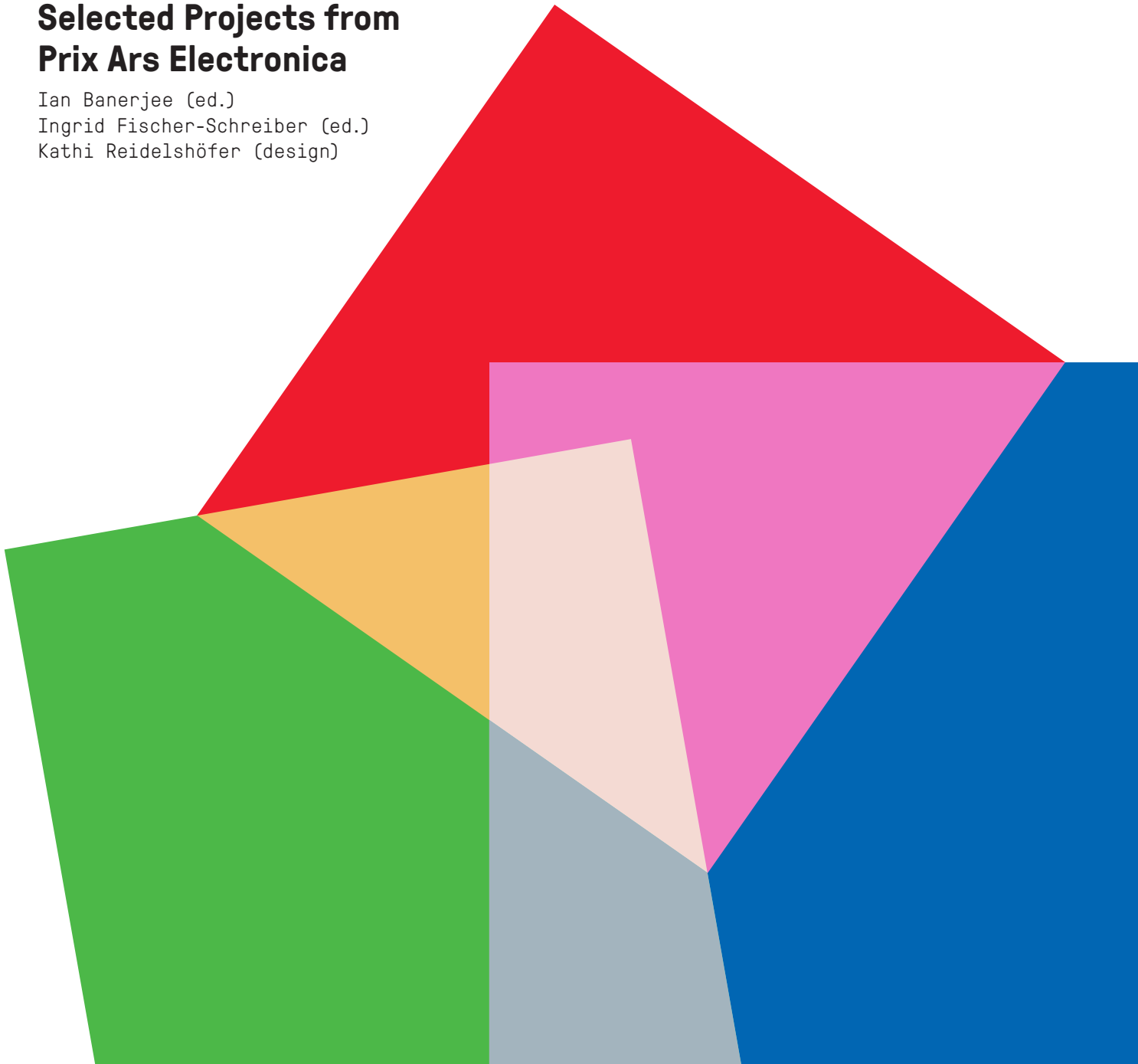# Digital Communities 2004 – 2014

Selected Projects from Prix Ars Electronica

Ian Banerjee (ed.)
Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber (ed.)
Kathi Reidelshöfer (design)

Content

The Story Behind & Acknowledgement

The idea for this publication was born a day after the Prix ARS jury meetings in May 2014 when we were sitting with jury member Washio Kazuhiko on a fine spring evening at Café Palmenhaus in Vienna. We're not sure if it was the intensity of the jury deliberations of the previous days or the serenity of the surrounding imperial urban garden that inspired us, in any case, it was on that evening that we felt a strong obligation to do something with the wealth of knowledge Prix ARS had collected about digital communities in the last years. It didn't take long to make up our minds to edit a book about it – with or without funds. After getting an enthusiastic response from Gerfried Stocker, head of ARS Electronica, we embarked on the project.

Most of all, we would like to thank all the persons who took the time to answer our email questionnaire. This helped us get a picture of currents state of affairs, the challenges and the future plans of some of the communities.

We thank Antoni Abad i Roses, Spanish artist and initiator of canal*ACCESSIBLE and megafone.net; Georgia Popplewell, managing director of Global Voices; Erica Hagen, co-founder of Map Kibera, Juliana Rotich, co-founder and executive director of Ushahidi; Pablo Collada, director of Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente; Sebastian Pichelhofer, chairman of the Apertus Association; Josiah Mugambi, executive director of iHub; Studio Zuloark of El Campo de Cebada; Daniel Hromada, the founder of Kyberia; Eric Pan, founder of Seeed Studio, and the team of Montenoso.

We would like to thank André Lemos for answering our questions, and Joichi Ito and Howard Rheingold for allowing us publish some of their existing materials.

We are very grateful to Kathi Reidelshöfer for offering her expertise in graphic and layout at a time when we had no idea if we were going to receive any funds for the project. Her long experience with Prix Ars Electronica and her knowledge about its database was particularly helpful.

We are thankful for all the informal discussions we had along the way, with friends and strangers.

Ian Banerjee and Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber

The Editors

Ian Banerjee studied architecture in Vienna with focus on urbanism. He has been looking into the challenge of urbanisation since 15 years and since six years he has developed a keen interest in the questions rising around the future of education. Based on over 150 global references collected from 2009 – 2015, he is currently writing a book about the growing inter-linkages between education, new forms of urban learning, civic engagement and strategic urban planning. He calls this newly emerging planning paradigm "Educational Urbanism". He has been jury member of the Prix Ars Electronica category of "Digital Communities" in 2013 and 2014.

Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber is a translator, editor and project manager. Since the 1980s she has been a freelance translator focusing on Chinese philosophy, digital culture, and societal questions. Since the mid 90s, she has been working on projects for Ars Electronica as an editor, project manager and curator. She was involved in the developing of the "Digital Communities" category at Prix Ars Electronica and has been the curator of the category from 2004 to 2014. She is engaged in cultural exchange projects related to China. Co-founder of ChinaCultureDesk. http://yingeli.net

The Designer

Kathi Reidelshöfer studied visual communication in Linz. Since 2006 she is a freelance designer with focus on print media. She is part of the post-punk band Dot Dash and the rockh'roll two-piece Kristy And The Kraks. In 2013 she co-founded the Viennese underground label Totally Wired Records. She lives and works in Vienna. www.katzevogel.at www.totallywiredrecords.com

Digital Communities in Perspective
Selected Projects from Prix Ars Electronica

Ian Banerjee, Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber

Background and Aim

The concept of 'community' has been the subject of a spirited discussion for over a century. The German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (Tönnies 1887) laid the foundations of this discourse when he introduced two conceptual categories of social ties – those in a *Gesellschaft* and those in a *Gemeinschaft*. *Gesellschaft*, translated as 'society', points towards underlying social ties that are impersonal, rationally constructed and whose value structure tend to be heterogeneous. Social cohesion in a *Gesellschaft* is built through negotiated design of its social order. *Gemeinschaft* on the other hand is translated as 'community' – it points towards a social ordering where ties are more personal, communication is more direct and where personal bonds are strong as in a family.

A *digital community* (DC) is new form of community that has not yet been adequately researched – not least because of its nascent state, its elusive complexity and its constantly diversifying manifestations. This publication aims to contribute towards better understanding of this emerging phenomenon by drawing on the large repository of digital communities collected at Prix Ars Electronica. It presents a select number of interesting cases from this database along with a number of current interviews with their protagonists.

The Rise of Digital Communities

By the end of the 1990s the Internet had started to go through significant cultural changes. We witnessed the emergence of projects and practices that started to pick up various issues of contemporary society. Much of it was about creating new kinds of communities, experimenting with social innovations or initiating various types and scales of collective action. These new projects shaped through values of trust and sharing were built on the technological foundations of what is broadly known today as "social software". However, they were innovations that went well beyond mere technological achievements – they showed nothing less than the adoption of new types of *cultural techniques*. Also they entailed significant social and political implications affecting our very understanding of communities, online or offline. They gave rise to the awareness of wholly new issues pertaining to human development, i.e. the right to innovate and share creativity, the awareness about the digital divide across societies, alertness about our freedom(s) in cyberspace, and the future of democracy etc.

By the beginning of the new millennium, social networks and collaborative projects responding to social issues and building common goods already constituted a major part of space in the Internet. *Wikipedia* and *Creative Commons*, to cite two projects that went online in 2001, had profound effect on the way we started to imagine this new social-digital space. These two early projects highlighted two essential elements of socially constituted projects in the Net: on the one hand they showed how *social software* can help to build platforms that enable

collaboration and co-creation involving large number of participants, on the other hand, they showed how *communities of users* could create common goods and social capital through active participation and the sharing of common goals. Today digital communities have become a growing force in the making of cities. Along with "tactical urbanism" and the "smart city" discourse, these new forms of mission-led, real-virtual forms of communities are increasingly becoming constitutive parts of our everyday urban life. (MacFarlane 2014, Townsend 2013).

Digital Communities and Ars Electronica

The DC trend was recognized and reflected in Prix Ars Electronica's category "Net Vision / Net Excellence". It focused on artistic projects – a category for Net-based projects that had been included in Prix Ars Electronica as early as 1995. In 2003, the two Golden Nicas in this category were awarded to two digital community projects: *Habbo Hotel* and *Noderunner*. The jury of 2003 of this category stated:

"*Communities or Social Software were one of the key themes for us this year and the possibility to use the Net to galvanize the engagement of society is seen in both of the Golden Nicas. True social software allows the creators to enter a peer relationship with their contributors so that the boundaries between them fade. This gives communities both vibrancy and longevity; it also allows these communities to have relevance in the physical world.*"

In order to look more closely at the meteoric rise of these virtual-real communities, and also to reflect more intensely on the societal dimensions of digital and networked systems, Ars Electronica decided to expand the ecosystem of Prix Ars Electronica and subsequently created a new category called Digital Communities. Building on two conceptual pillars, community and social software, the scope of this new category was outlined through the following conceptual framework:

"The Digital Communities category focuses on innovation in relation to human coexistence. Its main goals lie, first, in bridging the geographical as well as the gender-based digital divide, second, bridging across cultural conflicts and, third, supporting cultural diversity and freedom of artistic expression. Digital Communities shed light on the political and artistic potential of digital and networked systems. As such, Digital Communities select a broad range of projects, applications, artworks, initiatives and phenomena around which social and artistic innovation is taking place, as it were, in real time.

"Digital communities – regardless if their background is social or artistic – give rise to group action and interaction, engender constructive contexts, build social capital, promote social innovation as well as cultural and environmental sustainability. An essential precondition for this is making the relevant technologies and infrastructure more widely accessible or even developing them in the first place. Also, access to content and information is a core consideration. A crucial aspect that helps digital communities to flourish is making relevant technologies and infrastructures more broadly available and/or developing new technological approaches. Digital communities are committed to facilitate the furthering of social development. A key aspect of this effort, then, is to reconfigure the power relations between citizens and political leaders, the state and administrative bureaus as well as between financial and commercial interests. In order to achieve this, digital communities is en-

gaged in increasing participation, strengthening the role of civil society and establishing a framework through which democracy can flourish. "The Digital Communities Category is open to political, social, cultural and artistic projects, initiatives, groups, and scenes from all over the world that are effectively utilizing digital technology to further society and to promote social responsibility. It is open to the initiators and propagators of these communities as well as the developers of the relevant technologies, and is meant to honor those whose work contributes to the establishment and proliferation of digital communities as well as to those efforts that promote better understanding and research.

"The range of potential applicants to this category is wide: we invite submissions from private initiatives all the way to public institutions, grassroots associations to professional organizations. They might take any number of approaches and focus on all different aspects of community innovation and social software. Particular emphasis is placed on a project's level of community innovation, its sustainability in cultural, economic and environmental terms, and its use of technology in ways that are sensitive and user-friendly. Depending on the particular situation, this might simply be creating a smart linkup to pre-existing tools or optimizing the use of available infrastructure."

This then new category was supported by SAP, UNESCO Digi-Arts, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), and Austrian Broadcasting ORF, Ö1 science program.

About this publication

This publication gives glimpse of the remarkable variety of digital communities proliferating in the world today. To set the stage, we decided to insert two introductory texts and one interview. The first text was written by Howard Rheingold in 2004 on *Collective Action, Digital Communities, and the Net;* the second text on *The Aesthetics of the Internet – Context as a Medium* written by Joichi Ito in 1997 with commentaries in 2015, and finally an interview on *Digital Communities in Brazil* made with André Lemos in 2015. Lemos looks at the interlinkages between digital communities and contemporary urban issues such as the discourse around the "smart city".

We then give a chronological overview of a) the types of projects Prix Ars Electronica was looking for in the respective years, b) the members of the Jury and c) the winner projects. We take a close look at the statements of the Jury published in the catalogues of Prix Ars Electronica and select the most relevant reflections about the status of the category. We also list the criteria the jury identified and which guided them in their decision process. All the texts are selected and compiled from the *CyberArts – Prix Ars Electronica* catalogues of previous years.*

We have carefully chosen a select number of characteristic projects from the 3324 projects submitted to the Prix Ars Electronica between 2004 and 2014. They are indicative of the vast scope and potential of this global trend.

We have dug deeper into some of the cases submitted ("Selected Projects"), by contacting their protagonists once again to find out where they stand today. This allowed us to find out how these communities

* See also the online archive of Prix Ars Electronica: http://archive.aec.at/prix/

have evolved over the years, and allowed us to gain deeper insight into the inner life of digital communities, their self-comprehension, their future challenges and their emerging potentials. To provide our readers with better orientation, we assigned several keywords to each of the project. These keywords reflect the diversity and the complexity of the DC ecosystem. To create a better picture of how the DC category evolved at Prix Ars Electronica, we have included some early texts and some recent commentaries on the category written by people who have been instrumental in shaping it and have been members of the jury. This includes *Howard Rheingold*, the "mentor" of the category – his work on *Virtual Communities* inspired the project right from its inception, *Joichi Ito*, who has been a constant source of inspiration through all these years, and finally we chose *André Lemos*, who had always been a wonderful jury member and advisor over all these years and who opened up the Brazilian landscape of digital communities for us.

Sub-Categories

After analyzing the large number of projects in the Prix Ars repository, we identified the following sub-categories:

· social software
· software-based collaboration
· user-generated content
· social networking systems
· commons & public good
· citizen participation
· activism & advocacy
· civic media
· e-rights
· open data & government
· crowd-sourcing & co-creation
· digital neigborhoods
· mapping

The depiction of these sub-categories visualized in the form of a structured cloud (see p. 15) will help readers to quickly form a picture of the diverse issues and topics digital communities are addressing. As the cloud suggests, it is important to understand that the borders between the categories are truly fluid.

About the Advisory Board

In order to identify the most interesting projects from literally all parts of the world and in order to assure fair assessment of the chosen projects, an international Advisory Board has been established installed for the Digital Communities category. This comprises individuals active in the field as community-builders, researchers and observers from diverse cultural, professional and linguistic backgrounds. These advisors are invited to nominate suitable projects. In order to evaluate the projects in a qualified way, the jury needs to understand the cultural context, the background of the projects and also overcome language barriers. Consequently, the DC team as a whole has developed a somewhat "anthropological attitude" to handling these projects.

MacFarlane, Colin: *Learning the City: Translocal Assemblage and Urban Politics,* Oxford 2014

Tönnies, Ferdinand: *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Abhandlung des Communismus und des Socialismus als empirischer Culturformen,* Berlin, 1887.

Anthony M. Townsend: *Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hackers, and the Quest for a New Utopia,* New York 2013

Collective Action, Digital Communities, and the Net

Howard Rheingold (2004)

The story of digital communities is the story of the Net. I believe that online collective action is only the most recent acceleration of a human activity that has been building up for a long time – the use of language, social contracts, and communication technologies to evolve ever-larger, ever more complex social groups. Humans lived as hunter-gatherers in small, extended family units long before we lived in agricultural settlements. At some point, larger groups figured out how to band together to hunt big game. We don't know exactly how they figured this out, but it's a good guess that some form of communication was involved.

About 10,000 years ago, larger numbers of humans began to settle in river valleys and cultivate crops instead of continuing in perpetual nomadic hunting and gathering. In these settled floodplains, large-scale irrigation projects must have required some kind of social organization. And then the "big man" form of social organization changed in some places into kingdoms, and in a very few places, the first meta-kingdoms – empires – began to construct cities out of mud and stone. The first forms of writing appeared as a means of accounting for the exchange of commodities such as wine, wheat, or sheep – and the taxing of that wealth by the empire. The master practitioners of this new medium of marks on clay or stone were the accountants for the emperors and their priest-administrators. Each time the form of communication media became more powerful, social complexity was amplified and new forms of collective action emerged, from pyramid building to organized warfare. Lewis Mumford called this "the birth of the megamachine" – the alliance of armed authority with religious hierarchies, who organized people as units in social machines.

Alphabetic writing was the tool of the administrators of empires for thousands of years. An elite of priests and civil administrators were taught the secret of encoding and decoding knowledge across time and space. Then the printing press enabled populations of millions to amplify their thinking by becoming literate. Again, new forms of collective action emerged from newly literate populations – Protestant reformations, constitutional revolutions, the scientific method as a means of collective knowledge-creation. Markets are as old as the crossroads, but capitalism is only around five hundred years old, enabled by stock companies to share risk and profit, government-backed currency, shared liability insurance companies, double-entry bookkeeping, printing.

I've digressed into ancient history to show that people have used communication media to evolve complex social forms for quite some time – the digital community is the heir to a long tradition. The telegraph, radio, telephone, television, Internet all enabled new forms of collective action (and of control over collective action). The global Internet brought the advent of many-to-many capability: every desktop or mobile device linked to the network is now a worldwide multimedia printing press, broadcasting station, place of assembly, marketplace.

When we speak of "digital communities" and of collective action online, it helps to understand that the entire technology of computer networks was created by a community, and public goods that enable collective action were the foundations of networked computing as we know it.

The Internet grew to be influential because it was deliberately designed by the people who created and used it to be an innovation commons and laboratory for collaboratively creating better technologies. They knew that some community of user-inventors in the future would know more about networks than the original creators, so the designers of the Internet took care to avoid technical obstacles to future innovation.[1] The creation of the PC and the Net were community enterprises, and the media the original hackers created were meant to support communities of creators.[2] Because of these origins, several of the most essential software programs that still make the Internet possible are not owned exclusively by any commercial enterprise – a hybrid of intellectual property and public good.

The creators of the Unix operating system made their source code publicly available to other programmers, and invited collaboration in creating software that could make Unix more useful, a decision that gave birth to a whole new way of developing software. By distributing the source code, the Unix creators made it possible for other programmers to understand how the software works and to make their own modifications. Ken Thompson started duplicating Unix source code and utilities on magnetic tapes, labeling and documenting them with the words "Love, Ken," and mailing the tapes to friends.[3]

Unix software became the operating system of the Net. In turn, the Internet created a rich environment for Unix programmers to establish one of the earliest global virtual communities. Dennis Ritchie, one of the Unix creators, wrote: "What we wanted to preserve was not just a good environment in which to do programming, but a system around which a fellowship could form. We knew from experience that the essence of communal computing, as supplied by remote-access, time-shared machines, is not just to type programs into a terminal instead of a keypunch, but to encourage close communication."[4]

An almost unbelievably rich ecology of communities has grown up. The media that digital communities use is mutating almost daily: email, listservs, newsgroups, message boards, blogs, instant messaging, chat rooms, wikis. And the subjects of discussion have multiplied as well – there are now over 100,000 Usenet newsgroups; in 2003, nearly a quarter of a billion messages were posted to Usenet alone.[5] Entire academic disciplines of cyberculture studies have emerged. Now, more than ever, we need to take a close look at this immense social experiment, and try to determine who it helps and who it hinders, who is getting rich on it and who is exploited, how our use of online communication is affecting our ways of thinking, our relationships, our communities, our societies.

And now, while we are seeking to understand the impacts of cybersocializing, any means of drawing attention to excellence, best practices, and online communities that leverage collective action and enrich the innovation commons, can only have a salutary effect.

Reprinted with permission.

1   J.H. Saltzer, D.P. Reed, D.D.Clark, "End-To-End Arguments in System Design," ACM TOCS, Vol 2, Number 4, November 1984, pp 277-288.

2   Howard Rheingold, Tools for Thought, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985; Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

3   Nick Moffit's $7 History of Unix, http://crackmonkey.org/unix.html

4   Dennis M. Ritchie, "The Evolution of the Unix Time-Sharing System," AT&T Bell Laboratories TechnicalJournal 63 No. 6 Part 2, October 1984, pp. 1577-93.

5   http://netscan.research.Microsoft.com

Howard Rheingold is a critic, writer, and teacher; his specialties are on the cultural, social and political implications of modern communication media. He invented the term "virtual communities". He was advisor, mentor and Jury member for the Digital Communities category of Prix Ars Electronica in 2004.

The Aesthetics of the Internet – Context as a Medium* / 1997

Joichi Ito

The Internet connects computers, people, sensors, vehicles, telephones, and just about anything together in a global network which is fast and cheap. This interconnectedness is the context. Context represents the way and the timing in which nodes are connected together. If content were the noun part of information, then context would be the verb part.

I first heard about this noun/verb way of describing the Internet from John Perry Barlow. I think this paragraph is mostly still true.

New forms of media and communications tend to mimic its predecessors. Carl Malamud gives the example of early television where television shows often consisted of a radio announcer and a microphone on the screen. The Internet often has been called a method of online publishing or online broadcasting. Magazine publishers tell me that Internet advertising on a computer screen doesn't compare to an excellent full page ad in a magazine. Television producers often compare gritty Internet video to the power of a excellent television commercial. The Internet as a medium is not suited for the delivery of high volumes of the same information to many people. Currently,* the Internet connects everyone together at rather low bandwidth at low cost. The Internet delivers context, and it is of this that we should be building the future the Internet.

So this clearly isn't true anymore. We have very high bandwidth although obviously it could be higher. The Net Neutrality debate still tells us that it isn't unlimited and that there are probably different architectures if just bandwidth without context was all we cared about. I still think the notion of "Context is King" is valid.
The other thing that's happened recently in Bitcoin. As we talk about Digital Currencies, I think we're basing a lot of our vision on the traditional forms of money even using words like "mining" and "coin" when obviously it's a completely different thing. I'm excited to imagine what happens to trust and notions of "value" exchange when we strip ourselves of these old constructs like we have with "online magazines" or "online newspapers" which were PDF files of the paper newspapers.

Much of the information in today's world and on the Internet expires very quickly. Fifteen minute old stock quotes become free, instant stock quotes costing money. Yesterday's newspapers are free on the Internet, but today's (or tomorrow's) can cost you money. It is a relationship with the newspaper and its reporters that is more important than the database of old articles. Your Netscape browser will expire in weeks. Stealing an old Netscape diskette at a computer shop makes very little sense. Rather than downloading lots of software, on the Internet people remember where to find what they need, or better yet, who to ask or where to search. It is information about information about information... Just as our monetary system has become very abstract, our currencies represent something that really has no physical reality, most information on the Internet is about context, rather than content. Instead of the hard data of yesteryear that could be bound in a book, stacked in a warehouse and distributed by trucks, the information on the Internet is about being connected LIVE and about being in the right place at the right time.

I think this is still mostly true. Much more of the Internet has become "live". Interesting to think about Periscope being more "live" than Twitter which was already pretty "live".
Also, information about information is a key point when thinking about identity, indentifiers and metadata and how the discussion about personal data privacy and data science has become a huge business.

