to integrate stove pipe \$, mentality, partners (to transcend stovepipes)	H	L	
<b>Cant do economic development without ICT</b>	H	?	3
Scope of our activities & relationships in the context of Canada - we need to know the external players in order to have impact – a list of our constituencies becomes the list of our abilities. (CED – Advocacy – Civil Society – ICT – Social Development – Networks of Networks – Sharing – Flexibility – Activists)  What external climate and players do we want to identify with	H	L	
Why has TC not become the “person” for government to chat with us.	L	L	
<b>Relevance of all this to “Shot Gun Ally”</b>	H	H	1
Leverage towards impact (tools for advocacy)	H	L	
<b>Ideological Change leading to massive funding cuts</b>	H	H	0/2
Understanding the questions about change/cuts and partnerships that other organizations are asking.	H	L	
Diversification – Fragmentation (don't have time to reach out – cant deal with it all therefore harder to find the common issues and challenges)	L	H	
Vacuum is emerging across sectors as government abandons intermediary organizations – government role in structure – CDN vrs USA experience – alternative voices and actions	H	H	

## **ACTIONAREAS BY LEVEL OF POLICY IMPACT**

TC advocates for community-based approaches to the uses of the Internet for development and shares the learning that occurs from community-based action. By being where the grassroots is not, TC must occupy a huge feedback gap between intentions of policy makers and participation and impact at the community level.

### **1. LOCAL**

#### **CAP and Youth Initiatives Training Program Funding Cuts & Vision for the future.**

- A position paper exists and advocacy is underway. Under the issue of “**Computer Literacy – Defining the deepening Divide,**” there are links to the literacy movement. What are the essential skills? Utility of a “report card” – this has consistently come out of the CAP movement BTC (Before TC). There are links to Telecom Policy and the National ICT Strategy. Supports CAP Sites with leads to other funding.

### **2. NATIONAL**

#### **Telecom Policy and the Telecom Policy Review Panel (TPRP) Report.**

- What are the next steps in engagement with this? We need fact sheets. How can we leverage all the good work done and get it out into communities? We have two Audiences for action on telecom policy – Community People and Other Partners and Government Levels. To build numbers at the grass roots – we need to get the information to a level of the average guy and from their point of view. The easiest group to integrate with is CAP.
- **Nationalized ICT Strategy.** The huge ambiguity in the TPRP report over this represents an opportunity. Telecentres must be an integrated part of that strategy.
- **Community Controlled Broadband.** Critical to affordability and community control of local socio-economic development and uses of ICTs
- **Open Networks Issues and Open Source as an area of Policy.** These reside in Internet Governance as well as telecom policy in Canada. TC has a position paper on this. Leverage the good work done – get it out into communities.

### **3. INTERNATIONAL**

#### **International Collaboration**

- What are the next steps in understanding and leveraging the international dimensions? Alliances currently include TAP, American Federation of Community Networks and Telecentres.org. There is a need to document and brag about them).
- **Internet Corporation For Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).** No

policy statement here yet, but have applied to ICANN's At-large Advisory Committee (ALAC) to be registered as At-Large Structure (ALS). Reality of ICANN is hard to follow, and heavy laden in external, international politics. But, in the pending formation of the North American Regional At-large Organization (RALO) there may be funding opportunities for Canadian Internet Governance projects.

- **E-Governance** A need to understand and play to the emerging trends).
- **Post - World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).** TC is engaged around this, but everyone shudders at the complex resources and knowledge required for effective participation. Mike Gurstein is a member of a UN agency helping it morph. Mike and Garth participate in the Internet Governance Caucus, an open "civil society" umbrella for participation in the Internet Governance Forum.

### **IMPORTANT MEANS OF ACHIEVING POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:**

1. We have the power. Realizing our potential, claiming our accomplishments and being proud of what we have done with little or no resources, communicating success. This expresses our values through action.
2. Alliances. Who should we outreach to?
  - Institutional changes (actual and required), give openings for involvement, especially those where there are integrated ICT Strategies. (eg. Internet Governance Forum – ICANN)
  - Understanding the questions about change/cuts and partnerships that other organizations are asking
  - Strategic alliances around issues are more important to achieving TC's results than working to broaden the membership base
3. TC Web Site
4. Getting beyond Garth Documents – Engagement around documents
  - How do we identify, react to, and engage with change in Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), ... with the strong reality of making ICT's actually work. (eg. Open networks, customer owned fiber, Open Source, understanding the policy implications and advocating for them in relationship to existing technologies).
  - Policy Frameworks – broad based – concise points & point to what we believe – common understandings.
5. Membership. Who should we outreach to?
  - Building local capacity to integrate stove pipe \$, mentality, partners (to transcend stovepipes)
6. Bilingualism

<b>ACTIONAREAS BY LEVEL OF POLICY IMPACT</b>  <b>MEANS OF ACHIEVING OUTCOMES</b>	<b>LOCAL: CAP/YOUTH INITIATIVES</b>	<b>NATIONAL: TELECOM POLICY</b>	<b>INTERNATION AL COLLABORATI ON</b>
1. Communicating success / expressing values by action	A “CAP” position paper ( a vision for the future) exists and advocacy is underway. Keep up the pressure.	How can we leverage all the good work done and get it out into communities?	
2. Necessary alliances: - Institutional changes where there are integrated ICT Strategies. - Understanding questions re changes/partnerships that other organizations are asking.	There are links to: - The literacy movement. - The CAP movement BTC (Before TC). - Telecom Policy and the National ICT Strategy.	Two Audiences for action on telecom policy – Community People and Other Partners and Government Levels. Easiest group to integrate with is CAP.	- TAP - American Federation of Community Networks, - Telecentres.org, - ICANN
3. TC Web Site			
4. Engaging around documents: - Getting beyond Garth docs - Engaging change in ICT use - Policy frameworks	- Under the issue of Computer Literacy – Defining the deepening Divide,” what are the essential skills? - Utility of a “report card?”	- Nationalized ICT Strategy. - Community Controlled Broadband. - Open Networks Issues and Open Source. - Internet Governance	E-Governance Post-WSIS
5. Membership: - Building local capacity	- Supports CAP Sites with leads to other funding. - Partners that can transcend stovepipes	To build numbers at the grass roots, we need to get the information to a level of the average guy and from their point of view.	
6. Bilingualism			

**TC Priority Matrix**