Communities on the Net consist of a group of people connected to each other in the form of discussions, games, or some other form of two-way connectedness. People invest time and energy into these communities and these communities evolve into a complex aggregate of relationships between people mediated by a technology and a context. It becomes a kind of place. These communities are influenced by the underlying technology, but grow far beyond the technology itself. The technology is a kind of genetic basis on which a new organism can grow, receiving input from its environment through its participants.

I think a great example is how The World of Warcraft is a descendent of the original Multi User Dungeons and continues to evolve and grow.

Artwork, writing and other forms of content which are often nearly static in the slow moving physical world can also become living things in the fluid, high-speed context of the Internet. An interesting idea or design can quickly become a popular item to be sampled, edited and redistributed. The artist can view their work, or their child, quickly develop in something quite different from what it was originally intended to be. The original artist is the parent, but unlike a child raised in complete isolation, work on the Internet is educated and formed, for better or for worse, into a product of its environment and society. Putting work on the Internet is more like giving birth than creating a static object.

I think this notion of "living works" is one of the key reasons that copyright in the traditional form break the new creativity we are trying to unlock on the Internet. I think that we have yet to see this fully develop, but projects like Scratch and others that encourage you to build on the world of others are becoming more and more main-stream.

Communities, multi-user games systems, markets, search engines and router configurations are all context oriented. The aesthetic of context is the design of such context-oriented systems which are outstanding in their nature. A good context-oriented system causes the network of living connections to converge, interact and grow. It adds value to the network and attracts users and connections.

I think Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and the other social media and game sites have figured this out. It is interesting how closed many of the successful ones are – that wasn't something I originally envisioned, although game worlds were pretty closed.

The Internet is a self-organizing adaptive system. As John Casti from the Santa Fe Institute pointed out in his talk at the Ars Electronica Memesis symposium last year, one can understand completely the process in which a complex adaptive system works, but it is impossible to predict what it does. The Internet self-organizes itself in the very interesting area between total chaos and order. Eric Hughes has called it a working anarchy. When order is forced onto the Internet such as rigid protocols or singular ubiquitous operating systems, that layer becomes very brittle and as one learns in catastrophe theory, a shock to the system can cause a huge amount of damage. One virus or bug in the system could take the whole system down. The more inefficient and diverse nature of the current memetic/software pool allows the risk to be distributed. Many small earthquakes can help prevent a catastrophic earthquake. It is the inefficiency and the small errors that can help the Internet adapt and grow without imploding or exploding.

Where did Eric Hughes go anyway? (Breaking the first rule if Bitcoin club – I wonder if Eric is Satoshi...)
I think that the development of Bitcoin and its distributed architecture are a modern response to this question.

Ordered efficient systems are also very susceptible to fluctuation amplification. With feedback going in the wrong direction, small fluctuations in economy, politics, traffic or opinion can be amplified by the super-efficient network and explode or crash. Nature uses feedback systems that dampen such fluctuations in an elegant way to contain the energy and balance the systems. This non-linear balance is becoming exceedingly more important than to make the system faster or more efficient. This balance can also be explained as the aesthetic of the context.
Nearly complete chaos can also be found on the Internet in the sheer number of disorganized pieces of content and people. Total chaos can also be made much more useful by adding just enough context to help group the content and people into useful communities and networks.

And the big question about Digital Currencies and Bitcoin is whether they will help dampen fluctuations or just make it worse. Just removing friction isn't the answer. We need to create smart, closed feedback systems, not dumb open ones.

Therefore, I would conclude that both complete order and complete chaos offer very little information, value or energy. Systems that help order chaos or disorder order are useful. In addition, the way in which these systems cause this non-chaos/non-ordered system to manifest should retain or create as much energy as possible while keeping a feedback system that prevents it from amplifying into destruction or dampening into nothing. This requires a group of rules or memes that attracts energy in the form of people, content, traffic, money, etc. and organizes this content in a way that grows and adds value. It is almost a kind of memetic engineering.

The memetic engineer/Internet artist is interested in coming up with an idea, software protocol or image that grows and evolves on the Internet. It is more about creating life than about creating a non-living piece of art. The memetic engineer seeks to have the particular meme copied and replicated where traditional artists are protective of their work. It is the use, familiarity and reproduction that makes a meme powerful and proves its aesthetic quality. The Internet artist and the meme both work in the medium of context rather than content.

Page, S. E.: *Diversity and Complexity,* Princeton University Press

* Joichi Ito: The Aesthetics of the Internet – Context as a Medium, in: Hannes Leopoldseder, Christine Schoepf (eds.): Cyberarts – International Compendium Prix Ars Electronica 1997, pp 16 - 21.

https://readfold.com/read/Joi/aesthetics-of-the-internet-context-as-a-medium-v2f-PD3xWkDx

Joichi "Joi" Ito has been recognized for his work as an activist, entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and advocate of emergent democracy, privacy, and Internet freedom. As director of the MIT Media Lab, he is currently exploring how radical new approaches to science and technology can transform society in substantial and positive ways.He was member of the jury of the "World Wide Web" category of Prix Ars Electronica (1995, 1996), the ".net" category (1997–2000), the net vision / net excellence category (2002) and the "Digital Communities" category (2004, 2005) and frequent speaker at the Ars Electronica Festival symposium.

Digital Communities in Brazil
André Lemos

You have been member of the Jury (2007) and a long-term advisor to the Digital Communities Category and have nominated a lot of Brazilian projects. What are the most striking characteristics of Brazilian digital communities?

André Lemos: Brazil has been an intensive Internet user, despite the social, economic, and infrastructural problems. The country has used social networks to improve community power and to boost their culture in many ways. Some of the most interesting efforts in this area lies on digital inclusion initiatives, decentralized popular cultures, creative appropriation of electronic devices (workshops, hack labs, recycling), development of open source software community, and political action, such as the recent creation of a "hacklab" in the Federal Chamber of Deputies. Brazil has an advanced Internet constitution (called "Marco Civil") that was produced by social collective work through digital platform headed by Justice Minister. The constitution creates a legal environment for the development and expansion of digital communities initiatives that can empower Brazilian citizens. But the country has to deal with structural problems such as low-bandwidth and a lack of universal access to the Internet. The potential is still very large. Moreover, I believe that a stronger actions led by public authorities to encourage software literacy could help a consistent growth of digital communities activities.

What has been to most important change in the nature of these Digital Communities over the years?

André Lemos: I think that digital mobility was a decisive factor. New forms of actions and new projects have been rising. The growth of mobile devices and ubiquitous networks led to a change in the nature of the electronic community. To have access to information and fellows all the time and everywhere significantly changed the forms of organization, gaining agility, becoming more fluid, malleable, and therefore stronger. The recent experience of using these devices in mobilizations such as the Arab Spring, the public manifestation in July 2014 in Brazil and the revolt of umbrellas in Hong Kong attest this change. It seems to me that the forms of visualization and data mining projects also contributed to important forms for social visibility of relevant political issues and community reinforcement.

What can be the role of "Digital Communities" in the era of the smart city?

André Lemos: The smart cities are a mix of urban planning, Internet of things and big data, filled with utopias and myths of classical technological transparency. The technological utopia in urban space has a long history, from the industrial revolution, through the digital cities to current smart cities. We need to politicize and discuss what we meant when we talk about "smart" cities (and citizens) and de-emphasize the ready solutions coming from large global players. Many projects are underway in America, Asia, and Europa. It seems interesting to digital communities area to thing about the new role of objects. They begin to play as sociability producers because of their new info-communicational capabilities (Internet of Things and Internet of Everything). We have to recognize (more than before) that objects create new forms of agency, lose their objectivity and mediate the relations in a disruptive way. Privacy, safety, and issues in commerce, advertising, education, and interpersonal relationships emerge when these devices automatically take decisions and communicate these decisions to other objects and humans. Therefore, digital communities have to be viewed today as an ensemble that puts humans and objects in close relationship. Digital communities issues are not a human problem. We must place objects to this equation to understand digital culture as a social hybridization with non-human. Objects (devices, software) are not instruments or tools. They are social agents.

André Lemos is Professor at the Faculty of Communication, Federal University of Bahia (UFBA).

open

social change

open standards

privacy

freedom of expression

e-rights

digital freedom

collective self-organization

social networking systems

social innovation

local knowledge

open source urbanism

digital neigborhoods

peer-support

community action

privacy

grievances

user generated content

distributed intelligence

civic hacking

activism & advocacy

digital inclusion

commons & public good

bridge building

civic media

civic action

digital infrastructure

citizen journalism

mapping

access

community mapping

collective intelligence

"smart citizen"

resilience

citizen participation

software-based collaboration

social software

empowerment

accountability

sharing

e-democracy

crowd-sourcing & co-creation

open data & government

crowd-funding

transparency

empowerment

2004

Care about Each Other— A Web of Relationships

Jury
Andreas Hirsch
Joichi Ito
Shanthi Kalathil
Jane Metcalfe
Dorothy Okello
Howard Rheingold
Oliviero Toscani

Categories for the call
social software
eGovernment / eDemocracy / eGovernance
emergent democracy
collective weblogs / social networking systems
filtering and reputation systems
social self-support groups
learning and knowledge communities
computer aided collaborative processes
gaming communities
digital neighbourhoods / community networks
freeNet initiatives / wireless LAN projects
digital cities / city development projects
citizen participation / citizen councils
telecenters

First Reflections
around the new Prix Ars Electronica Category
Digital Communities

2014 / 2013 / 2012 / 2011 / 2010 / 2009 / 2008 / 2007 / 2006 / 2005 / **2004**

Why DC?

The goal in 2004, first year of DC, was to represent the breadth and depth of today's online communities … the most significant tool for community development was believed to be the evolution of the Wiki phenomenon.

Not for the first time in its history the Internet seems to be undergoing a major change [...] Signs of change are visible and discussed everywhere, ranging from Weblogmania to WikiWebphoria [...] What gives these observations significance beyond the craze of the day is the fact that most of the emerging phenomena in the field we are looking at are related in one way or another to aspects of society – they are about forming communities or taking collective action.

What is a Digital Community?

Most of all, Digital Communities are simply the latest example of the human capacity to invent new technologies of cooperation, and our continuing enthusiasm for new forms of social Relationship.

Digital Communities are about emergent collective action, citizen empowerment, social as well as economic entrepreneurship, the ingenuity of the users of technology and their power to actively shape their media, the future evolution of new tools and social forms, the improvement of culture and alleviation of suffering, the humanization of technology, openness and inclusiveness, and the sheer fun of making things together. Digital Communities can save lives, bridge differences and the Digital Divide, multiply knowledge, enable markets, revitalize democracy and provoke civic engagement – but only if people seize the power that technology provides and wield it thoughtfully.

Although sociologists Barry Wellman and Keith Hampton provide a more formal definition of "community" as "networks of interpersonal ties that provide sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging and social identity," we further define "community" for the purpose of this competition as "a web of relationships, sustained over time, among people who care about each other," and we define "digital community" as "a web of relationships that is enabled, enhanced, or extended by digital tools.

Building community in cyberspace is not possible through the use of digital technology and social software alone – social skills, human relationships, and sustained discourse is required.

Reflections of the Jury

…in 2004 the question of freedom and "digital commons" was in full swing…

An essential element of communities is the forming and defending of a "commons", a common ground of shared goods that all members of a community contribute to and can make use of. The Internet itself – if we look at its core values and basic protocols – was essentially intended to be this kind of "commons", and it can still be seen as such today, although not without limitations, as we have meanwhile recognized. Among the elements of human development at stake today is the existence of the "digital commons" that is threatened by changes in the protocols and the openness of the Internet itself, by legal regulations notably in the area of patent and copyright laws. This situation touches on the freedom to be creative and to share creativity and the freedom to invent, as Howard Rheingold points out:
"The freedom to invent and to use media to organize collective action is at stake. Whether we retain these freedoms is uncertain." *

…issue of democratic procedures and collective decision making as addressed by Jury member Joichi Ito

"Traditional forms of representative democracy are barely able to manage the scale, complexity and speed of the issues in the world today. Representatives of sovereign nations negotiating with each other in the global dialog are very limited in their ability to solve global issues. The monolithic media and its increasingly simplistic representation of the world cannot provide the competition of ideas necessary to reach consensus." **

Criteria

We held in mind a variety of criteria when evaluating entrants. Did the digital community provide or make possible public goods, technical and social innovations, civic value, humanitarian benefit, economic opportunity, grassroots power, enabling technology, bridges across digital divides?

* Howard Rheingold, *The Battle over Control of Code is a Battle over Freedom,* 2003, p. 42, in *Ars Electronica 2003 – Code, The Language of Our Times.*
** Joichi Ito, *Emergent Democracy,* March 2003, p. 15

Golden Nicas

The World Starts with Me
http://www.theworldstarts.org

Wikipedia
http://wikipedia.org

Awards of Distinction

dol2day – democracy online today
http://www.dol2day.de

Krebs-Kompass
http://www.krebs-kompass.de
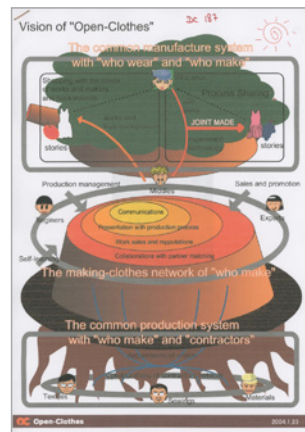
**Open-Clothes – 6 billions ways of
producing fashion for 6 billion people**
http://www.open-clothes.com/

smart X tension
http://www.mulonga.net

Honorary Mentions
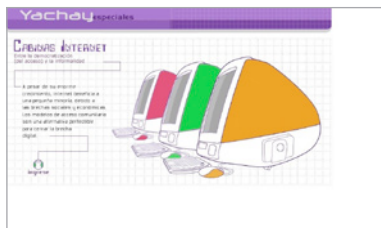
Cabinas Públicas de Internet / Peru
http://cabinas.rcp.net.pe

Children With Diabetes
http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/

Daily Prophet
http://www.dprophet.com

DakNet: Store and Forward
http://www.firstmilesolutions.com

Del.icio.us
http://del.icio.us/

DjurslandS.net
http://www.djurslands.net

iCan
http://www.bbc.co.uk/ican

Kuro5hin
http://www.kuro5hin.org/
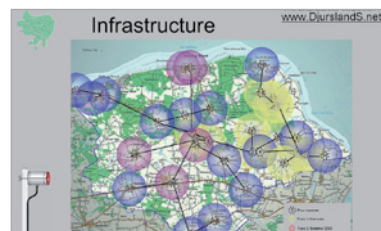
Kythera-Family.net
http://www.kythera-family.net

Nabanna
http://ictpr.nic.in/baduria/welcome.html

NYCwireless
http://nycwireless.net
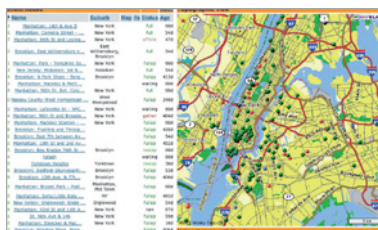
**Télécentre Communautaire Polyva-
lent de Tombouctou**
http://projettcp@voidumonde.com

The Lomographic Society International
http://www.lomography.com

Wikitravel
http://www.wikitravel.org
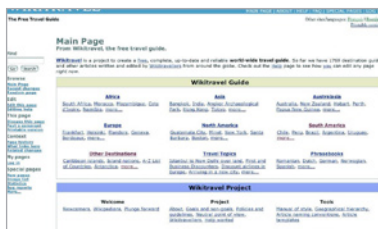
2005

A Voice to Everyone on Earth

Jury
Danah Boyd
Anita Gurumurthy
Andreas Hirsch
Hong Feng
Joichi Ito
Jane Metcalfe

Categories for the call
social software
emergent democracy
collective weblogs / social networking systems
filtering and reputation systems
social self-support groups
learning and knowledge communities
computer aided collaborative processes
gaming communities
digital neighbourhoods / community networks
freeNet initiatives / wireless LAN projects
digital cities / city development projects
citizen participation / citizen councils
telecenters
eGovernment / eDemocracy / eGovernance

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

"What has most advanced the cause of digital communities in the past year?", the jury responded with a wide range of developments and challenges: blogging rose to the top of the list, followed closely by rapidly increasing access to the Internet, and the expanding opportunities for translation.

The Internet, technology & Democracy

The Internet is the cornerstone of democracy and open society in the 21st century, and the digital communities, with their bottom-up process of innovation, deliberation and sharing will be the developers and users of this new open network. The Internet is the essential tool in the goal of providing a voice to everyone on earth.

The basic nature of an open society and democracy are built into the basic nature of the Internet. The idea of rough consensus and running code translates into the good civic principles of inclusion and bottom-up consensus.

Although some of these innovators were funded by governments and companies, these innovators were not researchers in the major incumbent monopolies such as the telephone companies and proprietary software companies, where such innovation was traditionally expected to happen...

The idea is that anyone should be allowed to innovate without permission, and if that person or group of people can show that the system – the "code" – works and they can gain a rough consensus from the community, that protocol or idea becomes widely adopted. This ability for anyone to innovate without permission, without a license and without a significant capital investment is what makes the Internet a bottom-up communication network, built by the people for the people.

Criteria

Since this is a nascent category within the Prix Ars Electronica, the jury has, for two years in a row, debated what should be the relative weighting of digital divide projects versus the software tools that enable the growth and development of digital communities versus e-democracy and activism sites, and what we came to refer to simply as "vibrant communities", which includes blogs.

Opennness + Free Software

...But what everyone on the jury understood to be the most significant principle for the future growth of digital communities was openness, and as a subset of that, free software. Thus, there are many projects represented among our honorees because of their commitment to openness.

Social or political objective

Incontrast to last year's overview of digital communities, this year's jury took a slightly different tack. We felt that honoring a site simply because it was "vibrant" was not enough. There had to be an overriding social or political objective; or it had to represent a technological leap forward for digital communities; or it had to represent a model for the future development of digital communities.

The Internet is the essential tool in the goal of providing a voice to everyone on earth.

Golden Nica

Akshaya
http://www.akshaya.net

Awards of Distinction

Free Software Foundation
http://www.fsf.org, http://www.gnu.org

NewGlobalVision
http://www.ngvision.org

New Global Vision / Telestreet
http://www.telestreet.it

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

23

Honorary Mentions

Catalytic Communities
http://www.comcat.org

E-Democracy.Org
http://www.e-democracy.org

Huaral
http://www.huaral.org

Kubatana.net
http://www.kubatana.net

MicroRevolt
http://www.microRevolt.org

The Borneo Project
http://www.borneoproject.org
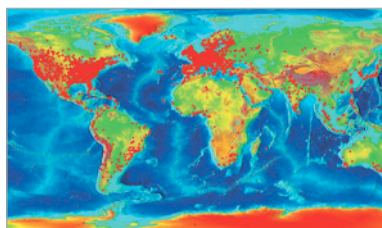
The CouchSurfing Project
http://www.couchsurfing.com

The South-East Asian Earthquake and Tsunami Blog
http://tsunamihelp.blogspot.com

TXTmob
http://www.txtmob.com

UpMyStreet
http://www.upmystreet.com

Wikimedia Commons
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
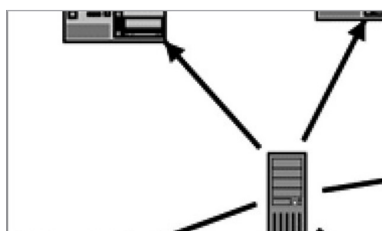
Special Mention: BitTorrent
http://bittorrent.com/introduction.html

2006

Putting the Tools into the Hands of the People

Jury
Steven Clift
Andreas Hirsch
Peter Kuthan
Lara Srivastava

Categories for the call
social software
web 2.0 applications
social networking systems / friends networks / social self-support groups
collaborative net.art-projects
software based collaboration / learning / creation and knowledge networks
mobile media / media sharing / ubiquitous computing
innovative solutions targeting environmental issues
user generated content & metadata
digital storytelling
gaming communities
digital neighborhoods / digital cities
citizen involvement / citizen journalism
e-right / eDemocracy / eGovernance

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

Whether on the streets of Barcelona, in the most remote villages of rural Brazil or in consumerist Europe, it is the courage to create an environment of openess and active citizen participation by putting ICT tools into the hands of the everyday people, that really makes the difference.

The award winners of 2006 in the category "digital communities", together with those receiving an honorary mention, have made that difference under often difficult and sometimes even hopeless conditions.

These examples should serve as an inspiration and encouragement for others around the world to firmly seize the relevant tools at their disposal, and make their own mark in our global information society.

Knowledge & Space

Knowledge and space have a complex and intimate relationship, a relationship that has also been in line with computing and digital media throughout their history. Only recently have relatively easy forms of relationship between knowledge and space (i.e. comfortable ways of mapping content and geography) been made broadly available. These offer amazing new forms of contextualization, that gain more and more importance as knowledge-based societies develop.

Openness: For Hardwares and Infrastructures

The openess of code is a prerequisite for the sustainable success of such collaboration, while this applies to "code" in the factual sense of lines of programming or "code" in the more metaphoric sense of rules and structures....Notably the notion of "openness" also applies to hardware and infrastructures, thus making the creation of common public goods complete. Such processes can and will nurture the building of social capital through sharing and reappropriation. They go hand in hand with efforts at capacity building, particularly with respect to overcoming all sorts of digital divide and exclusion, be it on gender, ethnic or other grounds.

The story of "open source" and "economies of sharing" follows the very early history of the internet. But it is only in recent years that this culture of sharing and collaboration has seen the return of the "digital commons", which had come under threat from restrictive legislation battles for corporate market dominance. It is only through participation and capacity building, through architectures and attitudes of inclusion that the form of social capital relevant here is nourished.

Criteria

The notion of "digital communities", and the award that bears the name, was born out of the perception of a shift in the history of the internet towards recapturing its social functions, as well as a desire to recognize outstanding efforts to help bridge the digital divide on a global basis. In this process, which is one of ambiguity and instability (not unlike world politics), a constant re-definition of the category seems to be a prerequisite of its relevance.

This year, we looked for projects that demonstrate the ability to combine several crucial aspects of what constitutes in our perspective a "digital community". We looked for originality and innovation, both in terms of new emerging tools or smart (re)combinations of existing ones as well as in terms of social innovation. The ownership of the project, its organisational structure and the values adhered to (or created) should be based in the community itself and not be an object of easy corporate buyout. Sustainability is a third key factor, i.e. the ability to carry on beyond one season or time period of funding.

We tried to identify projects that enable the sharing of knowledge and the collective creation of common public goods and projects that would help mobilize people and create a culture of participation. This includes the ability of projects to promote societal change and to serve as "best practice" examples for others, accompanied by an "open source" character of projects, which makes them realistically replicable.

The promise of technology would
be nothing in the broader context
of human development if not for
the appropriation of the tools by
the users themselves.

Golden Nica

Awards of Distinction

canal*ACCESSIBLE
http://www.zexe.net/barcelona
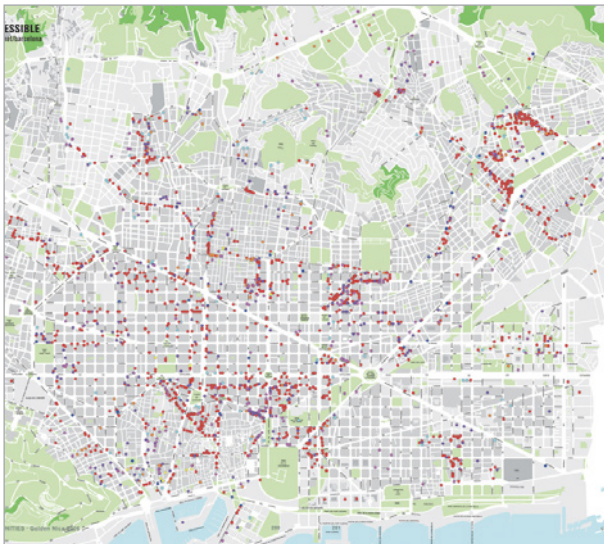
Codecheck
http://www.codecheck.ch
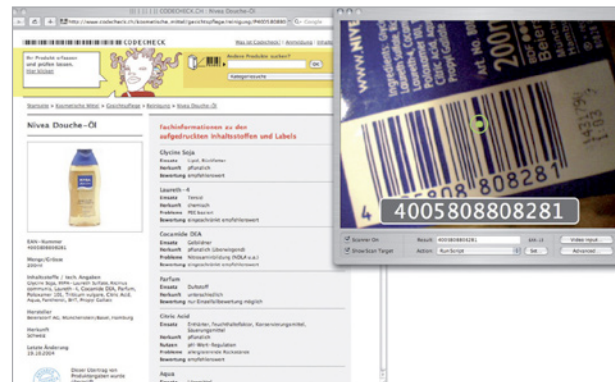
Proyecto Cyberela – Radio Telecentros
http://www.cemina.org.br

2004 / 2005 / **2006** / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 /2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

Honorary Mentions
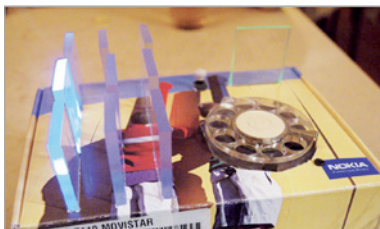
Arduino
http://www.arduino.cc
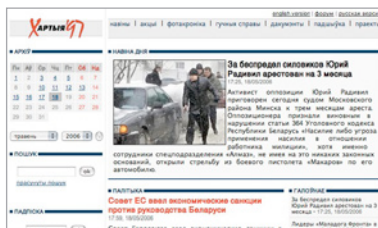
Charter97.org – News from Belarus
http://www.charter97.org

CodeTree
http://www.codetree.org

MetaReciclagem
http://metareciclagem.org
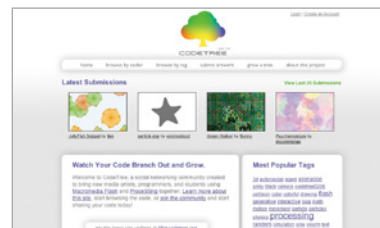
Mountain Forum
http://www.mtnforum.org

Northfield.org
http://northfield.org

Pambazuka News
http://www.pambazuka.org

Semapedia
http://www.semapedia.org

stencilboard
http://www.stencilboard.at

The Freecycle Network
http://www.freecycle.org

The Organic City
http://www.theorganiccity.com

UgaBYTES Initiative
http://www.ugabytes.org

2007

Communities in Transformation

Jury
Andreas Hirsch
André Lemos
Gunalan Nadarajan
Kathy Rae-Huffman
Steve Rogers

Categories for the call
social software
web 2.0 applications
social networking systems / friends networks / social self-support groups
collaborative artistic projects
software based collaboration
learning and knowledge networks
mobile media / media sharing
user generated content / metadata
gaming communities
digital storytelling
digital neighborhoods / digital cities
citizen involvement initiatives / citizen journalism
e-right / eDemocracy / eGovernance

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

Language
There were several themes that came to the fore and that both united and occasionally divided our panel. The first theme we saw coming through strongly this year was that of language. English is becoming the language of the net, and, although this can be seen as uniting, in some ways it is divisive, causing a digital divide not between those who do or do not have access to the net but between those who can or cannot understand it.

Transience
Transience and transience of community was the theme that probably caused the most heated discussion within our deliberations. We have noted a growth in a number of works that challenge the very concept of what community means, works that exist purely due to coincidence of location or time and ones that disappear as quickly as they arise.

Open standards and licensing models
Open standards and licensing models such as Creative Commons have continued to gain ground and are clearly at the center of many of the works.

Common good & shared source code
This goes along with the expansion of the number of communities that are looking to contribute to the common good. Projects often based on shared source code are continuing to grow and spread debate through the communities on the net and are slowly turning the idea of digital commons into reality.

Combination of digital networks with real-life
The combination of digital networks with real-life events formed another kernel that we debated. We were concerned that the works we were looking at were not just records of these events or repositories for the information created in such an event when the thrust of the work was elsewhere. We were concerned that the events should either have been the result of an already successful community in digital space, or that they should have been used as a way of giving impetus to a digital work that had then gone on to develop further.

Criteria

Vibrancy and Vitality
For a community to be successful it must achieve both scale and engagement. Scale of course often means different things for different projects. In the same way as a village can be seen to have a vibrant community with relatively few people compared to the community in a city, so it is in the digital world. Scale is about the number of people engaged as compared with the potential and aim.
Looking at vibrancy, we were looking to see that this was truly a living work for the people involved. With this in mind we often looked at how a community governed itself and at how it elicited contribution. We were more inclined to favor projects that clearly enabled the contributors to give direction to the work as a whole than those that were guided by a central core.

Originality
In a field that is becoming ever larger and in a world where there are very many commercial digital networks and communities, we were looking for those that were truly original. We were looking for those that existed due to the passion and energy of their contributors rather than those with a clear commercial potential.

Network specific
Our third basic criteria was that the work had to make clear and valuable use of the net. Many valuable communities exist, but could do so with or without access to the digital world. These use the net as a convenient and simple communication tool rather than as the key enabler at the heart of the community.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / **2007** / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

Combination of digital networks with real-life events

Golden Nica

Overmundo
http://www.overmundo.com.br

Awards of Distinction

Electronic Frontier Foundation
http://www.eff.org
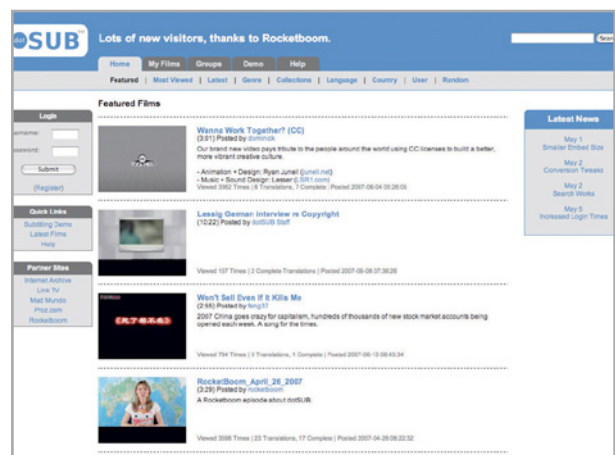
dotSUB
http://www.dotsub.com

Honorary Mentions

AHA: Activism – Hacking – Artivism
http://www.ecn.org/aha

cafebabel.com
http://www.cafebabel.com

dropping knowledge
http://www.droppingknowledge.org

Gothamberg
http://transition.turbulence.org/Works/
gothamberg/index.php
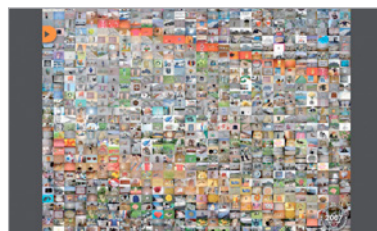
Herinnerdingen – Things to remember
http://www.herinnerdingen.nl

mySociety
http://www.mysociety.org/

OScar – reinvent mobility
http://www.theoscarproject.org

Radia Network
http://radia.fm

Rassismus streichen
http://www.rassismusstreichen.at
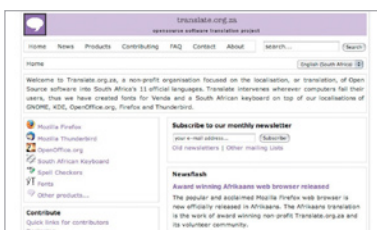
Translate.org.za
http://translate.org.za

Wiener Tafel
http://www.wienertafel.at

Women on Web
http://www.womenonweb.org

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / **2007** / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

2008

Social Art

Jury
Silvana Lemos de Almeida
Isaac Mao
Danny O'Brien
Gunther Reisinger
Saskia Sassen

Categories for the call
social software
web 2.0 applications
social networking systems / friends networks / socially oriented self-support groups
artistic collaborative projects, net art projects
software based collaboration / learning environments / creative and knowledge networks
mobile media / media sharing / ubiquitous computing
innovative solutions for environmental problems
user generated content & metadata
digital storytelling
digital cities / digital neighbourhoods
citizen participation / citizen journalism
eRights / eDemocracy / eGovernance

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

Social Art
Digital communities can be seen as an everchanging, always incomplete, social art. There's no final piece, no single author for such collectively created works. We can only glimpse – and judge – a blurred snapshot of what is intended and what is achieved.

Building Bridges
Connections between communities was a common theme this year, appearing as a feature of many of the nominations and all three of our prize-winners.

Digital communities make better analog communities.
Digital Communities have never simply been a matter of marshaling data, kneading and redistribution like so many communal loaves of bread. Successful digital communities can also help change the physical communities they are embedded within, improve the real lives of its users, or help to reduce the damage caused by wider social struggles. By using the tools forged with technology and milled by communal use, communities can bring their digital creativity back into their real lives. They can generate new social identities. A well-built digital community can dramatically improve the trust and sense of belonging between those community members, and its connection to the rest of the world. Digital communities make better analog communities.

Criteria

The participants in the communities we present here have harnessed the power of internet and other ICT tools to empower themselves, to gather, share and create new works, and to increase the value of information they provide to each other and to the public.

Excellence in Implementation
Above and beyond all of these considerations, were the terms on which we judged the Golden Nica and our two Distinctions. There we all agreed that only one criteria, one category of art, applied: excellence in implementation, as witnessed through the extent of their effect on the communities' members and their potential to change and challenge the rest of us: we, the outsiders that surround, cushion and hopefully nurture every successful community, digital or not.

Social Capital
Connections between communities was a common theme this year, appearing as a feature of many of the nominations and all three of our prize-winners.
In three Honorary Mentions, the superlative development of what *Bowling Alone* author Robert Putnam calls "bridging social capital" dominated our judgement.

"Pass, Communicate and Share"
is the motto of *1KG More.*
It could be the motto of the
Internet, it could be the motto
of all community.

Golden Nica

1KG More
http://www.1KG.org

Awards of Distinction

Global Voices
http://www.globalvoicesonline.org

PatientsLikeMe
http://www.patientslikeme.com

Honorary Mentions

Drupal
https://drupal.org

FFFFOUND!
http://ffffound.com
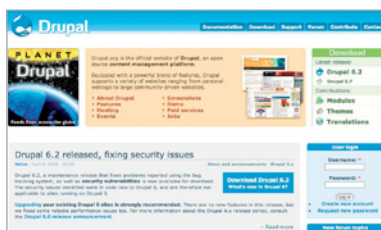
Groklaw
http://www.groklaw.net
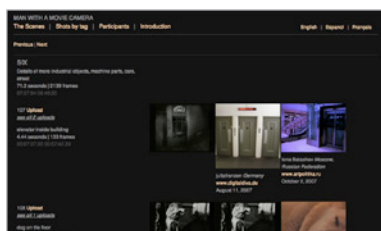
Man With a Movie Camera: The Global Remake
http://dziga.perrybard.net

Nico Nico Douga
http://www.nicovideo.jp

OpenStreetMap
https://www.openstreetmap.org

Readme.cc
http://www.readme.cc

Scratch Online Community
http://scratch.mit.edu

steve: The Museum Social Tagging Project
http://www.steve.museum

Take Back The Tech!
http://www.takebackthetech.net

The Freesound Project
http://freesound.iua.upf.edu

yeeyan
http://www.yeeyan.com

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / **2008** / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014
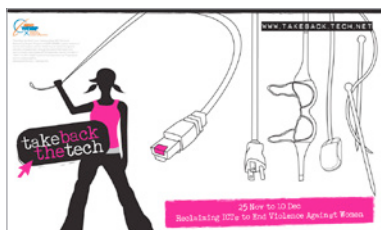
2009

Risks and Challenges

Jury
Régine Debatty
Huang Haitao
Alessandro Ludovico
David Sasaki
Felix Stalder

Categories for the call
social software
web 2.0 applications
social networking systems / friends networks / socially oriented self-support groups
artistic collaborative projects / net art projects
software based collaboration / learning environments / creative and knowledge networks
mobile media / media sharing / ubiquitous computing
innovative solutions for environmental problems
user generated content & metadata
digital storytelling
digital cities / digital neighbourhoods
citizen participation / citizen journalism
eRights / eDemocracy / eGovernance

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

The three days of intense deliberation by the jury also brought into focus the importance of how a project attempts to fully engage a diverse community around a common goal, purpose or subject matter.

Archives

Two of the mentions of the Digital Communities category are in essence archives and might, therefore, be seen as lacking a strict focus on community. However, the jury agreed that these projects deserved a mention for the remarkable way in which they indirectly crystallized a community's interests – especially niche interests – around their content. (i.e. UbuWeb)

Growing risks even if easy to use

...although the tools that allow web users to share information and communicate with each other are increasingly cheaper and easier to use, putting information on the world-wide web doesn't necessarily come without risks and challenges.

Proposal for Reformulation of Rules

This year's jury proposes a reformulation of the rules governing the digital communities category to take into account the unique intrinsic dynamics which govern the often spontaneous formation of networked communities. Some of the communities are indeed unable or even disinclined to submit their candidacy to the competition. Their own status or the circumstances in which they emerge would sometimes prevent them doing so. Besides, winning a large sum of money could, in certain cases, have a negative impact.

Purposeful Social Space

When assessed side by side, the Golden Nica, Awards of Distinction and Honorary Mentions might seem like a rather disparate assembly. Yet the jury hopes that, no matter how full of contrast the overall picture is, it reflects the broad spectrum of initiatives that are transforming the internet it into a purposeful, social space.

Criteria

What enables, sustains and encourages the successful existence of a digital community?

Tangible Impact & Offline Effect
One the most important characteristics is the tangible impact and "offline" effect that an online project can have on a group of people or on a particular social issue. This impact was appraised on the basis of quality rather than quantity. In some cases the mark left by the project can be observed only among a marginal segment of the population, such as a small geographic neighborhood. In other cases, a community's impact had wider and even global ramifications.

Courage
Another essential aspect that emerged during the deliberation was the sheer courage involved in setting up and developing some of these online projects. The key individuals behinds two of the works that have received an award this year have been exposed to lawsuits, censorship, corporate or governmental opposition, and even police raids.

Organizational Structure
The organizational structure was also identified as an essential shaper of the strength and identity of a community, be it online or offline. A bottom-up decision-making process and horizontally collaborative structure took front stage in the assessment of the submissions.

Long-term Viability
The long-term viability of a project is another important asset which has been measured by the jury not only in time span but also in the sustained level of involvement of its community members.

Imagine if every community were in charge of shaping its own narrative, of writing and contextualizing its own history.

Golden Nica

Awards of Distinction

HiperBarrio
http://hiperbarrio.org
http://convergentes.wordpress.com

Piratbyrån
http://www.piratbyran.org
http://thepiratebay.org

WikiLeaks
http://wikileaks.org

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / **2009** / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014
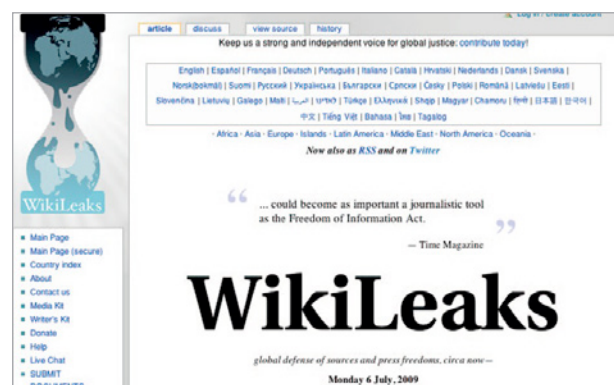
Honorary Mentions

Ashoka's Changemakers
http://changemakers.net

Canchas. spontaneous soccer fields.
http://www.canchas.org

female:pressure
http://www.femalepressure.net

Feral Trade
http://feraltrade.org

FLOSS Manuals
http://www.flossmanuals.net
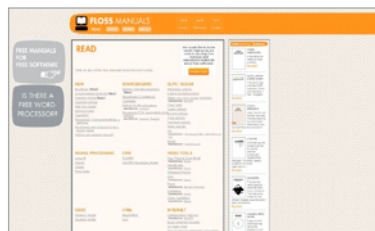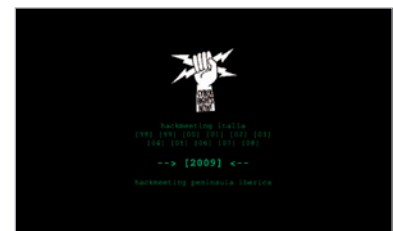
Hackmeeting
None

Maneno
http://www.maneno.org

Mute – Culture and Politics after the Net
http://www.metamute.org

PAD.MA
http://pad.ma

UbuWeb
http://ubu.com

Voces Bolivians
http://www.vocesbolivianas.org

Wikiartpedia – La Libera Enciclopedia dell'Arte e le Culture delle Reti Telematiche
http://www.wikiartpedia.org

Caonima-Grass Mud Horse
Special Mention of the Jury

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / **2009** / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

2010

Potential and Conflicts

Jury
Aram Bartholl
Isaac Mao
David Sasaki
Martin Richartz
Otto Tremetzberger

Categories for the call
social software
web 2.0 applications
social networking systems / friends networks / social self-support groups
user-generated content / metadata
citizen participation
citizen journalism / professional amateurs reporting
crowdsourcing
real-time web applications
mapping mashups
open government data
artistic collaborative projects / net.art projects
software-based collaboration / learning / creation and knowledge networks
mobile media / media sharing
innovative solutions targeting environmental issues
digital storytelling
gaming communities
digital neighborhoods / digital cities
eRights / eDemocracy / eGovernance

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

The projects selected by the jury in 2010 show that today digital communities are caught in a conflict: on the one hand, there is the need, with more or less innovation, to draw on the potential of conventional social networks and tools; on the other hand, there is a growing uneasiness with these platforms and the desire to develop and use tools that are independent of commercial interests.

The winning projects are initiatives that embody contemporary developments and positions in digital communities in a variety of ways and exemplify challenges, potential and issues that distinguish, shape and challenge these digital communities.

The entries once again make clear how, despite Facebook, Google and Twitter the projects selected by the jury in 2010 show Internet is not identical the world over. Almost every country has its own Web 2.0 platforms. The context and basic conditions under which digital communities thrive or not are different everywhere. Lively digital communities sometimes revolve around the blog of a single, committed author. In other instances, hundreds of thousands of users do not achieve comparable dynamics. Due to language alone, digital communities are often like islands in a sea of networks: one small circle among many, and each stands for specific goals, attitudes and concerns. Many of them interconnect and overlap. Others remain alone and vanish.

Discussion of the radical changes that the Internet is causing to society has shifted to the center of attention due to Google, Facebook, Apple and others. In politics and the mass media, questions are now arising about issues such as security and the protection of personal privacy in digital communities or social networks, as well as for Internet monopolists.

Criteria

In the course of deliberating the entries, the jury compiled a list of features that was less a list of criteria than a portfolio of the jurors' varying approaches and emphases:
- innovation
- the ability to bridge diversity
- artistic standard
- offline components
- sustainability
- benefits for the community
- social and sociopolitical features
- effectiveness
- creativity
- usability
- shareability
- active participation
- open-source capacity
- locality
- historical actuality

The jury also explored the extent to which today's digital communities contribute to the democratization of society – an expectation of the Internet we once all shared but in which we have often been disappointed.

Do the ideals, programs and services generated by a project benefit only a few or society in general? with the DIY idea – are people being empowered to help themselves?

The culture of DIY, the availability of knowledge, and the crowd intelligence of a community are symbolic and vital for a society that wants to be independent of the technology giants.

Golden Nica

Chaos Computer Club
http://www.ccc.de

Awards of Distinction

Map Kibera
http://mapkibera.org

the ubiquitous #unibrennt cloud
http://unibrennt.at

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / **2010** / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014
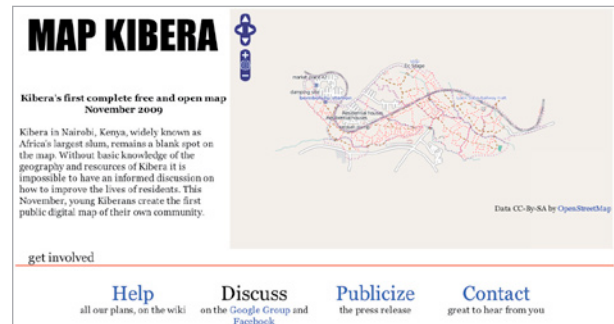
Honorary Mentions

BOSCO-Uganda
http://www.bosco-uganda.org
http://www.bosco-uganda.wikispaces.net

CBA – Cultural Broadcasting Archive
http://cba.fro.at/index.php

ceibalJAM!
http://ceibaljam.org
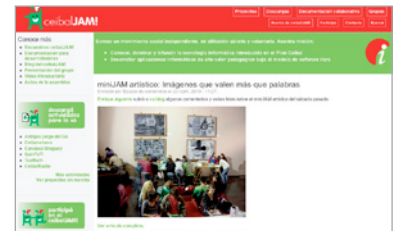
CulturaDigital.Br
http://www.culturadigital.br

Fix My Street
http://www.fixmystreet.com

Kloop
http://www.kloop.kg

MakerBot Operators
http://makerbot.com
http://thingiverse.com

Puncar Action!
http://puncar.tw

Sourcemap
http://www.sourcemap.org

TEDtoChina
http://www.TEDtoChina.com

The Tor Project
http://www.torproject.org

web2.0 suicidemachine
http://www.suicidemachine.org

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / **2010** / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

2011

Guinea Pigs and Apples

Jury
Beatrice Achaleke
Graham Harwood
Aaron Koblin
Liu Yan
Tiago Peixoto

Categories for the call
social media
web 2.0 applications
social networking systems / friends networks / social self support groups
user generated content / metadata
citizen journalism / professional amateurs reporting
crowdsourcing
real-time web applications
mapping mash-ups
open government data
artistic collaboration / net.art projects
citizen participation / citizen journalism
eRight / eDemocracy / eGovernance

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

Crowdfunding & Crowd Mapping
There were several emerging themes in this year's submissions. The jury discovered a major trend of crowd-funding and crowd-mapping projects;

...however, the jury wanted to focus on software built from the bottom up, enabling communities of interest to scale and create coordinated voices. Meanwhile, the jury wanted to distinguish between small communities with large voices and large communities with short attention spans.

As technology advances social systems, endangered cultures and emerging cultures are little catered for. Expensive software production excludes minority languages from gaining a foothold in the digital future that is rapidly overtaking us all.

Self Critique of Jury
The jury had overlapping domains of interest and understandings as well as blind spots of ignorance; we spoke English together at the majority of candidates and jury members were not native speakers. We processed and reviewed submissions and selected 15 by awarding them points before debating the merits of each. Several times we thought we had selected the top three before sleeping on it. After a restless night worrying whether we had given full attention to the projects, we began to formulate basic criteria and to criticise ourselves. Could we argue why we had placed the projects in the order we had and why had others moved out of the main beam.

The jury also attempted to balance the ratio of projects coming from developed and developing countries in order for Prix Ars Electronica to gain more attention and participation from a diversity of countries and cultures.

- We constructed basic criteria from those in t he room and based on former conversations that could be used to re-examine the selection?

- What impact will the project create / has it created within the specific context from which it emerged?

- How will an award affect the project and the context from which it emerged?

- How will the project represent best of the emerging trends and how does this reflect on Ars Electronica?

- What is the project's potential to remake and reflect on that community and its relations to other forms of power?

- How critical and innovative were the modes of production, distribution and scalability of the project with the context from which it emerged?

- How does the community become involved in technological design and production that enables contributions, participation and communication?

Criteria

Comparing Guniea Pigs with Apples without speaking the language of either...
How could we begin to formulate a critical framework, create a criteria of comparison between Chilean civic hackers, SMS safety networks for Brazilian sex workers in London and transcribing the words of Jeremy Bentham, famed as the creator of the Panopticon, now sitting mummified, occasionally brought out for a meeting of the University of London College Council. The jury repeatedly tried to jump the language and cultural hurdles, only to fall again and again, until we resolved it would be impossible to fully comprehend either the context, language and culture from which every project emerged or the change and impact the projects will have or have had.

Unequivocal Artwork
The submissions acted on the jury like scalpels, deconstructing the category, pushing us toward trying to understand each project within the political, social, cultural and technological context in which it arose. It would have been justified and inclusive if the top three selected works had included a clear, unequivocal artwork, if such a thing exists.

Digital Communities in the context of Digital Culture
From the projects that strayed into the searchlight of Prix Ars Electronica, the jury wanted to understand what digital communities might be in the context of a digital culture and art prize today – not tomorrow or yesterday.

How does the digital develop our notion of community, open it up to the lens of a network or provoke notions of distributed intelligence?

Golden Nica

Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente
http://www.ciudadanointeligente.cl

Awards of Distinction
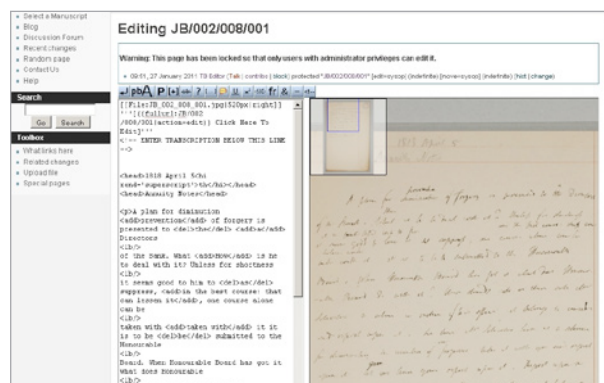
Transcribe Bentham
http://www.transcribe-bentham.da.ulcc.ac.uk/td/Transcribe_Bentham

x_msg project
http://xmsg.org.uk

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / **2011** / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

Honorary Mentions

Afrikanet.info
http://www.afrikanet.info

Audiotool
http://audiotool.com

Bloody Map
https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?ll=31.466154,121.992188&spn=25.2824+73,36.035156&hl=+zh-CN&msa=0&z=5&ie=UTF8&brcurrent=3,0x31508e64e5c642c1:0x-951daa7c349f366f,0;5,0,0&mid=zUNBnSib5DjY.kbszfFXBeAxM

Booki
http://www.booki.cc

Boskoi
http://boskoi.org

Dead Drops
http://deaddrops.com
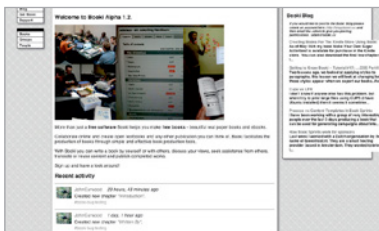
Grassroots Mapping
http://grassrootsmapping.org
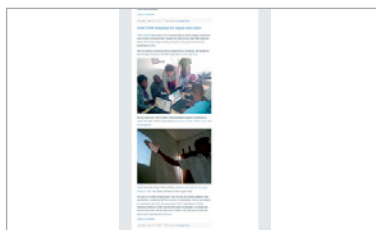
Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team
http://hot.openstreetmap.org

NairoBits Digital Design School
http://www.nairobits.com

Seaquence
http://seaquence.org
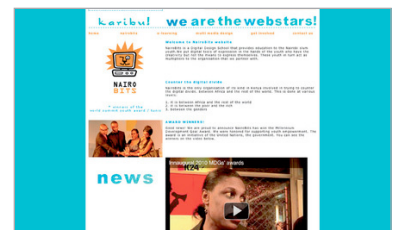
the 120 days of *buntu
http://www.120buntu.com
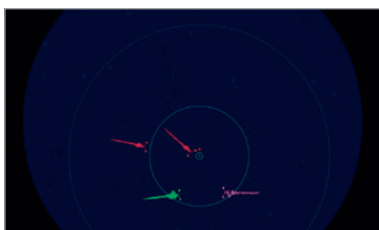
Ushahidi
http://www.ushahidi.com
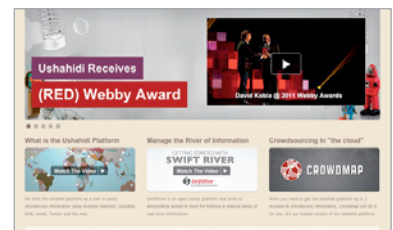
2012

A Hub of Creative Energy

Jury
Wolfgang Blau
Peter Kuthan
Liu Yan
Leila Nachawati
Thomas Schildhauser

Categories for the call
social media
web 2.0 applications
social networking systems / friends networks / social self support groups
user generated conent / metadata
citizen journalism / professional amateurs reporting
crowdsourcing
real-time web applications
mapping mash-ups
open government data
artistic collaboration / net.art projects
citizen participation / citizen journalism
eRights / eDemocracy / eGovernance

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

Back in 2004
When introducing the Digital Communities award category for the first time in 2004, juror Howard Rheingold wrote: "Digital communities can save lives, bridge differences and the digital divide, multiply knowledge, enable markets, revitalize democracy and provoke civic engagement but only if people seize the power that technology provides and wield it thoughtfully." Today, with the rapid expansion of the Internet, of smartphones and social media, the role of the Internet as a driver of societal change is getting even larger than most of us were able or willing to imagine back in 2004, when this specific award category was first introduced.

The Net is primarily about communities and not commerce
Online communities have been an integral part of the Internet from its earliest beginnings. It took the adoption of social networks on a mass scale, though, to make us understand that the net is primarily about community and not about commerce or publishing.

E-commerce & community
In fact, the most successful e-commerce and online-publishing companies in 2012 are those who see themselves as communities and have either built their own social platforms or are deeply integrated with the leading social networks of our time.

It's the people not the platform
A lot has been said and written about the supposed "Facebook Revolution" in the Arab world. While the term has been misleadingly giving more credit to the platform than to the people using it, it is certain that social networks have been crucial in enabling the uprising in the Arab world as well as the global spread of the Occupy movement.

Financial crisis & crisis of democratic representation
177 award entries from 35 countries ... the jury noticed an abundance of projects that are trying to find answers to the financial crisis and to the crisis of democratic representation. We wanted to honor and to give credit to these movements, creators and collaborators who are searching for common ground and a modern definition of democracy and who provide tools and ideas for an engaged public that values creativity.

About AFRICA
More than at any other award we know of, the organizers and jurors of the Prix Ars Electronica Award have always been efforting to look beyond the vibrant and comparatively well-funded online spheres of Western Europe and the United States of America. For the year 2012, four awards went to digital community projects on the African continent. Africa still is a "dark continent" on the map of Internet connectivity, but things are changing. About 140 million Africans are now online and 40 million are on Facebook. With half of the population aged under age 15 and with 70 percent of the population under the age of 30, social media is becoming an important feature in the continent's development path. In 2012, there are about 600 million connected mobile devices in Africa. Against the backdrop of a continuing still existing digital divide in Africa, the jury wanted to give special emphasis to outstanding African projects with a vision of digital inclusion, to projects that who are challenging the odds and are providing for a hub of creative energy, networking and collaborations.

Criteria

· **Community:** Is the community of a project alive and active? Is the community scalable or are there technical or conceptual factors that will limit its growth? How civil is the tonality of interactions in this specific community?

· **Accessibility:** Is the community openly and freely accessible?

· **Novelty:** How novel or original is this project?

· **Non-Commercial Character:** We acknowledge the enormous societal contributions of commercially run communities. However, we decided to give awards only to non-commercial projects.

· **Technology:** What is the technical quality of this project? How does it treat private user data? Is its platform agnostic and ready for mobile devices?

· **Societal Impact:** How much of a societal impact does this project have or how much of an impact might it develop?

· **Significance of the Award:** What impact would a Prix Ars Electronica Award have on this project and how would it reflect on the Prix itself?

Seize the power that technology
provides and wield it thoughtfully.

Golden Nica

Syrian People Know Their Way
https://www.facebook.com/Syrian.Intifada

Awards of Distinction

Apertus Open Source Cinema
https://www.apertus.org

Dark Glasses. Portrait
http://ichenguangcheng.blogspot.co.at

Honorary Mentions

18 Days in Egypt
http://www.18daysinegypt.com

Cronicas de Heroes
http://www.cronicasdeheroes.mx
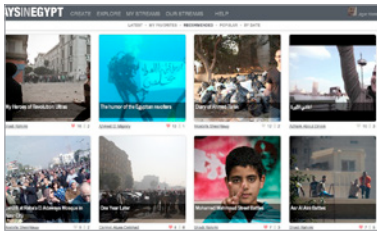
Europe versus Facebook
http://www.europe-v-facebook.org

iHub – Nairobi's Innovation Hub
http://ihub.co.ke

iStreet Lab
http://www.dlux.org.au/cms/
istreet.html

Lorea
http://www.lorea.org

Meine Abgeordneten
http://www.meineabgeordneten.at
http://twitter.com/MeineAbg

Safecast
http://safecast.org

Texting for Democracy
http://www.kubatana.net
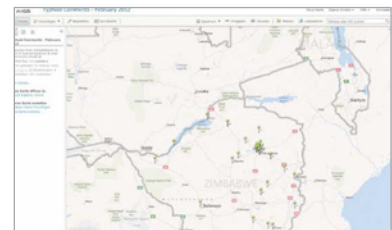
The Johnny Cash Project
http://www.thejohnnycashproject.com

XinCheJian: The First Hackerspace in China
http://www.xinchejian.com

YoungAfricaLive

2013

The Muddy Camps of the Network Society

Jury
Ian Banerjee
Leila Nachawati
Marcus Neustetter
Bruce Sterling
Lei Yang

Categories for the call
social software
artistic and technological collaborative projects
user generated content & meta data
crowdsourcing & co-creation
citizen participation / citizen journalism
advocacy projects
smart citizen projects
open data / open government projects
eRights / eDemocracy / eGovernance / public services

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

- A desktop elite is replaced by massive mobility
- Resilient local cybercultures, tied strongly to language and place, are outlasting technological fads
- No major city anywhere lacks a "hackerspace" or "think-and-do-lab", all busily taking open-sourced objects and services into the streets.
- Open-sourced hardware clusters around increasingly powerful and capable industrial devices.
- Broadband and cheap storage enable large, technicall capabel projects of community memory
- Opened government databases are becoming immediate, useful, interactive and even interesting.
- Information visualization casts new light on old dilemmas, and is a novel method of advocacy.

We are sensitive to the fact that these are hard times and that communities everywhere are stressed. In a darkening atmosphere of financial collapse, crises in housing, flows of refugees, and archaic, corrupted national politics, it is important to recognize community responsibility and community action.

Our winners demonstrate:
1. the power of citizen advocacy in spontaneous and open local action.
2. in the healing of families torn apart by strife...
3. the power of well-considered speech and imagery, in even the most protracted scenes of war and struggle.

They are exemplars and harbingers of an emergent 21st century network society.

Criteria

How can one "judge" a community? Our criteria are as follows.

- Firsts, and most importantly, is the context in which this Digital Community exists. Why are they there? What is the relevance of their activities? Do they inspire others around them? Are they a leading force within society?

- We deliberately priviledge grass-root communities over user-bases of commercial objects and services

- Is this community vibrantly active? Does is inspire and involve people? Does it have a heritage and established etiquette?

- Can this community grow? Could it change the texture of existence for many people in many situations? Might it represent a new way of life?

- Does this Digital Community demonstrate a humane spirit of citizenship within the so-called "smart city"?

- Is this an inventive learning community? Are ideas flowering here?

- Is this community accessible? Is it just inclusive and fair minded? Is it generous in spirit? Does it welcome newcomers?

- We believe that aesthetics matters to any digital community. People deserve elegant design and usable tools.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013** / 2014

The winners demonstrate the power
of citizen advocacy in spontane-
ous and open local action, in the
healing of families torn apart
by strife, and the power of well
considered speech and imagery.

Golden Nica

El Campo de Cebada
http://elcampodecebada.org

Awards of Distinction

Refugees United
https://info.refunite.org

Visualizing Palestine
http://www.visualizingpalestine.org

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 /2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013** / 2014
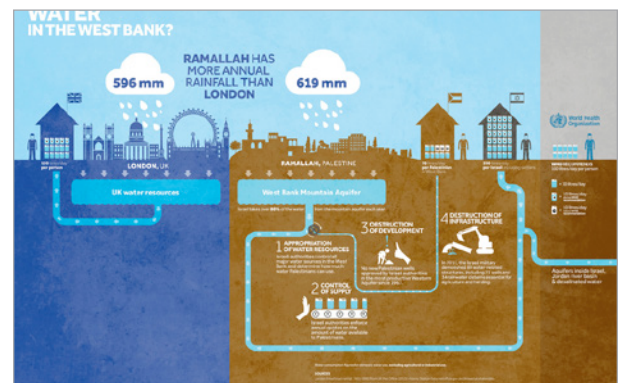
Honorary Mentions

African Digital Art Network
http://africandigitalart.com

Casastristes
http://casastristes.org

Indian Memory Project
http://www.indianmemoryproject.com

I Paid a Bribe
http://www.ipaidabribe.com

Kyberia
https://kyberia.sk

Labmovel
http://www.labmovel.net

Metropolitalia
http://www.metropolitalia.org

NicoNicoGakkai Beta
http://niconicogakkai.jp

Numbeo
http://www.numbeo.com

oiga.me
http://oiga.me

Seeed Studio
http://www.seeedstudio.com/blog
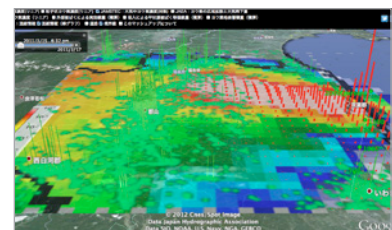
The East Japan Earthquake Archive
http://e.nagasaki.mapping.jp/p/japan-earthquake.html

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013** / 2014

2014

Inspiring Humanity

Categories for the call
social software
artistic and technological collaborative projects
user generated content & metadata
crowdsourcing / co-creation
citizen participation / citizen journalism
advocacy projects
smart citizen projects
open data / open government projects
eRights / eDemocracy / eGovernance / public services

Reflections of the Jury
What's new?

The Digital Communities category was born out of the perception of a shift in the history of the Internet towards recapturing its social functions.

Today, in the context of...
- increasing turmoil
- financial crisis and
- rising censorship and surveillance

...defending community-based responses to these threats seems more important than ever.

This jury has aimed to give awards to projects that inspire humanity to rise above the current challenges.

Climate Change (Japan)
Against the background of the fact that ever more regions of the world will be afflicted by the effects of climate change, we chose *Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan* as our winner of the Golden Nica. It crowd-sources and crowdfunds time, energy and resources of the community to meet the real needs of people. In the context of Japan, this initiative has the potential to catalyze governance models.
In addition to meeting the criteria, it also showcases a model of resilience that has high potential for replication in other parts of the world.

Contributing to Common Goods (Spain)
We chose *Goteo*, a social network for crowd-funding and distributed collaboration (services, infrastructures, micro-tasks and other resources) for encouraging the indepe dent development of creative and innovative initiatives that contribute to the common good. We have valued the innovative character of the power of communities in addressing the mounting challenges of Spain in the context of financial crisis and social cuts.

Violations of Musician's Rights (Global)
We believe that music is a powerful tool to bridge language and cultural barriers and convey strong messages that can help drive change. we have chosen *Freemuse*, an independent international membership organization advocating and defending freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide.

Criteria

Our main concern was to identify projects that were relevant to their communities and inspire others around them, becoming a leading force within society.
- Which projects have the strongest impact, which ones can be game-changers in times of increasing threats and turmoil, and radically change the social, political or economic scenario for the better?
- Are they sustainable, in the economic, social, and environmental sense?
- Do they contribute to improving the quality of human life while supporting eco-systems?
- We have favored bottom-up approaches over pure top-down projects, although we regard co-creation as highly valuable.
- Although we understand that commercialism can be a drive for change, this category prioritizes non-commercial projects.
- We have favored open hardware and software.
- By regaining public spaces, finding innovative ways to make use of public resources and the common good, the value of citizenship is underscored within a context of market economy and increasing privatization.

We have favored open hardware and software.
- We have valued the innovative character of the projects, framing them not only in the technological aspect, but in their implementation and within their (social) context.
- Equality and inclusiveness of the projects were underscored, with strong attention to the educational component.

Openness, neutrality,
transparency & independence.

Golden Nica

Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan
http://www.freemuse.org

Awards of Distinction

Freemuse
http://www.freemuse.org
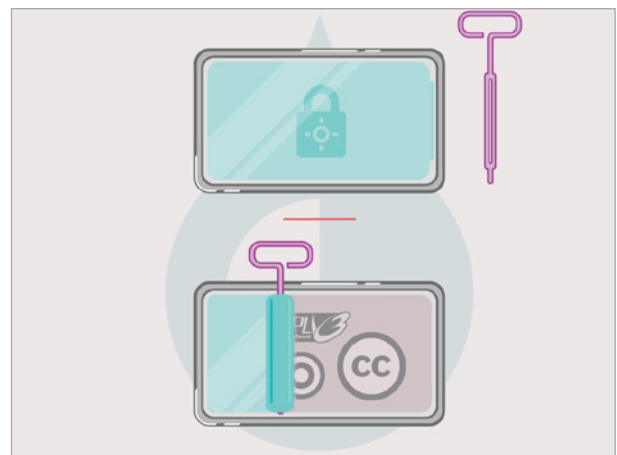
Goteo
http://goteo.org

Honorary Mentions

Arseh Sevom
http://www.arsehsevom.net/fa

Desarrollando América Latina
http://2013.desarrollandoamerica.org

Global Voices Online
http://globalvoicesonline.org

iFixit
http://www.ifixit.com

Islibrary Project
http://www.islibrary.com
http://www.weibo.com/islibrary

Land Matrix
http://www.landmatrix.org

Lifepatch – Citizen Initiative in Art, Science and Technology
http://lifepatch.org

Montenoso
http://montenoso.net

Soko
http://www.shopsoko.com

Syria Untold
http://www.syriauntold.com

Take Back the Tech!
http://takebackthetech.net
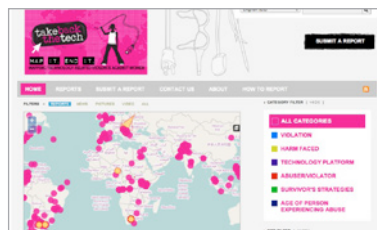
#techmums
http://techmums.co

Selected
PROJECTS

Akshaya / 2005
canal*ACCESSIBLE / 2006
1KG More / 2008
Global Voices / 2008, 2014
Open Street Map / 2008
PatientsLikeMe / 2008
Drupal / 2008
yeeyan / 2008
Ashoka's Changemakers / 2009
Chaos Computer Club / 2010
Map Kibera / 2010
FixMyStreet / 2010
Ushahidi / 2011
Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente / 2011
Apertus Open Source Cinema / 2012
iHub Nairobi / 2012
Safecast / 2012
El Campo de Cebada / 2013
REFUNITE – Refugees United / 2013
African Digital Art / 2013
Kyberia / 2013
Numbeo / 2013
Seeed Studio / 2013
Project Fumbaro East Japan / 2014
Freemuse / 2014
Goteo / 2014
iFixit / 2014
Islibrary Project / 2014
Lifepatch / 2014
Montenoso / 2014

Akshaya
http://www.akshaya.kerala.net (2005)
http://www.akshaya.kerala.gov.in (2015)
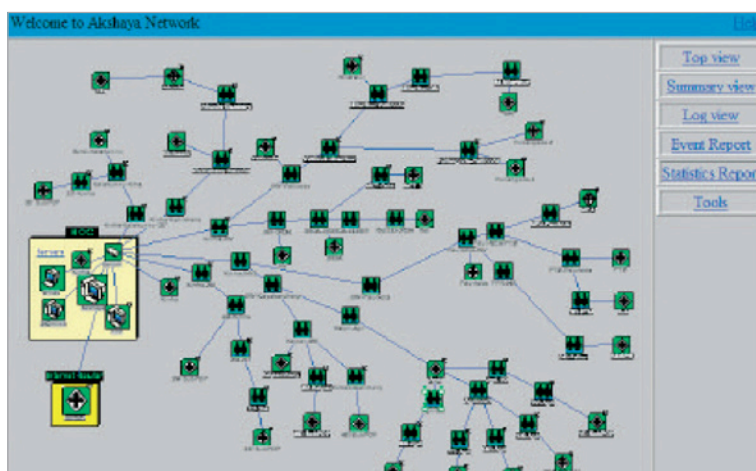
The project Akshaya – which means "perpetuating prosperity" – is being implemented in Kerala to address the issues of the digital divide in the state in an integrated and holistic way. The project has been successfully implemented on a pilot basis in Malappuram.

Components of the project are providing ICT access to all sections of society, even those located in the remotest part of the state, developing minimum skill sets among all the people through functional IT Literacy training, creating relevant local contents to benefit all the interest groups. This project enables generating massive economic growth and the creation of direct employment opportunities in the state. The project will have a long-term impact on the socio-political scenario of the state.

This project is implemented by the Government of Kerala through Kerala State IT Mission, the nodal agency for implementing Information Technology in the state. So far, 0.6 million people have been trained in the functional IT literacy program and 3000 jobs created by the pilot project at Malappuram. Currently the project is spreading to the entire state. It seeks to network 30 million people across 6 million households.

As a first step, a network of Akshaya E-Centers is being set up across Kerala. Run by entrepreneurs, each center is a self-sustaining unit, for which the e-literacy programme assures baseline revenue. Akshaya Centers are set up within 2 km of every household. 4500-6000 Akshaya Centers will be developed in the state with the objective of one center for 1000 families. The centers are being connected through broadband wireless technology. The development of these centers provides direct sustained employment to at least 25,000 people in the IT Sector. Each center is equipped with 5 to 10 computers, printers, scanners, webcam, other peripherals and the necessary software to carry out various ICT-based services. In addition, IP phones are also being made available in these centers.

Akshaya E-Centers provide training that not only familiarizes people with the basics and the scope of IT, but also ensures hands-on skill in operating a computer, using the Internet and so on. Aimed at creating a 100% literate state, the program aims to provide e-literacy to one per-

From the Jury Statement
Akshaya – a word from a mytho-logical reference to an inexhaust-ible vessel of food, the "akshaya paathram" – is a pilot project in the South Indian state of Ker-ala, which successfully mobilized local institutions and individual entrepreneurship to set up net-worked multi-purpose communi-ty information centers providing connectivity within 2 kms of every household in the district. The pro-ject, now being upscaled to pro-vide access for the entire popula-tion of the state, is an ambitious ICT initiative for development and a unique example of a community based telecentre initiative, with active community participation. Akshaya is a model for how com-munities can harness digital op-portunities to create a new social architecture. It signifies the in-volvement of the local community in the owning and shaping of their emerging information society, and the commitment of the govern-ment to create and sustain an information and communication infrastructure that enables both people to people initiatives (online and offline) as well as government to citizen interaction.
In the context of a developing country like India, Akshaya's po-tential lies in how it can transform the effectiveness of develop-ment delivery (in health, educa-tion, agriculture), so that levels of transparency and accountability of government can be enhanced, and tangible economic and social gains can accrue to people.
There are many e-government projects that have sought to make service delivery more ef-ficient. Most are top-down and most ignore the potential for cit-izen involvement in governance. Akshaya's promise lies in how the community will be able to drive

son in each of the 6,400,000 families in the state A carefully designed content module of 15 hours of training per person that is designed in the local language is a major highlight of the programme. The process of providing the skill sets shall lead to the creation of a long-term relation between the Akshaya Centers and the families in the catchment area. On a macro level this will generate a state-wide data warehouse and repository of relevant content for the families.

The focus here is to ensure a viable, sustainable service delivery mechanism for the citizens of the state. The Akshaya Center will be furnished with necessary equipment like computers, fax, printers, telephones, broadband Internet connection, software, etc., in order to cater to the information and communication requirements of the local citizens. A community portal which will meet the day to day requirements of the local community is also envisaged. This e-literacy campaign is the foundation on which the state seeks to bridge the digital divide in the state. The underlying objective of the campaign is to remove the "fear of the unknown" that common people have about technology in general and computers in particular.

The Akshaya E-Centers are being set up under the sole management of selected entrepreneurs, who have come forward from among the local community. These centers are set up as pure entrepreneurial ventures with an investment of Rs. 300,000-400,000 per center. The entrepreneurial spirit has been fully utilised for developing the micro-enterprise in the ICT sector. As in the case of any conventional enterprise, these entrepreneurs display their skills and resources in ICT enabled sectors, content creation, fulfilment of the communication needs of the community, e-enabling farmers, scholars, and medical practitioners in the community for total development. These entrepreneurs are fulfilling their social commitment to impart e-literacy to the other members of their community.

The Akshaya ICT access points are envisaged to provide G2C, G2G, C2C and G2B information interchange and dissemination. Akshaya centers shall function as decentralized information access hubs that cater to a range of citizen needs with an inbuilt integrated front-end. The collection of utility bills and taxes now done through Friends Centers is being integrated with Akshaya Centers, thereby minimizing the transaction cost to the citizens.

the process, and it is the jury's hope that Akshaya will be able to make the conceptual shift from community access to community ownership. The project intends to generate over 50,000 direct employment opportunities in three years; lower communication costs through Internet telephony, e-mail, chat, etc.; enhance ICT demand in telemedicine / e-commerce / e-education; improve delivery of public services; and catalyze all sectors in the IT Industry.

Major Outcome (2010)

· Digital empowerment in the state
· One stop shop for citizen services
· Touched the lives more than 75% of population
· Generation of of 15000+ employment opportunities
· Women Empowermenr: 55% of Akshaya centers are run by them

http://www.itforchange.net/sites/default/files/ITfC/Korath_Mathew_Akshaya_project_1.pdf

Project History

Akshaya was inaugurated on 18th November 2002 by the president of India. The Akshaya Centers were set up by May 2003 and the literacy campaign competed by January 2004. The broadband connection was provided by August 2004 and e-payments started. In 2005, there were five Akshaya centers by Panchayat, and each center has 1000 to 1500 families.

canal*ACCESSIBLE
http://megafone.net/barcelona
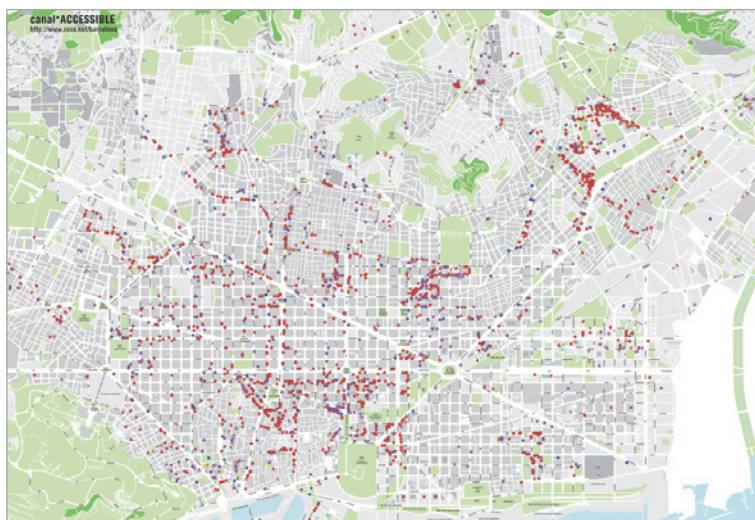
The project *canal*ACCESSIBLE* enables people with disabilities to create a virtual map of the city of Barcelona on which all places inaccessible to the physically handicapped are marked using multimedia messages (MMS). A group of 40 people with different physical disabilities use mobile phones to photograph and transmit the obstacles they encounter in Barcelona directly to the project's website.

As a result, discriminated groups are able to make themselves heard and their presence felt. Via mobile communications technology, these groups can directly make their concerns public on the Internet, independently of the prevailing mass media which tend to present their own views of things. The individuals affected can speak their minds and formulate their expectations. In the beginning, these groups found it hard to articulate their interests and contents, as they were not used to people listening to them. Bit by bit all the groups began to examine exactly those issues that concerned them most.

At meetings held at regular intervals, programs were unanimously agreed upon. Next individual editorial groups were formed and the subjects or interests affecting them formulated and published. These contributions often turned out to reflect the society surrounding them. Repeatedly the project also had to be adapted to the specific communication needs of the individual groups. For example, the program of *canal*ACCESSIBLE* itself had to be adapted so that each time an obstacle was referred to, a map of the neighbourhood would be integrated into the site at that point. Existing programs also need to be analyzed and decisions made about creating new ones. Exemplary here is *canal*ACCESSIBLE* which was developed to allow project participants also report about positive, barrier-free instances of accessibility.

Since December 2005, 3578 architectural barriers or other obstacles have been categorized, documented and posted online – steps, stairs, curbs, in public transport, lavatories, or at other sites with little sense of public responsibility, as well as instances of adaptations made without the disabled in mind. The cases transmitted to the website are geospecific, which means that every image is posted at its corresponding

From the Jury Statement 2006
It is in an elegant way that this project unites several of the key factors that define outstanding "digital communities". A group of Barcelona people in wheelchairs documents road blocks and other obstacles on their way as well as the – rare – positive examples of easy access for people in wheelchairs. Doing this they make the best use of existing technology to work for change. This project tells us a lot about access in its most basic forms as well as in relation to technology and networks: it supports the fight for physical access to buildings and infrastructure for a marginalized and handicapped group of people, it promotes the awareness of their problems and takes the collaborative use of technology right in the hands of the concerned people themselves. The technology they use represents the most common form of ubiquitous computing: mobile phones with digital cameras. The web platform of *canal*-ACCESSIBLE* serves as the binding element of this community, and maps their findings and observations to the physical geography of Barcelona. All of this is done with a simple interface, providing easy-to-use access to that constantly growing and up-to-date base of information. They will use the prize money of the Golden Nica not only for further improvements of the usability of their interface but also give it to the implementation of similar projects in countries of the global South – an investment in replicability and in bridging the global digital divide.

Project History

*canal*ACCESSIBLE* was initiated by Spanish artist Antoni Abad.

location on the city map. All these entries are also accompanied by spoken or written commentary.

Thanks to the range of traditional communications media and the Internet, it is now possible to mobilize people with physical disabilities while simultaneously raising the public's awareness of them. With this project, the municipal government of Barcelona now has direct access to information from those affected and can thus take measures to make the city accessible to everyone.

*canal*ACCESSIBLE* in 2015
Interview with Antoni Abad i Roses, Spanish artist and initiator of *canal*ACCESSIBLE* and *megafone.net*

canal*ACCESSIBLE – *which is now part of megafone.net – was one of the pioneers in the field of locative media and citizen participation. How did the project evolve over time given the developments in web technology?*
Antoni Abad: If an idea can be expressed with a pencil I don't think it is necessary to use paint. This is the approach to technology implemented in megafone.net projects. A sort of minimalistic media that tries to express participant's voice in the simplest way. Web technology developments are always welcome in order to improve this type of social software, one that is always listening to participant needs.

How does it "compete" with the big players in the mapping field?
Antoni Abad: The 14 *megafone. net* projects developed since 2004 with different groups and communities, have a very different approach to what most commercial social networks are targeting. Those try to get

millions of users, to place them advertising and to use personal data to place even more advertising.
Megafone.net projects are conceptualized for small groups that get to know each other personally and celebrate regular presential meetings in order to project their own news and opinions on the web.

What has been the impact on the city / how does the city management react to these project?
Antoni Abad: Three accessibility projects were developed with people with limited mobility in Barcelona 2006, in Geneva 2008 and in Montreal 2012. Even if the main consequence these experiences have is the creation of permanent personal bonds between project participants, we were vey curious about the city councils reactions.
Barcelona's council reacted by publishing a contra map of the accessible spots in the city, but many of the mapped

obstacles were later adapted. Geneva was a special case. It was the city council who proposed to host the project. Their point of view was to ask disabled citizens about the situation of the architectural barriers. A participatory proposal where citizens are invited to contribute to the urbanistic development of the urban space. In Montreal participants continue to face the silence of the authorities, in a city where day-to-day life is extremely difficult for people with limited mobility. Public transport in this Canadian city is actually a terrible example of exclusion.

What is your vision for the project?
Antoni Abad: Given that I always prefer to go ahead with new projects, the *megafone. net*/2004-2014 exhibition that was organised by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona last year, became a good opportunity to look back at those ten years of activity. I con-

cluded that during this decade many platforms were created devoted to groups and communities aiming to raise their collective voice. But some fields are still not developed, like locative community tools specially conceived for the blind and visually impaired. So I decided to concentrate in the blind.wiki project, a citizen network allowing participants to map and comment on accessibility in the cities where they live. A project that will enable participants to organize as activists and to lobby for increased and improved way-finding facilities. A project where blind participants will hopefully have the opportunity to analyze, discuss, share and compare the accessibility situation of different cities. Since October 2014, the blind.wiki prototype is being developed in Rome, with the greatest contribution of an enthusiastic group of blind and visually impaired beta-testers.

What inspired megafone.net?
Antoni Abad: The day in 2003 I discovered the first cell phone that had two features put together in such a small piece of hardware: an integrated camera and connection to the Internet. I immediately thought that finding a way to put the recorded multimedia contents on-line (the included software didn't allow that feature) could become an incredible device for groups and communities to express themselves and counteract the mainstream media. Then I had the chance to travel for the first time to Sao Paulo in Brazil and the huge "motoboy" community (motorcycle couriers) caught my attention. There were 160.000 motoboy in the city daily risking their lives, speeding between cars to transport all kind of deliveries. I discovered that people hated motoboys and motogirls and that they were systematically overlooked or misrepresented in the media. So I approached somemotoboys and proposed them to use cell phones to create its own communication platform where they could have the chance to express themselves and project their own news and opinions. They accepted the challenge and today they continue their regular meetings and web castings at the canal*MOTOBOY project.

How exactly does megafone.net work? How are individual projects formed, who participates and what role do you play in their projects?
Antoni Abad: Megafone.net projects are organised in the environment of contemporary art. The art centres provide meeting rooms, funding, sponsoring, exhibition space, etc. They provide the platform to develop the projects and I consider that the biggest success the projects can have, is actually to become autonomous of the art world, after the initial support. This has happened in some of the projects like in Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Barcelona, Montreal or Queens N.Y. Participating communities are proposed based on different criteria, including my own intuition (like the taxi drivers in Mexico City and the motoboys in Sao Paulo), the suggestions of the curators of involved art centres (like the Nicaraguan migrant workers in San Jose de Costa Rica and the sex workers in Madrid), the research of discriminated communities (like the Sahrawi refugees in the Algerian Sahara and the displaced and demobilised persons in Manizales, Colombia) or by friend's suggestions (like in the projects with people with limited mobility in Barcelona, Geneva and Montreal).
Participants are located by different procedures: classified ads, leaflet distribution, association approaches and personal contacts. Then the first meeting is convened and the project is explained to the group. For the moment, all approached communities have agreed to carry on the projects. Next step consists of inviting the participants to propose the topics that they identify as most significant. Each theme associated with an specific "tag" that participants include in every post. My role is basically convincing the arts centres to go ahead with such projects, teach the participants the technical procedures of the *megafone.net* device, contribute the experience of the previous projects and give the maximum autonomy to the participant groups so they can develop the projects in the future by their own.

Has this proven to be an effective way in social change? What have been direct results for the marginalized people involved megafone.net?
Antoni Abad: These are micro-politic experiences. They act as wake-up calls for persons normally involved into their the daily practises, not finding the time to sit down and think about their own lives. In *megafone.net* they find a place share with other persons in the same situation and to get articulated as a group. The projects have proven to be an effective way to change the perception of reality of the participants and to get organised. These are the most obvious direct results of the various experiences. In some cases, like the motoboys in Sao Paulo and the limited mobility cartography projects in Barcelona, Geneva and Montreal, they used the findings of the projects to lobby and to pressure authorities for the necessary actions to improve social and mobility conditions.

1KG More
http://www.1kg.org

The goal of the project *1KG More* is to build longterm, open-minded and systematic charity services for schools in rural China by cooperating with the community. The ultimate objective is to provide services that offer reading material, computer courses, internet access and extracurricular education for more than 5,000 schools in rural China in the next five years.

Presently, in rural areas of China there are more than 400,000 secondary and elementary schools in need of teachers, stationery, books, extracurricular education, etc., and just five percent of them receive limited service and assistance from charities. It is obviously difficult for charities that are short of resources and service capabilities to meet such an enormous demand, as people usually communicate and assist in providing the service through coordination with these charities.
To help clear this bottleneck, *1KG More* presented a new concept of charity works: to improve rural education by group collaboration, allowing the public to participate directly in charity work. *1KG More* operates a Wikipedia-like charity, as they encourage people to participate community work by DIY. For example: people would able to explore more rural schools information by organizing and participating in travel by themselves. Sharing information through the internet would attract more attention, and they could set up various groups from the *1KG More* website to provide longterm assistance to these rural schools.

From the Jury Statement
1KG More has a simple name, and a simple idea. Every traveler who travels between the urban and the rural worlds of mainland China, from backpacker to business visitor, can afford to take one kilogram more in their luggage, to be delivered to the poorer communities of that vast nation. The *1KG More* site acts as coordinator and arbiter: the travelers find what small schools need before they go; their photographs exist as proof and testimony to the kilogram's delivery (and in the pictures of delighted schoolchildren, a powerful advertisement for others to join the project).
Books, stationery, even pencil erasers can be hard to obtain in some Chinese communities, yet the complexities of organizing state or charitable donations on a large scale can quickly drown such simple tasks in a mass of bureaucracy, internal politics and/ or local suspicion. The simple act of connecting a rural school with a lone traveler has proven to be far more effective: and for those involved it is a more satisfyingly personal experience. This is the scale on which the internet thrives at building its communities: one person at a time, possibly across vast distances, and always with the possibility of easily multiplying one act across thousands. "Pass, Communicate and Share" is the motto of *1KG More*. It could be the motto of the internet; it could be the motto of all community.

In 2004, as a breakthrough point, *1KG More* launched charity travel for the public for convenient and easily accessible charity work. They urged everyone to carry a little more and visit rural schools during the journey, communicate with children, spread the awareness and share the good fortune.

By this simple approach to charity work *1KG More* achieved positive feedback and became one of the fastest-growing and most widespread NGOs in China. So far, *1KG More* has served and assisted more than 200 rural schools from the hinterland of south-west China to famous country tourist spots.

1KG More in 2015

Andrew Yu, initiator of *1KG More* (2015): Slowly we realized that the villages also need teaching materials, so we are also designing what we call "One Kilogram Box", which is a learning tool given to teachers, so students can have better teaching materials. We also encourage university students who go to these villages during their holidays as well as may local teachers and NGOs involved with education, we also provide them with teaching materials and support.
I believe in good activities including good proposals, especially educational proposals, they are connected because everyone hopes to achieve better educational methods and content.

Source: http://www.australia china.org/blog

Project History

1KG More was initiated in April 2004 by Andrew Yu (CN). Inside three years it grew into a famous nation-wide voluntary-work campaign in China, currently with volunteer teams in some 10 major cities. More than 2,000 volunteers work for all kinds of *1KG More* activities. Our volunteers have submitted information to our website on more than 200 rural schools. Presently, *1KG More* has three full-time members and more than 200 voluntary core members. We have set up wide cooperative relationships with both NGOs and commercial Companies. In December 2007, *1KG More* gained the support from Lenovo, the largest Computer manufacturer in China, and became one of its five model charities. In the same year we also successfully the Twin-Books project.

Global Voices
http://www.globalvoicesonline.org

2008

Global Voices seeks to aggregate, curate and amplify the global conversation online – shining a light on places and people other media often ignore. We work to develop tools, institutions and relationships that will help all voices, everywhere, to be heard.

With tens of millions of people blogging all over the planet, how do you avoid being overwhelmed by the information overload? How do you figure out who are the most influential or respected and credible bloggers or podeasters in any given country, especially those outside your own? Our international team of volunteer authors, regional blogger-editors and translators are your guides to the global blogosphere. These amazing people are bloggers who live in various countries around the world. We have invited them as contributors or hired them as editors because they understand the context and relevance of information, views, and analysis being posted every day from their countries and regions on blogs, podcasts, photo-sharing sites, video-blogs – and other kinds of online Citizen media. They are helping us to make sense of it all and to highlight things that bloggers are saying that mainstream media may not be reporting.

At a time when the international English-language media ignores many things that are important to large numbers of the world's citizens, *Global Voices* aims to redress some of the inequities in media attention by leveraging the power of citizens' media. We're using a wide variety of technologies – weblogs, podcasts, photos, video, wikis, tags, aggregators and online chats – to call attention to conversations and points of view that we hope will help shed new light on the nature of our interconnected world.

From the Jury Statement 2008
Global Voices is a world-renowned global project that engages dozens of grassroots contributors to collect, translate and interpret online voices from around the world. Originally intended to combat the isolation that every national media shows (under-reporting international news, over-reporting the local and domestic), *Global Voices* has in recent years developed a voice and power all of its own.
The site can report what is happening at any moment around the world, often faster and with more thoughtful contributions than the traditional media. Contributing editors not only quote from their local blogosphere in a neutral way but also put their own personal insights on the site to highlight the general and specific problems around the world. Its dynamic website takes scattered voices and subtly arranges and coordinates them to allow readers to drill down easily into one region's history or to pull back to see a truly global overview of individual concerns. As if to show that even the most diverse community will always find common ground, the site has also spawned an advocacy wing, which coordinates internationally to support and publicize jailed bloggers and others online who are fighting censorship and seeking global conversations between conflicted groups. For *Global Voices* many years of bridging the internet and the world, we award it the Prix Ars Electronica Distinction.

Award of Distinction 2008
Honorary Mention 2014

citizen journalism
activism
advocacy
bridge blogging

We aim to do the following:

1) Draw attention to the most interesting conversations and perspectives emerging from citizens' media around the world by linking to text, photos, podcasts, video and other forms of grassroots citizens' media being produced by people around the world

2) Facilitate the emergence of new citizens' voices through training, online tutorials, and publicizing the ways in which open-source and free tools can be used safely by people around the world to express themselves

3) Advocate freedom of expression around the world and to protect the rights of Citizen journal ists to report on events and opinions without fear of censorship or persecution.

2014

Since 2008 we have transformed from a groundbreaking experiment in distributed online reporting to a respected news source with hundreds of writers and translators. Members of our community have been trailblazers of digital activism and leaders in the fight against online censorship. We work together to highlight the world's most overlooked stories through the voices of local people, and help train new bloggers in communities where there are none. We share our work as openly and freely as possible, and work with countless global media partners to distribute our stories in different languages to as wide an audience as possible.
Our online community has not just survived into 2014, we have excelled and continue to push the boundaries for what is possible for an online community that is diverse, dynamic and distributed. The mainstream media have transformed to include the voices of bloggers and citizens on social media in their international reporting, but they still ignore stories that fall outside the mainstream news narrative. Our authors are experts in the areas they write about and every story published on *Global Voices* is vetted by members of our impressive editorial team.
We work to find the most compelling and important stories coming from marginalized and misrepresented communities. We speak out against online censorship and support new ways for people to gain access to the Internet. Our goal is to empower people who value justice, equality and empathy. We value curiosity, honesty and connectedness in the name of understanding and friendship across borders.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / **2008** / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / **2014**

10 years of *Global Voices*
By Georgia Popplewell, *Global Voices*' Managing Director

In a sense, *Global Voices* is the ultimate digital community. Since our launch 10 years ago we've operated virtually and across borders – today, we're a leading citizen media community with an international network of over 800 writers, translators, technologists and activists, finding ways to bridge differences of language and nationality to amplify local knowledge and unheard stories from citizen media around the world.

Community was at the heart of the entity envisioned by Rebecca MacKinnon and Ethan Zuckerman when piloted the idea for *Global Voices* at a sidebar meeting at Harvard University in December 2004. Citizen media was then in its infancy, and the meeting brought together some of the key bloggers of the day, most of whom had never met in person but would have known each other through their online writings – a "community" in the very broadest sense of the term. It quickly became clear that in order to fulfil the ambitions of a project

with the scope the founders envisioned would mean building a different kind of community, a more intentional one with shared goals and values. One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the *Global Voices Manifesto:*

"We seek to build bridges across the gulfs that divide people, so as to understand each other more fully. We seek to work together more effectively, and act more powerfully.

"We believe in the power of direct connection. The bond between individuals from different worlds is personal, political and powerful. We believe conversation across boundaries is essential to a future that is free, fair, prosperous and sustainable – for all citizens of this planet.

"While we continue to work and speak as individuals, we also seek to identify and promote our shared interests and goals. We pledge to respect, assist, teach, learn from, and listen to one other."

The initial *Global Voices* community, formed in early 2005, comprised a handful of editor-bloggers who curated and amplified stories from blogs in designated geographical areas. They also sought to build teams of volunteer writers from their regions, who would bring deeper local knowledge and nuance to the coverage. In late 2006 the first community-led shift took place, with the founding of the Lingua translation project. Inspired by a small community of Taiwanese bloggers and translators who had begun independently translating *Global Voices* stories in to Chinese, a group of *Global Voices* editors and authors banded together at the second Summit in New Delhi and proposed the idea of translating stories not just from other languages into English, but from English into other languages, creating even stronger channels of communication across cultures. By mid-2007 *Global Voices* sites in Chinese, Bangla, Farsi, Spanish, Portuguese and French were launched. With this shift,

Global Voices began welcoming translators into a community that had previously comprised mainly bloggers. Today *Global Voices* can be read in over 30 languages.

There were two further additions 2007. With online freedom of expression increasingly under threat, *Global Voices* Advocacy (today also known as Advox), was formed. This introduced to the *Global Voices* community an extended network of bloggers and online activists dedicated to protecting freedom of expression and free access to information online by reporting on threats to online speech, sharing tactics for defending the work and words of netizens, and supporting efforts to improve Internet policy and practice worldwide.

The second change in 2007 was the launch of our media development section, Rising Voices, which reached across the digital divide to invite an entirely new set of people into the mix: communities with limited access to digital tools and a massive will to remedy the situation.

Today, the *Global Voices* community comprises over 800 writers, translators, technologists and activists, the majority of whom are volunteers. A good deal of energy goes into maintaining that open, volunteer ethos that we believe is an essential part of who we are – not a trivial task in a virtual community that operates across borders and languages. And doing this while trying remaining agile and responsive to a rapidly shifting media environment: the space once dominated by independent bloggers is now both more noisy and crowded, more heavily guarded, and increasingly corporatised.

In 2005, when we set out to amplify citizen media, our mission was unique. By 2009, mainstream media outlets began discovering the merits of citizen media, and quickly learned to locate and parse blogs and microblogging platforms and press those narratives and snippets into service as a complement to professional media coverage. We've managed to forge partnerships with several of these media outlets, who recognise the benefits of collaboration and the value of *Global Voices* access to local knowledge and unparalleled translation capacity.

Jillian York, a longtime *Global Voices* author and now the Electronic Frontier Foundation's Director of International Freedom of Expression, argued in a 2012 article that "a decade of blogging led to a year of revolution" in Egypt's 2011 revolution. *Global Voices* plays a pivotal part in this story. In 2008, *Global Voices* leaders in the MENA region convened a group of bloggers, activists and techies from the Arab world in Beirut to share skills and teach each other tactics for digital media activism. The group met several more times, at two further bloggers' meetings and numerous informal gatherings. They also maintained their relationships online, following and supporting each other as they fought against censorship and surveillance and for broader political rights and freedoms in their respective countries. In 2011, many of these same activists played key roles in the Arab uprisings.

We're proud that 10 years after its founding, *Global Voices* remains a thriving, vital component of the global media environment, helping individuals, media professionals, academics, and policymakers connect with the diverse voices coming from citizen and social media around the world. *Global Voices'* distinctive innovation has been building and sustaining a community dedicated to fulfilling the Internet's potential as a global connector. We establish relationships, new forums, and new practices in information sharing and production. We are interpreters, not only of languages, but of culture, politics and social dynamics. *Global Voices* exemplifies the open Internet – a positive example of a self-generating and self-regulating community that exists because of the neutral and distributed character of the Web.

We demonstrate what's possible when the world gets online freedom of expression right.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / **2008** / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / **2014**

OpenStreetMap
https://www.openstreetmap.org
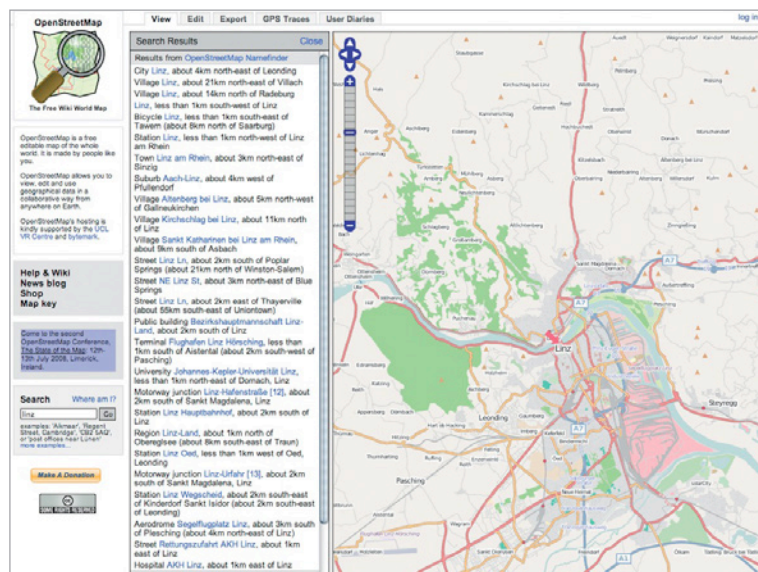
OpenStreetMap is a free wiki map of the world, editable by anybody. Users use GPS traces or aerial imagery to add roads, footpaths and other vectors together with points of interest, such as cafes. It is three-and-a-half years old and has 26,000 users, growing at 2,000 a month all over the world. The project consists of the main website, where the maps are viewable and editable. There is a wiki where many sub-projects and the community is organized. Most discussion occurs on the "talk" mailing list, but there are also lists for development and for individual countries around the world.

OpenStreetMap started because I wanted a map of my local area. I figured that if I used a GPS and others did too then we could collaboratively make a map of the world. When I started, the only maps you could use were copyrighted images from Microsoft MapPoint. Innovations like Google Maps have helped move the world on, but the underlying copyrighted data still remains – this is the problem I wanted to fix.

In 2005 *OpenStreetMap* had its first "mapping party", where it ran an event in the Isle of Wight to map it in a weekend, with 30 to 40 people attending from around Europe. In July 2007, the OSM Foundation held the first OSM international conference, entitled "The State of the Map". In 2008 there will be a second conference in Limerick, Ireland. (Stephen Coast)

OpenStreetMap
in 2015

In 2015, *OpenStreetMap* reached one million registered users.

From the Jury Statement 2008
If code is the bricks with which an online habitat is built, then data is its mortar. And while the availability of code has exploded with the open source revolution, much of the data about our world is still held under lock and key.
This is particularly true, tragically, for data collected on behalf of and paid for by the public. Too many countries, for instance, have attempted to hoard the very shape and geography of it's the land beneath their citizens' feet: reselling them mapping data that they have already paid for. *OpenStreetMap* is an international project that is creating a genuine public good in a area where many countries' governments have failed us. The project collects thousands of users' GPS tracks of their countries, as well as datasets contributed by professional organizations who have an interest in free road and topology data. From its humble beginnings in the UK, the database has now grown to cover dozens of countries who, until now, have had no public definition of their own geography. Provided under a Creative-Commons-inspired license, *OpenStreetMap* is a practical assertion of Woody Guthrie's folk song slogan: This Land is Your Land.

Project History

OpenStreetMap was founded in July 2004 by Stephen Coast. In April 2006, OSM began a process of transforming itself into a foundation. There is a core team of sysadmins of about four people and a larger group of about 20 programers. We have 26,000 users and about 2,500 per month edit the map in one way or another. Many of these users are not technically inclined but are motivated instead by a love of maps and mapping or political motivations where their government may hold a monopoly on map data. (2008)

PatientsLikeMe
http://www.patientslikeme.com

PatientsLikeMe is about using community tools to force new and productive collaborations between patients, healtheare providers, advocacy groups and intervention developers, to serve a patient-driven agenda of living beyond the boundaries traditionally associated with chronic illness and disease. By combining data with social functionality, the site provides patients and researchers with tools to rapidly carry out inquiries. Patients learn about the factors that impact on their health status over time, locate others like themselves, consult a trusted community within which to exchange advice, sympathy and insight, and have tools to research and compare new treatment strategies. Two years after launch, *PatientsLikeMe* has over 10,000 verified members, including patients, caregivers, researchers and healthcare Professionals.

From the Jury Statement 2008
As there are more and more people facing the problem of illness around the world including ALS, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, HIV and mood conditions (including depression, bi-polar disorder, anxiety and more), so they also face the challenge of isolation, exclusion and loss of confidence. *PatientsLikeMe* is a place that provide a space for those people who may want to actively deal with their diseases with the social support of similar peers. On the PLM site, patients interact to help improve their outcomes, while the data they provide helps researchers learn how these diseases act in the real world. *PatientsLikeMe* endeavors to create the largest repository of real-world disease information to help accelerate the discovery of new, more effective treatments. The site is designed to help those users find and support each other, in a context a world away from the usual medically mediated world of traditional medicine. And yet the tools provided online can be used to measure one's own improvements scientifically and hopefully increase their efficacy through the support of an experienced community. *PatientsLikeMe* is not just a medical tool: it is the intimate heart of a truly communal attempt at rehabilitation.
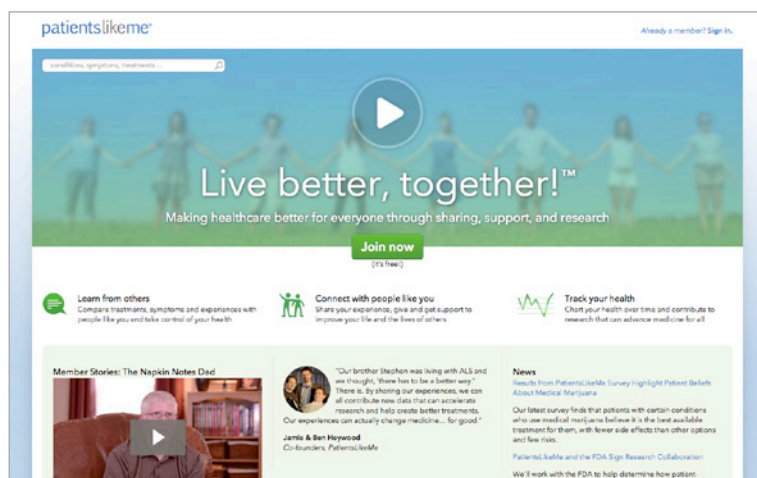
In *PatientsLikeMe*, each community is built for a particular disease based on a nuanced and personal understanding of the condition. The first *PatientsLikeMe* community was built for patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS / MND), which is an incurable and fatal neurological disease. *PatientsLikeMe* online community members create knowledge about effective treatment of serious illnesses by sharing intimate details of their biological, physical and emotional experience of disease. Patients contribute structured data about their symptoms, treatments, tests and health status. This information is reflected back to community members in coherent graphic displays as individual-level health profiles and community-level reports on symptoms, treatments and outcomes. These data displays are the focal points for discussion in a public forum, within a specific patient's profile or in private messaging between patients. Referencing data content, patients discuss treatment effectiveness and how to moderate side effects, or they can look at one another's profiles and offer words of encouragement, support and advice. Health profiles, community-level reports and user discussions are dynamically linked to introduce data into the conversation and signal the health status, history and credibility of the author.

PatientsLikeMe in 2015

350,000 members
2,500+ conditions
60+ published research studies
28 million data points about disease

Today, *PatientsLikeMe* is a for-profit company, but not one with a "just for profit" mission. We follow four core values: putting patients first, promoting transparency ("no surprises"), fostering openness and creating "wow." We're guided by these values as we continually enhance our platform, where patients can share and learn from real-world, outcome-based health data. We've also centered our business around these values by aligning patient and industry interests through data-sharing partnerships. We work with trusted nonprofit, research and industry Partners who use this health data to improve products, services and care for patients.

https://www.patientslikeme.com/about

Project History

In 1999, at the age of 29, Stephen Heywood was diagnosed with the terminal muscle-wasting disease ALS. Inspired by Stephen's experiences with the disease, his brothers Ben and Jamie Heywood, along with family friend Jeff Cole, designed an online community for patients, doctors and organizations that inspires, informs and empowers individuals. "PatientsLikeMe" is now a team effort built through the collaboration of its 15-plus members.

Drupal
https://www.drupal.org

Drupal is a free, open-source platform for building social publishing web sites. It is built and maintained by the community of developers and individuals who use it daily, and has developed a rich ecosystem of add-ons for special needs like electronic commerce, social networking, news aggregation, and so on.

Drupal's primary focus has always been on enabling communities to collaborate and communicate effectively. In particular, geographically dispersed communities who must rely even more heavily on such software tools. The drupal.org web site itself is an example; dozens of thousands of individuals from around the world use the site to collaborate on the process of enhancing the Drupal software, building and maintaining their own add-on tools, and building web sites with those tools. It's been used to build artists' home pages, citizen-driven journalism web sites, large information archives for museums and nonprofit organizations, and more.

From the Jury Statement 2008
Drupal is an open-source project that has allowed communities without a core of technologists to quickly adopt the more advanced features of the best sites. Open-sourced in 2001, it quickly became one of the default choices when a website wanted to both create its own content and allow its readers to contribute too. Drupal's origins in bulletin-board software make it uniquely democratic in how it manages content. Every page on a Drupal site could have comments; every user could have their own blog. After a long struggle to create a reasonable roadmap and not be pulled in many different directions, Drupal is now reaching the position where its promise is matched by the ease of installation and the rich possibilities of its independently written module system. For both its contribution to other communities and its example as a longrunning community itself, we gave Drupal our honorary mention.
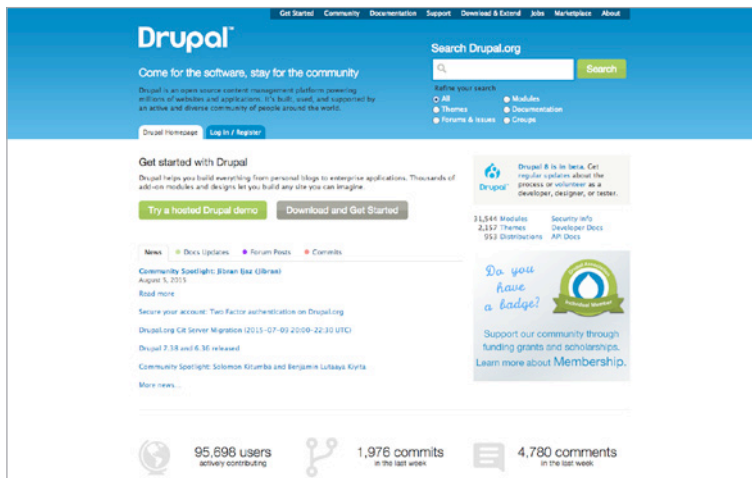
In 2000, permanent internet connections were at a premium for University of Antwerp students, so Dries Buytaert and Hans Snijder set up a wireless bridge between their student dorms to share Hans's high-speed connection among eight students. While this was an extremely luxurious situation at that time, something was missing: there was no simple way to share information and collaborate on this mini-network. This inspired Dries to work on a small news site with a built-in web board, allowing the group of friends to leave each other notes about the status of the network, to announce where they were having dinner, or to share some noteworthy news items. When Dries moved out after graduation, the group decided to put the internal website online so they could stay in touch, keep sharing interesting findings, and keep up on each others' personal lives. The site went live at http://www. drop.org, and slowly its audience changed as the members began talking about new web technologies such as moderation, syndication, rating, and distributed authentication. The discussions about these web technologies were tried out on drop.org itself as new additions to the software running the site.

In January 2001, Dries released the software behind drop.org as an open source project. His purpose was to enable others to use and extend the experimentation platform so that more people could explore new paths for development. Today, more than seven years later, the community of developers and enthusiasts who launched Drupal has grown by many orders of magnitude.

Drupal in 2014

As of February 15, 2014 the number of sites using Drupal is 1,005,489 according to the automated tool on Drupal.org which tallies most of the live Drupal sites on the web.

Source: https://www.drupal.org/node/2211503

Project History

A small, rotating group of individuals ("founder" Dries Buytaert included) serve as the gatekeepers for the core Drupal project, ensuring that code added to the official "core" project is high-quality. Any member of the Drupal community, however, can submit new features, bug fixes, and other enhancements for consideration. In the past year alone almost 1,000 individuals have contributed changes to the Software in that fashion, and an active core of individual volunteers are responsible for maintaining specific portions of the Drupal code. Whenever a change is proposed, any member of the Drupal community can vote on the quality and applicability of the new addition or fix, making the project's participation model one of the most open and democratic in the world of open source. (2008)

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / **2008** / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

yeeyan
http://www.yeeyan.com
http://www.yeeyan.org

yeeyan is a community website dedicated to translating excellent content on the internet from foreign languages (mainly English) into Chinese. (en.yeeyan.com is its English site that translates Chinese content into English.) It started as a translation blog by three founders and soon evolved into an open web2.0 platform to allow other contributors to join in. The site was launched on December 10, 2006. Since then, both the content library and the community have grown at a tremendous pace and in an organic way. As of today, nearly 800 users have contributed about 4,000 translated articles. The project has logged more than three million readers.

The community initially attracted relatively young and innovative people, such as college students and young entrepreneurs, and gradually expanded to include people from different age groups, fields and interests. So did the content library: its categories started from IT and startup and now include finance and investment, health care and life style, social sciences and operations management, poems and novels, and so on.

yeeyan in 2015

Since 2008, *yeeyan* – which in 2014 counted 500,000 registered users and 60.000 translators who collectively translate 50 to 100 news articles every day from English to Chinese – developed a range of new projects. In July 2012 it launched "Project Gutenberg" (http://g.yeeyan.org): Taking after the original Project Gutenberg, initiated by Michael Stern Hart in 1971, to make e-books freely available to people, yeeyan's project focuses on giving Chinese online readers the option of getting foreign books for free. By 2014, *yeeyan* has already translated and published around 200 e-books from different languages. This work is done by 3,000 translators in the online community and two full-time editors coordinating the schedule of the translation of each book.
"yeeyan" also cooperates with Chinese publishing companies, (*yeeyan* tanslators are behind the Chinese version of the autobiography of Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson or Kevin Kelly's "Out of Control") and develops tools for publishers to facilitate online publishing and collaboration.

Project History

yeeyan started as a translation blog by three founders Lei Zhang, Kai Zhao and Jiamin Zhao and soon evolved into an open web2.0 platform to allow other contributors to join in. There is a team of six (two part-time) in China supporting this project.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / **2008** / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

Ashoka's Changemakers
http://changemakers.net
https://www.changemakers.com
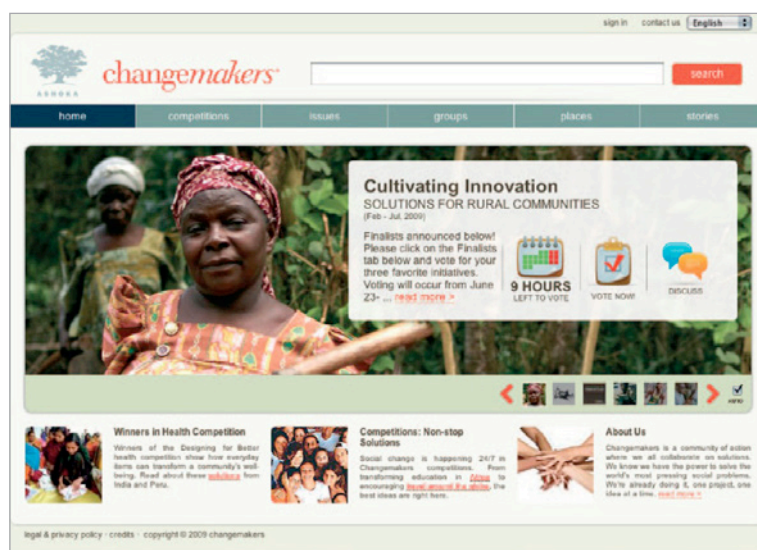
Building on Ashoka's 26-year history of discovering and funding social innovators, *Changemakers* developed an online community to expand the search for social solutions. Originally based solely around online competitions, in response to our community's needs we are now building a set of tools so that our community can continue to engage and communicate beyond and outside of the competition process.

Changemakers is a global community of social innovators seeking to discover the cutting-edge innovators from around the world. We have built the world's first global online open-source community that competes to discover the best social solutions, and then collaborates to refine, enrich and implement those solutions. *Changemakers* begins by providing an overarching intellectual framework for collaborative competitions that bring together individual social change initiatives into a more powerful whole.

To keep the framework dynamic, the online *Changemakers* community identifies and selects the best solutions and helps refine them. The result is global action frameworks, drawing on the work of social entrepreneurs, which seed collaborative action and visibility on a global scale – making a big difference, field by field.

The Open Sourcing Social Solutions model aims to challenge the traditional focus of issues such as human trafficking and conflict resolution with a broader, more complete set of stakeholders. As such, each one serves as a platform for building a practitioner- and investor-engaged community that sparks new waves of innovation around problems stuck on conventional approaches.

From the Jury Statement 2009
Changemakers redefines philanthropy by involving a world-wide community of social entrepreneurs in the grant-making process. A project by Ashoka, *Changemakers* hosts grant competitions for specific topics, such as "quality education in Africa", and requests applicants to publish their proposals on the *Changemakers* website where registered users can add comments, discuss related issues and endorse individuals and organizations. The jury was impressed by *Changemakers'* dedication to transparency, multilingualism and dialog as it seeks to involve a larger and more global community into the often exclusive realm of philanthropy.

As the diverse group of stakeholders come together and see the way their work and concerns overlap and inspire each other, unexpected and important outcomes typically ensue, which the *Changemakers* model makes possible but could never predict.

Changemakers' collaborative competitions have produced new partnerships between India's largest bank and one of India's largest rural women's programs; the connection of thousands of rural farmers to low-cost healthcare providers; and the scaling of an affordable Thai housing solution by the world's largest cement manufacturer. These are just three examples that represent the strength inherent in a change-making community. And they signal the way an entire sector can broaden its focus and integrate a powerful set of solutions and stakeholders bent on change.

Changemakers in 2015

US $600 million+
Funding Changemakers has channeled directly to social innovators

70+
ONLINE COMPETITIONS
Changemakers has hosted to identify the best ideas in social change

20,340 SOCIAL INNOVATIONS
from around the world shared on Changemakers

125 COUNTRIES
represented in this community of innovators, who are sharing best practices and ideas to accelerate a global movement for change

500,000+
COMMUNITY BUILDERS
on Changemakers, its social media sites, and content partners

http://www.changemakers.com/what-we-do

Project History

Changemakers is a global team of approximately 30 individuals. We have a global community of 60,000 registered users, who range from grassroots innovators to professional organizations working on solutions to pressing global needs.

Chaos Computer Club
http://www.ccc.de

The *Chaos Computer Club*, founded in 1981, is world's oldest and most renowned hacking community. Based in Germany, the *Chaos Computer Club* is a non-governmental organization that focuses both on the integration of the hacking community and educating the public on complicated issues. Carefully analyzing the nature of technology and weighing chances against risks in the use of it has been a key factor in the work of the club.

The CCC has proved to be an influential force in German society on a variety of topics, including but not limited to privacy, digital freedom, risks and opportunities for technology and politics for the information society.

Strongly adhering to the principles of hacker ethics, the CCC supports open structures and transparency in politics and society while maintaining a strong stand on the privacy of the individual.

The club is actively using digital media in the form of mailing lists, wikis, websites and podcasts to provide information and discussion of topics to the public.

The CCC, and especially the Chaos Communication Congress event, serve as a forum for the political-technical community encouraging open discourse, unlimited disclosure. The CCC disapproves of secret communities and governments working in secret. The CCC also encourages and supports the development of open systems, open source software and has itself realized a variety of projects at this level.
The influence on German and European society and politics has been strong and has helped achieve some groundbreaking decisions by the

From the Jury Statement 2010
Discussion of the radical changes that the Internet is causing to society has shifted to the center of attention due to Google, Facebook, Apple and others. In politics and the mass media, questions are now arising about issues such as security and the protection of personal privacy in digital communities or social networks, as well as for Internet monopolists. We would like to acknowledge one group that has been working continuously on these topics in the best sense of the term "digital community" for almost 30 years now: the *Chaos Computer Club* (CCC), founded in Hamburg in 1981, explores these questions from the perspective of the people, and is often a thorn in the side of policymakers. The CCC champions freedom of information, also transnationally, and actively addresses technology's impact on society.
For almost three decades – long before the World Wide Web and public access to the Internet (IBM PCs had just been invented!) – CCC members have devoted themselves to the fields of opensource, computer security and censorship. Early on they pointed out gaps in the security systems of banks and communications services. In doing so, the CCC often pushed the boundaries of what was legal in order to call urgent attention to deficiencies: in the 1980s the CCC became known for spectacular hacks (e.g., of the Hamburger Sparkasse, the largest bank in Hamburg). In the 1990s it was still often ridiculed and dismissed by the authorities as merely a gathering of computer freaks. But over the past decade, since Germany's Federal Supreme Court began turning to these net experts for advice in technical matters related to the Inter-

German Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) and similar institutions in other European countries reversing a variety of laws endangering privacy and democracy. This includes but is not limited to
a) a ban on election ballot computers in the Netherlands and Germany, keeping the voting process private and free from computer fraud
b) the repeal of the laws on "online searches" in Germany
c) the repeal of the German data-retention law

Apart from its political work, the CCC has been an outstanding contributor to hacker culture.
a) The Chaos Communication Congress and Chaos Communication Camp have pioneered a new form of conference that has influenced events around the world.
b) The CCC-based Blinkenlights project has been a role model for modern interactive media art in public space.
c) The worldwide Hackerspaces movement has been strongly influenced and motivated by the CCC structure in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

In 1984 the Club became famous for its "BTX Hack", a discovery of security flaws in the state-run Videotex network. A surprised public, basically knowing nothing about computers and networks, suddenly discovered that technologically savvy individuals were able to transfer huge amounts of money from a bank to the club exploiting these flaws. Returning the money and notifying the press about this incident before anybody noticed made the club immediately famous for its "Robin Hood" approach. This kind of "public hack" became the signature feature of the CCC.

net, the CCC has taken on a more substantial role in politics and society. All the same, this unique digital community has at all times been loyal to its motto of remaining "unorganized" and independent. The *Chaos Communication Congress*, which is held annually in Berlin, is a highlight of the international cyber scene. We would also like highlight the fact that, in the field of media art for instance, the CCC's Blinkenlights project caused an international sensation.
Years of work and dedication as well as the intensive efforts of several generations of members have created a basis that should not be underestimated, especially when it comes to the ubiquitous discussion of the effects of the Internet on society. Alongside a broad front of politically active "digital natives" that has been mobilizing recently, the CCC seems to be just one of many movements, but with its history and years of commitment, it is unique.

Project History

The *Chaos Computer Club* was founded in 1981 with *1984* in mind. The club started as a loose community of computer experts and people with various other expertise and interests. In 1984, the CCC also founded its annual *Chaos Communication Congress*, which today is world's biggest meeting for alternative technical research, with more than 5,000 attendees from all over the world. In 1999 the spin-off event, the *Chaos Communication Camp*, redefined the idea of the congress, bringing hackers out in the open air over several days, demonstrating the vast variety of cultural achievements that the worldwide hacker scene has created over a period of many decades. Today the CCC has more than a thousand members worldwide and is influential in many international groups and events. The concept of regional CCC groups CCC has sparked the concept of "hackerspaces"throughout the world, with more than 400 such spaces being founded since 2000. The CCC is generally seen as the core influence on this powerful cultural movement.

Map Kibera
http://mapkibera.org

From the Jury Statement 2010
Out of a total world population of 6.8 billion, an estimated 1.8 billion use the Internet today. As the next five billion go online, these physical communities will determine how they want to represent themselves in digital space. The jury has observed that an ever-larger number of new and old digital communities are relying on commercial platforms such as Facebook, Google Maps, and Twitter, because they make it easier for ordinary citizens to participate in issue-based campaigns and discussions. However, the goals of these companies are often diametrically opposed to the culture of openness, sharing and freedom, which have defined the first two decades of the World Wide Web. Some physical communities do not exist on commercial platforms at all. On Google Maps, for example, the informal settlement of Kibera, outside of Nairobi, Kenya, shows up as a blank. In fact, there are an estimated one million residents living in what is an area smaller than New York's Central Park.
Using *OpenStreetMap*, an open-source, Wikipedia-like online mapping platform, thirteen residents of Kibera set out with GPS devices to create the first freely available map of their community. The map documents the infrastructure of the community in incredible detail, including the location of water towers, churches, nurseries and bars.
Besides being invisible on commercial platforms like Google Maps, the residents have historically not had access to the information collected and published by the Kenyan government and aid agencies about Kibera itself. How we govern the land, people, resources, housing, and businesses of our communities depends on our perception of the physical

Until recently, Kibera, a massive slum in Nairobi, Kenya, was a blank spot on any public map. The Nairobi City Council considers it a forest, and it was not marked on Google and *OpenStreetMap* online maps, despite an estimated one million people living in this informal area smaller than New York's Central Park. Although many non-governmental organizations, government offices and academic institutions have been involved in data collection and even mapping in Kibera, none of the results were publicly shared or available at a local level. *Map Kibera* was created to address this gap, based on the premise that without basic knowledge of geography and available resources, it is impossible for residents and other stakeholders in any community to have an informed discussion on how to improve the lives of citizens.

So in November 2009 *Map Kibera* trained 13 young people, one from each village in Kibera, in the tools and techniques of *OpenStreetMap*. Over three weeks, assisted by local GIS professionals, they collected data with GPS units and edited their map using open-source software. Since we were newcomers to Kibera, this was made possible through strong local partnerships with Kenyan organizations Carolina for Kibera, Kcoda (Kibera Community Development Agenda) and Sodnet (Social Development Network). We also worked widely with the technical and international development communities in Nairobi, building relationships for the project and involving participants from wider society.

Data without a story has little life. At the same time, we engaged community media groups in Kibera (the newspaper Kibera Journal, radio station Pamoja FM, and online video group Kibera Worldwide), showing how they could tell more effective stories using digital media and map information. Using the *Ushahidi* platform, we began development of a community media aggregator, which publishes reports with geographic context on http://kibera.Ushahidi.com/. Realizing that community journalists needed extra support in order to broadcast their stories, we trained Kibera Worldwide's Flip video program in digital reporting and editing, and they accompanied mappers in the field. The result is one of the densest maps ever created in the commons, poised for use in many applications, and an empowered nascent community of data users and storytellers in Kibera. Current projects emerging in Kibera based on this pilot include: a community journalism partnership among media groups within Kibera for improved reporting and online presence; mapping of the locations of CDF projects; merging map data with other research on Kibera from other organizations to create a shared knowledge base; a joint SMS reporting platform for local news and urgent needs.

Map Kibera in 2015
Erica Hagen, co-founder of *Map Kibera*

Map Kibera continues as an organization in Nairobi, with several more projects completed and ongoing. For instance, recently the *Map Kibera* group has documented Kibera's schools on a site called www.open schoolskenya.org. This school project aims to share details on the many small schools in the slum to help improve schools and give everyone better open data about what exists in the education sector. The team also did a lot of paper map distribution and engaged each individual school. So, I would say that we have come a long way since 2010 even though we have not grown much larger. Many of the same people from Kibera are still part of the team ever since the beginning. They also did a great job monitoring the elections in 2013, reporting from each polling station, making election maps, and doing a great deal of media coverage to make sure there was no violence or fraud. There have been a lot of challenges over the years as well

as milestones. Our first milestone was probably getting the registration in Kenya as a Trust. This took a long time and it meant the organization could be Kenyan-owned and led. But that also led to challenges, we had to find funding and manage accounting and the young team from Kibera slum was ill equipped to do all of this. So, my partner Mikel and I founded a US-based company called GroundTruth Initiative and we now often work together with the Kenyan *Map Kibera* group to help in management. We also do our own work elsewhere in the world.

Other lessons include, well, it is very important to build up networks of trust. Digital technology doesn't replace that.

space they occupy, and *Map Kibera* provides a geographic foundation on which Kibera residents can visualize key information that can lead to better governance, such as the distribution of schools, income, and water access. In a video posted on YouTube, for example, Kibera resident Douglas Namale says that the planning department has never had adequate geographic information about Kibera, which has resulted in poor sanitary facilities. The collaboratively produced map of Kibera has been integrated into the *Ushahidi*-based *Voice of Kibera* (http://kibera.ushahidi.com), a website built with open-source tools, which tracks news from Kibera and locates it on a map interface. Readers can subscribe to updates via text message and/or e-mail. Maps are more than geographic representations; they are instruments of power that influence who is heard and what is funded. We congratulate the volunteer mappers behind *Map Kibera*, who use open-source software to challenge their invisibility on commercial platforms.

Project History

Map Kibera emerged as a crazy idea from a Nairobi Bar Camp in April 2009. Mikel Maron and Jubal Harpster developed a project concept, and found funding from Jump-Start International. Much preparation took place before arrival, particularly facilitated by colleagues at *Ushahidi*. Erica Hagen and Mikel Maron arrived in Nairobi October 2009 to lead the project. Partnerships were quickly established with Sodnet, Carolina for Kibera, and Kcoda. A team of local youth was recruited, trained, and created the map with incredible speed. We are now working in partnership with Unicef.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / **2010** / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

FixMyStreet
http://www.fixmystreet.com

FixMyStreet helps people view and discuss local problems they have found and report them to their local council simply by locating the problem on a map or taking advantage of GPS in smartphones.

After entering a postcode or location, users are presented with a map of the area. They can view problems already reported in the area or report ones of their own simply by clicking on the map at the location of the problem.

Problems are reported to the relevant council by e-mail. The council can then resolve the problem in the way they normally would. Alternatively, users may discuss the problem with others on the website and then get together to lobby the council to fix it, or fix it directly themselves.

We sought to use the benefits that Internet technologies could bring to local communities and build a simple service that allows people across the UK to report common local problems such as graffiti, broken street lights, leaking pipes etc. by sticking a pin in the map. What makes it different is that it will provide a public place where users can see what has been reported by other users, make comments on what's going on, and subscribe to alerts when new developments occur. With £10,000 from the Department of Constitutional Affairs (now the Ministry of Justice), maps from Ordnance Survey and time from our core developers, we mixed up some open-source technologies (Yahoo's JavaScript libraries, Perl and PostgreSQL), wrote new functionality to cut up the map tiles from the OS originals and put together a website allowing people to report local problems to their council by clicking on a map.

From the Jury Statement 2010
FixMyStreet helps people in Britain to discuss and report local problems to their town council by locating the problem on a map. Problems are reported to the relevant council by e-mail. *FixMyStreet* provides a simple and effective means for local authorities to receive reliable information about problems they should resolve in their area. The jury would like to honor *FixMyStreet* as a best-practice project for its simple and useful – low-threshold but high-efficiency – dialog between local authorities and citizens with more than 2000 "fixed problems" each month.

Project History

FixMyStreet was launched in Britain in early February 2007 and has subsequently been adapted to create foreign versions in places as far apart as Brazil, New Zealand and South Korea. This site was built by mySociety, in conjunction with the Young Foundation. mySociety is the project of a registered charity, which has grown out of the community of volunteers who built sites such as TheyWorkForYou.com.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / **2010** / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

Honorary Mention 2011
open source social software
for data collection
enabling civic action

Ushahidi
http://www.ushahidi.com

Ushahidi is a non-profit technology company that specializes in developing free and open-source software for crowd-sourcing, visualization and interactive mapping. We build tools for democratizing information, increasing transparency and lowering the barriers to individuals sharing their stories.

Ushahidi started as an ad hoc group of technologists and bloggers hammering out software in a couple days, trying to figure out a way to gather more and better information about the post-election violence in Kenya in January 2008.

Since then, we have open-sourced the *Ushahidi* platform and made it available for free to individuals and organizations. The tool is now being utilized by organizations big and small all over the world. In short,*Ushahidi* has shown what a small team of dedicated people can do, leveraging technology to impact and create change all over the globe.

Some examples of this have been seen in places such as Haiti, where 80,000 SMS reports were received, 3000+ reports thousands published to the map, and hundreds of people helped by local relief groups due to this new source of real-time information. In essence, *Ushahidi*'s work with partners in Haiti served as the de facto emergency SMS system, connecting those in need with the major relief organizations, including the Red Cross, UN, US State Department and many others.

The platform played a decisive role in Russia during the fires of summer 2010, where the citizens self-organized using *Ushahidi* to coordinate their efforts. Media organizations such as *Al Jazeera*, the BBC, *The Guardian*, *Internews*, and the *Washington Post* have deployed *Ushahidi* for various reasons.

Project History

Ushahidi is a disruptive organization that is willing to take risks in the pursuit of changing the traditional way that information flows. The core team is Erik Hersman (co-founder and director of strategy and operations), David Kobia (co-founder and director of technology development), Juliana Rotich (co-founder and executive director).

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / **2011** / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

Honorary Mention 2011
open source social software
for data collection
enabling civic action

Ushahidi in 2015
Interview with Juliana Rotich, co-founder and
Executive Director of Ushahidi

Where does Ushahidi *stand today?*
Juliana Rotich: *Ushahidi* has evolved from making software to becoming an organization that at it's core empowers people. What started as a software platform wound up organically helping other people start their own products and companies. As *Ushahidi* supported other people to deploy their own initiative on the ground, it also organically did this collaboratively, and this process is now formally a core component of our organization. Programs like Making All Voices Count have kick-started other people's projects, many of which are based on software developed outside *Ushahidi*. In addition, *Ushahidi* worked with communities on the ground put up their deployments on our platforms, and this process is now formally a part of the organization as the Resilience Network Initiative (RNI). RNI connects city governments and citizens by uncovering existing solutions to resilience challenges that might not be known; and improving response to these needs by allowing cities and the communities within them to function collectively and respond rapidly through shorter feedback loops.

What have been the lessons learned?
Juliana Rotich: There are many. The biggest lesson learned is that the tech being a small component of success. Ninety percent of the success of initiatives or projects revolves around human resources and planning. In the beginning we were very involved in deployments and to some extent that took us away from making sure that the tech works really well, we had to abstract our role – providing value to users, making sure they are creating impact with the tools. That is why we developed tool kits.
Our tools have been used so broadly in so many contexts; from mapping connectivity to great burger maps, and mapping conflict as with Syria Tracker. As we build new versions of our new software to address the needs of everyone using our tools, the challenge is to address all the requirements in a new version – to iterate on tools that have been used so broadly. We are trying to address all those requirements, which has also slowed down our ability to iterate.

What is the biggest impact of the project?
Juliana Rotich: *Ushahidi* products give people access to powerful software, to move SMS messages and data around to their will, for free and in a way they can bend to their will. We have disrupted the way information flows – we see a lot of engagement from people who may have been considered to be passive, through really simple tools, the tech meets people where they are, they are voicing their reality and networking with their communities to encourage the same. But technology is just one part of what makes an impact. Strategy, building and engaging the community are also part of the special 'sauce' that makes communities more resilient.

Does it have real political impact?
Juliana Rotich: Yes. The tools create information flows in a much more collaborative way of engaging citizens to be part of the solution, and also to provide a channel for the city to respond to its citizens. For example, in Dublin, Ireland, the FixMyStreet software was used to report things broken around the city, like potholes. The city committed to responding within 48 hours.

Who is using Ushahidi *now?*
Juliana Rotich: *Ushahidi* is truly a global tool. There are now over 70,000 *Ushahidi* deployments. We made the software open source precisely so people can modify, customise and localise it. The software is translated to over 40 different languages, which makes it even more impactful.

Software of Resilience – how technology can bring cities and their citizens closer together

Tell us about Ushahidi *in 2030!*
Juliana Rotich: First, *Ushahidi* will keep creating and maintaining open source software for changing information flow – mobile apps, things like Ping, SMSsync – different tools grounded in being able to work not just in Africa, but anywhere.

Second, *Ushahidi* will be a catalyst playing a very important role in communities, such as promoting open innovation with the *iHub* in Nairobi, Kenya, and spinning out companies and initiatives like the Crisis Mappers Network and BRCK, the Wi-Fi hotspot router.

Third, *Ushahidi* will aim to stay influential with expertise, implementation and consulting, with solutions tailored for cities to be more resilient, working with officials in emerging markets to really figure out what it means to have technology as part of the problem-solving kit. We often say technology is 10 per cent of what is needed for impact. The other 90 per cent is typically a lot of partnerships, engagement, commitment, community and expertise around problems such as responding to disasters.

Can anyone modify and use Ushahidi's *open source software? How can cities benefit from this?*
Juliana Rotich: Absolutely. We made the software open source precisely so people can modify, customise and localise it. The software is translated to over 40 different languages, which makes it even more impactful. Cities can benefit by using *Ushahidi* to bring down costs significantly. The tools create information flows in a much more collaborative way of engaging citizens to be part of the solution, and also to provide a channel for the city to respond to its citizens. For example, in Dublin, Ireland, the FixMyStreet software was used to report things broken around the city, like potholes. The city committed to responding within 48 hours.

How is technology and innovation altering urban governance?
Juliana Rotich: Urban governance can be participatory and inclusive when you use tools like *Ushahidi*, particularly in areas that may otherwise be marginalised. For example, Voice of Kibera is an implementation of *Ushahidi* in Kibera, one of the largest slums in Africa, giving a collective global voice to the residents while in the process of digitally mapping the area.

Please illustrate some ways that urban leaders and planners can use the Ushahidi *Data Studio.*
Juliana Rotich: Urban leaders and planners can create their own dashboard using the *Ushahidi* Data Studio. *Ushahidi* can work with cities and resilience officers in the 100 Resilient Cities network to figure out what needs to go into this dashboard. For example, a dashboard of crisis data can be useful for decision-making. A dashboard for Singapore would be quite different from that for other cities.

Do you need technical expertise to modify the software for use?
Juliana Rotich: You should be able to use it without having to know how to code. If you've used blogging software, like WordPress, you can pretty much just work on it.

Name some affordable measures that cities can look into to be more resilient.
Juliana Rotich: Different cities need to be resilient in different ways. In terms of affordable measures, OpenMRS or FrontlineSMS are very useful tools that can be used to manage information in the healthcare space. More importantly, cities need to look at which communities they can work with to be more resilient, which communities to empower, to provide technology and training, so that when something happens, those communities that know how to use technology can help respond. Technology is just one part. Strategy, building and engaging the community are also part of the special 'sauce' that makes cities more resilient.

Are there urban sustainability problems that Ushahidi *plans to solve in future?*
Juliana Rotich: *Ushahidi* tries to solve problems around information flow, which cross-cuts with many urban problems around the environment such as air quality, as well as around service, such as service delivery from the city government. *Ushahidi* can be an enabler of change, to give people tools to gather information, contextualise it and come up with solutions with the larger community.

Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente
http://ciudadanointeligente.org

Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente (Smart Citizen Foundation) is a non-profit social organization based in Chile that promotes transparency and encourages active citizen participation through the web and other information technologies. Its goal is to reduce information asymmetries in Latin America that currently produce a gap in citizens' relations with politics, the market and other social encounters. The organization conceives web technologies as a key tool for gathering, organizing, illustrating and sharing information through the social web, with the aim of promoting informed citizen actions and accountability. Our web platform www.ciudadanointeligente.cl hosts various apps that are used as citizen tools to promote transparency and citizen participation:

www.votainteligente.cl is the online congress accountability website that acts as a watchdog to monitor congress information. It tracks every bill being debated, providing updated information about the contents and the parliamentarians who support them (or not), the debate, both at plenary and committee levels, and the potential interests behind the legislative work. It also has a Profiles section, where web users can track each member of congress individually. *Votainteligente* is also a blogging space for citizens who aim to publish information, opinions or columns related to issues of political accountability and transparency.

www.accesointeligente.cl is a web application that allows citizens to request public information from any government-dependent agency, all from a single window that acts as a one stop shop. It connects automatically with each public agency's online form, it publishes answers as searchable data-bases, and it keeps statistical information of all requests.

www.donar.cl is a website that helps citizens find the right organization to make a donation to. It is a catalog of NGOs based on institutional information about organizations and on the transparency of budget-management information and performance.

Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente was born in 2009, before Chile's presidential election. The platform started out as a unique place to find all the information about each candidate: CVs, stances, views on subjects, etc. Users could compare the candidates' positions side by side, through the sites' candidate comparison app, which served as a resource in the decision-making process.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / **2011** / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente in 2015
Interview with Pablo Collada, director of
Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente

Where does the project stand today? What have been the milestones in setting up the Fundación? What were the challenges and the lessons learned?
Pablo Collada: By now, *Ciudadano Inteligente* has defined a model that balances its projects in the Chilean context as well as its interactions with other organizations in Latin American. Also, after six years working on the civic technology arena, the organization has found a good set of experiences (some more successful than others) developing, redeploying and exchanging technology with other organizations. In those terms, the great challenges have been to consolidate a developing and design team that understand the focus and language with which we as an organization want to build better democracies. On the other hand, we have built a communication and community team that has created a model to engage and an advocacy team that understands the importance of impact. The basic lesson is that to have any kind of impact and to make our work relevant, we need to integrate constantly the work of our technologists, with the one of our advocates and our community builders. Any lack of coordination between these elements reduces the possibilities of any project.

What has been the main impact of the project?
Pablo Collada: There have been some tangible and some intangible impacts. On the tangible ones, we have a lobby law that was approved – we are evaluating its implementation now. Also, very recently, we have participated in the formulation of a series of reforms concerning the system of po-

litical financing in Chile as well as an anticorruption model and revisions of the transparency laws.
On the intangible ones, we have consolidated a very active online community of more than 100,000 users in our social media accounts. Also, we have generated a series of alliances with citizens and organizations on the local and the Latin American level with whom we are collaborating on a diverse set of projects not only focused on transparency issues, but also on other subjects such as childhood, extractive industries and even urban mobility.

What is your vision for the next five years?
Pablo Collada: *Ciudadano Inteligente* is supporting advocacy strategies all along Latin American on several issues such as water, environment, health, urban development and others, through a methodology that integrates transparency and civic engagement elements and with a constant use of technology.
With our recent projects, we have found a priority to work on the development of strong and cohesive communities that define a clear set of priorities and advocacy strategies. When those elements are set, the use of technology comes in smoothly and its impact is not only better appreciated, but also clearer and more positive.

cal information of all requests. Transparency was sliced away from open data in the domain of civic hacking revealing a chasm between Chilean notions of transparency and a European open-data reading of itself for entrepreneurial investment and big society. The jury decided to give the Golden Nica to this project because of its substantial contribution to how technology can serve civic hacking in Chile and help open up democratic processes. Its development does not just impact on society but also serves it.

Project History

Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente (CL) has been founded by Felipe Heusser, a Lawyer from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. It has a solid team of people, all young professionals from different fields: lawyers, political scientists, journalists, sociologists and researchers, together with a large group of interns who help us with our investigations and legislative monitoring.

Apertus Open Source Cinema
https://www.apertus.org

The goal of the *Apertus Open Source Cinema* project is to create a modular camera system composed from several hardware and software modules. Free (FLOSS) software and open hardware are to be utilized to build a device sporting all the features required by professional filmmakers in both studio and outdoor environments. The *Apertus* project also sees itself as more than just a hardware/software initiative. It is a burgeoning platform for filmmakers, creative-industry professionals, artists and enthusiasts. *Apertus* is a community movement, a forum of knowledge, an ecosystem of people supporting each other also advocating freedom. We actively cultivate: free technology, free information, free education, free knowledge, free culture, free arts, etc. This requires that everything we create shall be released to the public and protected with licences that ensure freedom as defined by the FSF (GNU GPL, Creative Commons, etc.).

Film production has long been consigned to the realm of a select few, high-end proprietary manufacturing corporations. Due to the expense involved in research, development and low-volume, high-tech manufacturing, their products were reserved for only the most well-funded clients. This represents the essence of a closed world. Only in recent years have revolutionary changes taken place, with smaller companies creating innovative cameras and other tools at lower prices. However,

Project **History**

Apertus Open-Source Cinema. The core team currently consists of around 15 people. The membership forum currently has over 100 registered users. Anyone can join the community and engage in interaction/discussion or by contributing to the project. The entire community is very difficult to measure, but in combined social media we have a direct reach of around 1000 people.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / **2012** / 2013 / 2014

their technological secrets are protected at all costs, and manufacturers have blocked access to the internal design of their products in fear of losing market share. This has resulted in vague or missing documentation, threats to void warranty – to prevent attempts at reverse engineering – and artificially crippled features. This leads to the paradoxical situation where the technology for filmmaking is now widely affordable at the expense of the loss of freedom to use these tools.

We at *Apertus* believe in open development and rely on fulfilling the four essential freedoms: freedom to access, use and study all knowledge; freedom to modify and change anything; freedom to redistribute all original knowledge; freedom to redistribute all modified and changed knowledge. In the beginning *Apertus* was just about building an open camera. As of 2012, it has become a much broader initiative. It now represents:
· A movement actively spreading the idea of sharing knowledge and working together collaboratively
· A pool of filmmakers and creative-industry professionals collaborating on professional cinema and arts productions
· A missionary, encouraging individuals to develop an active mind, question what has come before them and give back to their respective communities
· A group that researches and publishes knowledge, gives talks, holds workshops and events
· A pool of developers working on free software and open hardware for film- and post-production.

Apertus Open Source Cinema in 2015
Interview with Sebastian Pichelhofer, Chairman of the Apertus association

Were you able to take advantage of the Award of Distinction bestowed on you by the Prix Ars Electronica?
Sebastian Pichelhofer: The prize money we received from the Prix made a major contribution to the fulfillment of our dream of a free, open-source film production camera. We put the money into the development of our AXIOM Alpha prototype camera, which we used to shoot videos that we, in turn, screened in conjunction with our very successful "AXIOM Beta: The first open digital cinema camera" crowdfunding campaign. This approach generated a real groundswell of support for the project, including a large number of early adopters and even a few Hollywood big-shots. During this campaign, we pre-sold about 500 cameras! Our projection was to sell only 250, and we weren't at all certain that this figure wasn't way too high.

What sorts of hurdles did you have to surmount over the past two years?
Sebastian Pichelhofer: The biggest problem throughout was a lack of funds. We've been financing the project with contributions, sponsoring, prize money and subsidies, but, in the last two years, that hasn't amounted to even nearly enough to buy even the hardware we've needed for the production of our prototypes. Thus, several crew members have invested their personal savings in the project. But, in the meantime, the successful crowdfunding effort and an EU subsidy have given us a little breathing room in this respect.

A camera for cinematic film formats is a pretty ambitious project …
Sebastian Pichelhofer: We realized right from the start that our project had the potential to absolutely revolutionize the whole creative

industry and the way films are produced. In preparing our crowdfunding effort, our main cause for concern and source of uncertainty was the question of whether people are really, truly prepared to put up the money to take back their creative freedom or if they would simply rather remain imprisoned in the gilded cage other camera manufacturers have made for them. And in our crowdfunding campaign, we explicitly offered a developer kit, an unfinished camera that amounted to an invitation to supporters to collaborate on the rest of the development process. But this definitely turned off a lot of people who were strictly interested in being users.

By the way, the results of our AXIOM Beta crowdfunding effort were record-setting: the most successful Austrian indiegogo campaign to date, far surpassing the previous record. And this not only solved our money worries; it also got us hooked up to a community of interested people who are able to help with feedback, ideas and stories about everyday life in film production, who are interested in defining the direction of long-term development, and are prepared to actively participate in it.

Why did you decide seven years ago to get into this field of professional film production?
Sebastian Pichelhofer: The founding fathers of this project were all involved in film production. We were all extremely dissatisfied with the equipment we were forced to use back then, and the camera manufacturers seemed to have no interest at all in satisfying any of the points on our wish list. So, the only logical conclusion we could draw was that we had to build our own tools. We took the first step seven years ago: modifying existing hardware to make

it suitable for filmmaking. In other words, we started out on the periphery, and the focus was on hardware. In 2011, the limitations had to do with the hardware that was available to us, and these couldn't be surmounted with workarounds. And this was the point of departure of the next phase: building our own camera hardware. In 2012 at the Libre Software Meeting in Geneva, this open hardware project, which we named AXIOM, made its public debut.

What about your online community of supporters? Where do they come from? And, in retrospect, has this been a transient gathering, or are there still people who've been involved ever since Day 1?
Sebastian Pichelhofer: Both. There are long-term participants as well as those who resurface after a long pause and get actively involved again. And, of course, there are a lot of people who, for a variety of reasons, can contribute only briefly to the project. Generally speaking, the community has grown slowly and steadily. The biggest problem is the threshold barrier of actually working with the camera hardware. At the moment, we have only a single fully functional AXIOM Alpha prototype. And this model has already earned a lot of frequent flyer miles traveling around the world to various presentations and workshops. This growth process will make a quantum leap as soon as we begin delivering the AXIOM Beta hardware to the crowdfunding supporters. Then, there'll be about 500 people worldwide who'll be able to get started experimenting with their camera prototype.

So where exactly does the project stand right now? Can consumers already purchase an AXIOM Beta camera, and what are your plans for a follow-up gamma version?

Sebastian Pichelhofer: The AXIOM Beta will first be delivered exclusively to the approximately 500 crowdfunding supporters. Those who got on board last will be receiving their cameras in August 2015. Then we'll be accepting consumers' orders for the AXIOM Beta. The development of the AXIOM Gamma will proceed parallel beginning in Spring 2015 and run until about the middle of 2016.

Reprinted with permission from: http://www.aec.at/aeblog/en/2014/12/30/apertus/

iHub Nairobi
http://ihub.co.ke

Kenya has set up a robust telecommunications infrastructure and high-capacity international gateways. The country has also made remarkable progress putting an ICT policy framework and implementation strategy in place, complete with measurable outcomes and time-frames.

In conjunction with this rapidly growing number of mobile and Internet users, supporting government policy and infrastructure, the number of computer science and IT students graduating each year continues to increase both in public and private universities. This seems to indicate great potential in ICT not only for current growth in the country but sustained future growth as well.

One quickly emerging digital community is *iHub*, which was opened in March 2010. *iHub* can boast of more than 6,000 virtual members, who interact via the web platform, 240 green members, who physically access the space, and nine red members, who pay for a semi-permanent desk space for a period of six to 12 months. *iHub* is a network and meeting place that enables Kenya's innovators to bring their ideas to fruition. Through *iHub* the technology community, industry, academia, investors and venture capitalists can meet, share ideas and collaborate. The centre is the first of its kind to operate in Africa. It allows technologies to progress from the ideas stage to becoming real products and the key to its effectiveness is open innovation – the process of combining internal and external ideas, as well as internal and external paths to market, to advance the development of new technologies.

From the Jury Statement 2012

iHub is a fast-growing incubator space for Kenyan startups, investors and technologists providing an open space for the technology community in the area. Its focus is on young entrepreneurs, web and mobilephone programmers, hackers, designers and researchers. It is an open community workspace, closely linked to popular concepts such aslike M-Pesa or the *Ushahidi* platform. *African Digital Art*'s has launched their first event there, a website which has transformed the digital art space in Africa by giving thousands of artists a platform to showcase their work on. Other examples of companies started, or connections made, include mFarm (a mobile agricultural information tool), Rupu (a Groupon clone for Kenya) and investors found for Eatout.co.ke, among others. This is achieved through the concept and social software of oOpen iInnovation, which is the process of combining internal and external / online and offline resources in a very favourable and inspiring environment.

Project History

The *iHub* management team consists of passionate, hard-working people who genuinely care about the community because they are part of it. The management team exists to facilitate and support the community but the community themselves are the heart behind *iHub*. The *iHub* advisory board (2011) is made up of five people from the Nairobi tech community: Riyaz Bachani, Wananchi executive, now in charge of Wazi WiFi; Josiah Mugambi, co-founder of Skunkworks, works at Nokia Siemens; Rebeccah Wanjiku, technology reporter and founder of Fireside Communications; Conrad Akunga, blogger, co-founder of Mzalendo and highly respected software architect; Erik Hersman, technology blogger and co-founder of *Ushahidi*.

iHub in 2015 and beyond
Josiah Mugambi, Executive Director of *iHub*
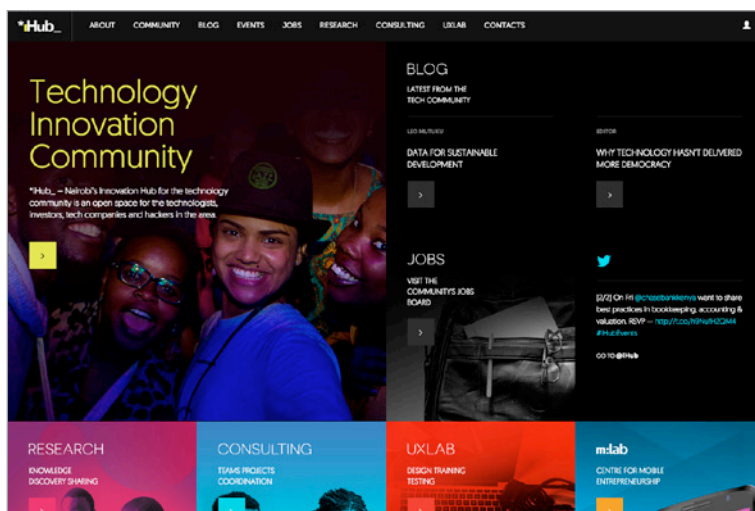
2015 the *iHub* is five years old. It is exciting to see how far we have grown since the idea was born at a Barcamp back in 2008. During some of the initial brainstorm meetings in early 2010, we wondered if we would even be able to fill up the community space on the 4th floor. Two months after opening, it was full. A year on, *iHub* Research started, as well as the m:lab (working then with eMobilis, University of Nairobi and the World Wide Web Foundation). A couple of years later, our User Experience Lab and Consulting initiatives started. In the last twelve months, together with Sanergy, *Ushahidi* and BRCKwe have started Gearbox, which will be a design and rapid prototyping facility strategically located in the industrial area of Nairobi.

The *iHub* is many things. It is an amalgamation of different initiatives that are geared towards catalyzing the growth of the Kenyan tech community. It has done this by acting as a connector, allowing world captains in business and technology to meet with as-piring entrepreneurs, as well as developers, engineers, investors and founders. Through our initiatives, we have been working with individual entrepreneurs and startups towards their establishing or becoming successful companies. The *iHub* has surfaced information that isuseful to startups, corporates, and other organisations and people in the tech ecosystem. In most cases, this is made easily available, accessible and digestible as we believe in creating a new centre of knowledge, with insights from our ecosystem, for the local and global technology community. The *iHub* is not merely an incubator (that's what the m:lab does), or a co-working space (that's on 4th floor).

While looking at the future and in what direction the *iHub* might head, it is tempting to spend time planning out each and every detail. I however like the idea of having a compass rather than a map to guide our journey, keeping us focused on what we stand for and what we want to achieve. Our ultimate goal is to con-tinuously fuel an ecosystem of innovation and technology that allows people to create enterprises that creatively solve problems around them using technology, while shaping the way African innovation is viewed by the world.

Ecosystem
A lot of great work has been done over the last decade by many people and institutions, including the government (infrastructure and policy) as well as various organisations. Last year, I spent some time thinking through our startup ecosystem specifically looking how well we do in these five ingredients: people (talent), culture, density, capital and the regulatory environment.

As more (tech) companies come up, with many (hopefully) growing and scaling regionally and beyond, there will be an increasing need for highly talented people who can work in these companies. People are at the core of any successful company across the world and any country that diligently invests in its people (particularly for a young popula-

tion such as Kenya's) is bound to reap huge benefits sooner or later. We want to play a significant role in this. The main thing is that we want to help develop top-notch talent that can start or help build successful tech companies that can scale regionally and globally.

We will continue to support startups throughout their innovation journey, connecting them with opportunities through our initiatives. After all, the *iHub* is for all parties in this ecosystem that are involved in this entrepreneurship journey of taking an idea from concept to a company. Some of these include individual developers, designers, creatives, researchers, scientists, engineers, technologists, as well non-tech people looking to launch start-ups. The *iHub* will continue connecting these people and startups with individuals and companies providing professional services, corporates, investors, academic institutions, public sector players as well as development and international organisations able to provide support crucial support in growing their ideas and startups into successful companies. We want to be at the forefront of igniting the growth of successful company after successful company.

A lot discourse has taken place online and offline on the availability (or the lack of) of start up financing. We will continue to develop relationships such as the one between Chase Bank and the *iHub*, in line with one of our core values: collaboration. Access to capital is critical for the growth of some of these young companies. As this partnership commences, we look forward to easier connections for these companies with organisations such as Chase Bank. With part-

nerships such as these, Chase Bank and other organisations will also be able to tap into the creative juices and smart, innovative minds of the *iHub* community, resulting in new and innovative uses of technology and ways of financing tech start-ups. There's also room for innovative ways of providing for and raising early-stage funding, which we hope to help set up in the not too distant future.

5 Years from now
Frankly, we can't be too sure of how the *iHub* will look like 5 years from now (same entity? a campus of companies? a university? who knows.). We couldn't even have guessed in early 2010 what the *iHub* would be today. What I am sure of is that if we keep to our commitment, our core mission of catalysing the tech community growth, creating opportunities for people to change the world that they live in, we will have not only achieved what we set out to do, but we will also be on a path for continued innovation and growth.

Reprinted with permission from: http://community.ihub.co.ke/blogs/22534/five

Safecast
http://blog.safecast.org
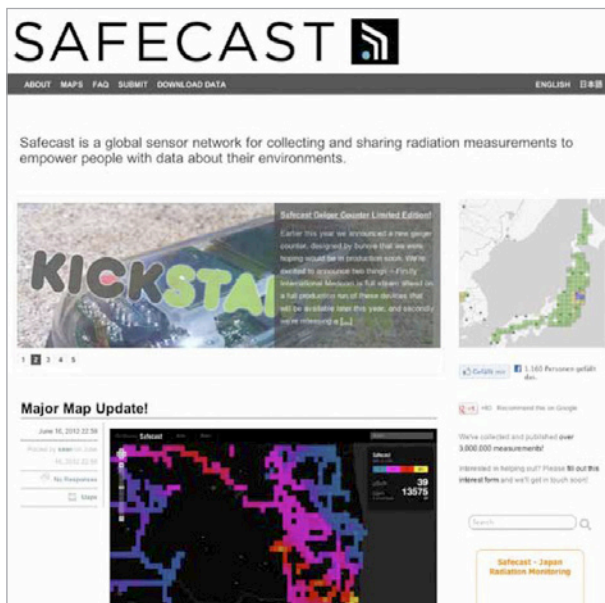
Safecast is a global project based in the US but currently focusing on outreach efforts in Japan. We are working to empower people with data about their environments, primarily by mapping radiation levels and building a sensor network, enabling people both to contribute and to freely use the data collected. After the 3/11 earthquake and resulting nuclear situation at Fukushima Daiichi, it became clear that people wanted more data than was available. Through joint efforts with partners such as International Medcom and Keio University, *Safecast* has been building a radiation sensor network made up of static and mobile sensors actively deployed around Japan – both in the exclusion zone around the reactor and elsewhere in the country. *Safecast* supports the idea that more data – freely available data – is better. Our goal is not to single out any individual source of data as untrustworthy, but rather to contribute to the existing measurement data and make it more robust. Multiple sources of data are always better and more accurate when aggregated. While Japan and radiation is the primary focus of the moment, this work has made us aware of a need for more environmental data at a global level and the long-term work that *Safecast* engages in will address these needs.

Safecast is a volunteer driven non-profit organization with the goal of creating useful, granular environmental data for research and educational purposes. Initially focused on radiation levels in Japan, *Safecast* is now trying to get a radiation baseline for the planet as well as measure other environmental factors such as air quality. All *Safecast* data is published, free of charge, under a CC0 designation. Data is collected via the *Safecast* sensor network as well as submitted by the public. *Safecast* also lends equipment to volunteers so that measurements may be taken on site in various locations. Measurements are taken free of charge. *Safecast* will regularly assess where equipment is best used and will reclaim and redistribute elsewhere from time to time, with priority being given to areas that have not yet been measured.

http://blog.safecast.org/faq/

Project History

Safecast was initated by Joi Ito (Cambridge), Bunnie Huang (Singapore), Sean Bonner (Los Angeles), Pieter Franken (Tokyo) and Ray Ozzie (Seattle) and others.

El Campo de Cebada
http://elcampodecebada.org

El Campo de Cebada is both a physical and a virtual space, an open-source square in the center of Madrid.

Two years ago it was only a void in the city, a hole where the local public swimming pool used to be. The city council demolished the pool to build modern new facilities, but then the economic crisis arrived and they found they had no money for the project. So the space was closed and fenced off. After a few months, and resulting from a conflict generated by a temporary activity held inside it during the celebration of Madrid's White Night, the local residents realized that it was a shame to have 3,500 square meters of closed off land in the center of Madrid and thought it could be a chance for them to participate in their own neighborhood. So they came together with local associations and managed to talk to the government. It was agreed that the space should be managed by the local residents but in co-responsibility with the city council, combining the power of people willing to work for their city with that of the tools and experts that governments can deploy. This also works in the very important direction of legitimacy.

Now the space is co-managed by the residents and the local administration with dynamic and open tools to "save" the traditional understanding gap that often exists between them. It has a fully transparent open-data policy in both the virtual and real worlds, since all the meetings and assemblies are open to everyone, the resources management is published and can be always consulted. Everything is done through the effort of the individuals and collectives sharing their specific knowledge and all the designs are registered, uploaded and open for further improvement. It is a space to develop new ways of understanding and to construct an open-source urbanism based on ad-hoc solutions and common sense.

Project History

El Campo de Cebada in Madrid consists of a large number of individuals and collectives, citizens, experts, administrative assistants and technicians involved in the management and development of Campo de Cebada. They work voluntarily and for free for their neighbors, legitimated by their own work, hence increasingly feeling that they belong to a space that it is theirs because they look after it. They are curators of a city that they are helping to build through their own decisions. In this way everybody has authorship and yet nobody does.

In all this, virtual space as important as the physical, with virtual players being related at the same level and creating this double support for a "community construction." It uses web 2.0 space, a common mailing system and traditional social networks such as Facebook or Twitter (@ campodecebada), creating network dynamics with other community projects in the city, programming an open-source urban square.

The aim is to bring together the largest possible number of players to reach agreement between traditional "enemies." In this way *El Campo de Cebada* works differently to other current self-managed spaces, which reject government involvement. We think the government and its experts must share responsibility with citizens in the construction of the 21st century city. By visualizing, mapping what we do and what we learn with this project, we can spread the idea of implementing new urban models in which the citizen is no longer a static agent with no decision-making power.

The new world context demands these new roles; urban planners and architects are now necessary experts, intermediaries between citizens and power, between administration and urban users. Our final aim is to implement strategies that can hybridize both physical and digital worlds. We understand that *El Campo de Cebada* is constructed at the same time in both worlds and with the same importance; in the physical environment just as in the digital one there is no inauguration day, and it never finishes because it is always updating – a space that provides the opportunity to download but, even more importantly, to upload.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013 /** 2014

El Campo de Cebada in 2015 – 21st century urbanism
Zuloark

Almost four years ago, *El Campo de Cebada* was only a void in the city, a hole where the public swimming pool of the quarter used to be. The city council demolished this public facility in order to build a new and modern-style one, but after they tore it down the crisis arrived and they found they had no money. So the space got closed and fenced. After a few months (and because of a temporary activity held inside during the celebration of Madrid's White Night) the nearby neighbors realized that having more than 2000m² of closed land in the center of Madrid was a shame, they thought this place could be a chance for them to participate in their own neighborhood so they came together with local associations and they managed to talk with the city government's officials. What they agreed upon is that the space should be assigned to the neighbors for management but in co-responsibility with the city council. This last point was very important because in such a crisis context, with no public money in the government treasury to invest, they could have had the temptation of avoiding the responsibility they have with public space maintenance as governors, giving away the problem without caring for it, giving all the work to this willing neighbors without spending a single euro on this piece of public land, and that's was not what we intended as promoters. Even though we did not ask for public money, we did asked for this shared responsibility, mixing the power of people willing to work for their city with the power of governments that can deploy tools and technicians.

Golden Nica 2013
open sourcing of public space
open source urbanism
citizen participation
open data

We've experienced a big success with this public space – achieving enormous using rates with cultural, sport, political and pedagogical activities – mixing them with the normal use of any other public spaces in a city like Madrid (resting, reading, eating, talking, playing etc.). There's so many people coming to use *El Campo de Cebada* any given day, in so many different ways, that it has became a real problem to manage it with volunteers, because local authorities finally didn't take the responsibility we asked from them. They haven't showed up as the necessary force they represent in public life. So all the management is relying on local volunteers that work hard for free. We have problems with garbage, noise, legal irregularities, with the opening and closing time and in sharing responsibility with a lot of different communities that are using *El Campo de Cebada*. This communities are very varied:

Local basketball and football teams, groups of teenagers, weekend tourist from Madrid's outskirts, rappers, different ethnic and immigrant groups, urban garden groups they all have their opinion in *El Campo de Cebada*, something to teach and learn, but managing this cohabitation is also tough. All this uses are happening at the same time, so the space becomes the living representation of the many city layers that exist, all the possible uses of public space concentrated and densified in a single spot, a test tube for what we consider to be 21st century urbanism.

What we can say is that *El Campo de Cebada* could die because of its success if we don't implement new ways of managing it. We need new legal institutions and funds to legitimize it and pay the responsible agents for their job; we need to introduce new roles in city management, neighbors / technicians / local experts who can be paid for managing, improving and keeping the public space in good condition and full of activities. The government must understand that *El Campo de Cebada* is the best public space that Madrid has, with free and varied activities happening everyday with so many users that it has become a big asset for the city. The model, as you know, has won several awards and this, together with the fact that the best public space is the one that you feel as yours because you have been given the chance to make decisions in it, legitimates what it is and what it represents.

We've understood that the best way to do a participative space is to turn this space into a citizen infrastructure, thus we (architects & planners) don't say "How a user must participate": Instead we do an accompaniment process, projecting and delivering a tool with known rules, so the user is free to decide "How they wish to participate". Going to *El Campo de Cebada* is therefore about participating in urban politics, it doesn't matter if you go to arrange a cinema session, to water some tomatoes or if you go to read the newspaper. You are doing politics even if you are not aware of it. The future depends on whether we are able to create new roles for government/administration, citizens and urban planners.

zuloark is a group of architects, designers, builders and thinkers operating within the fields of architecture, urbanism, design, pedagogies, research and development.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013** / 2014

REFUNITE – Refugees United
https://refunite.org

REFUNITE (formerly *Refugees United*) is a non-profit organization working to provide refugee families with a global, anonymous and user-driven tracing system to help them reconnect with missing loved ones. *REFUNITE*'s platform and mobile tools were built via an open-source, collaborative approach to building an organization via partnerships with large corporate players as well as other non-profit organizations.

The platform empowers refugees to take the search process into their own hands and start looking for missing family and friends and it drastically streamlines the family-tracing process for both NGOs and individuals. Refugees can register on the *REFUNITE* search site using information such as nicknames, scars, former locations and the like that are recognizable only to family and close friends. No third party is involved in *REFUNITE*, either in the organization or the running and supervision of the search tool. This digital infrastructure not only fosters greater collaboration and promotes unhindered sharing of information among family tracing and reunification (FTR) agencies, but it also gives refugees the ability to become directly involved in their search for missing family via an anonymous, safe forum with easily accessible tools.

Project History

REFUNITE was founded by social entrepreneurs David and Christopher Michelson in 2008 (under the name "Refugees United") based on a personal experience trying to reconnect a young Afghan refugee with his family. Today the team behind REFUNITE consists of ten employees in two offices, in Copenhagen and Nairobi. The platform itself is open to everyone missing loved ones and currently has 185,000 registered users.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013 /** 2014

African Digital Art
http://africandigitalart.com

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013** / 2014
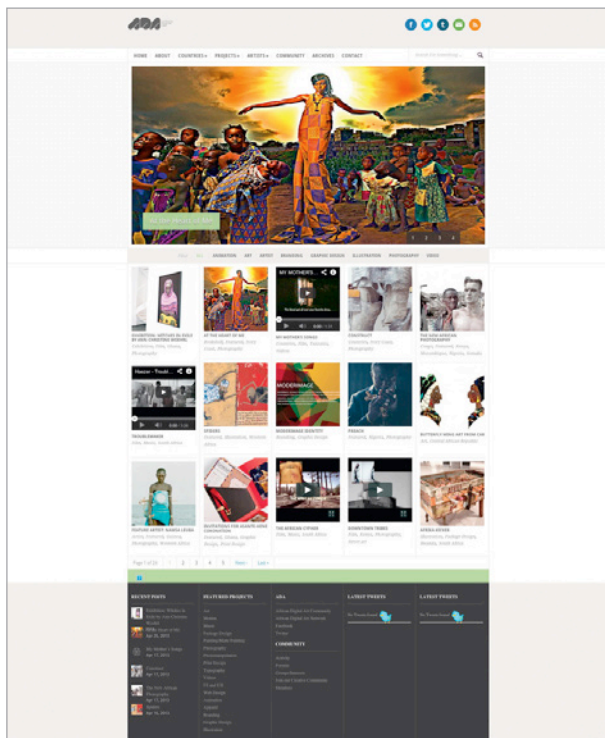
African Digital Art is an online collective, a creative space where digital artists, enthusiasts and professionals can seek inspiration, showcase their artistry and connect with emerging artists. *African Digital Art* is dedicated to serve the African creative economy and mainly directed towards creatives, artists and those with an inclination towards the creative arts. We truly believe that with a healthy creative economy and by encouraging others to participate in design, art and creative institutions Africa can come up with better solutions to the myriad of limitations and problems we face.

When we began *African Digital Art* our audience and participants were mainly online, a rare group of artists, photographers, filmmakers, animators, electronic artists and more. We wanted to ensure that we encouraged those who were in the digital arena to participate, because we believed that the intersection between art and technology is a powerful place to inspire innovation. Today we have become a leading source of inspiration to other artists offline and outside the digital scope and we have become an archive of Africa's changing image.

African Digital Art is focused on encouraging more creative participation in ideas of citizenship by understanding the need for design focus and artistic solutions as it relates to social innovation. We have hosted over ten events, workshops and clinics around the world, which have encouraged creative participation to highlight the importance design and art plays in communities, companies, NGOs, governments and countries, and that it can make a difference everywhere, including in healthcare, science, art and so on. We also hosted a series of remote lectures with digital artists from Africa to encourage budding young artists to participate and experiment with a diverse range of digital forms that encourage civil engagement and participation.

Project History

African Digital Art Network was founded by Jepchumba, an African digital artist originally from Kenya. She begun the project while she was completing her master's degree in digital media. At the time she recognized that there were not any spaces for artists and creatives to participate in the digital arena. The discussion around art in Africa was often restricted outside the contemporary framework. Jepchumba has been listed by Forbes as one of the 20 Youngest Power Women in Africa 2012 and by the Guardian as one of Africa's Top 25 Women Achievers.

Kyberia
https://kyberia.sk
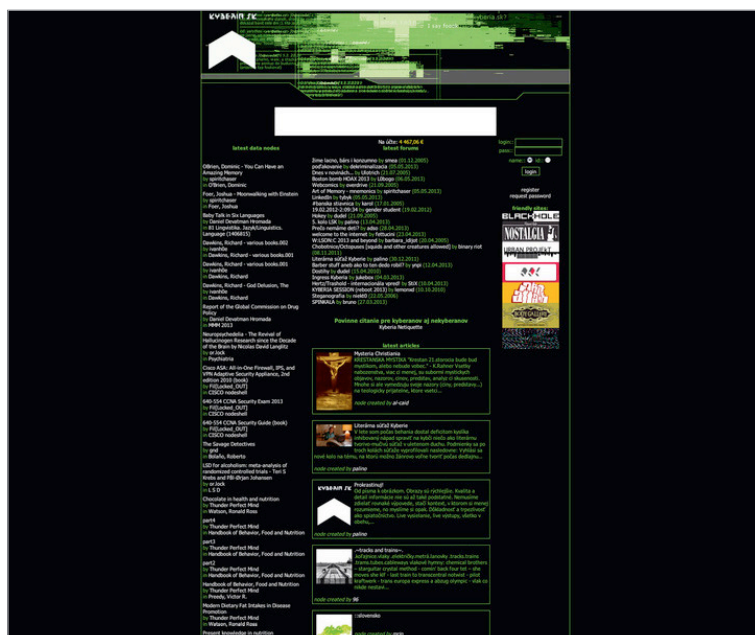
Kyberia is an independent and innovative archipelago of digital communities that emerged in 2001 on the Slovak domain kyberia.sk. Initially a website informing the Slovak public about topics that were ignored on the Slovak web at the time (e.g. trans- and post-humanist philosophies, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, entheogens). *Kyberia* swiftly evolved first into a threaded forum and subsequently into a fully-fledged digital community where hackers, artists and scientists were able to interact in a densely hyperlinked graph.

The current version released in 2006 focused more on internal K-economy and the politics of the community. More concretely, a Senate was created and first trials to allow the system to auto-configure by using the parallel democracy model were run. In 2007 *Kyberia* won the prize of distinction as a "best Slovak virtual community" in the biggest public competition ever organized on the Slovak web. In 2010 code of *Kyberia*'s engine was released on GitHub under AGPL and the community was expanded into Czech cyberspace, where a parallel community was launched on the kyberia.cz domain.

In over ten years of existence, *Kyberia* has transformed itself from a science and hackers' community into a more mainstream community of thousands of active users discussing myriads diverse topics in more than seven million parallel forums, blogs and/or data nodes. One of the most characteristic features that, we believe, transformed *Kyberia* into a social body with a collective identity is that *Kyberia* has a semipermeable membrane (which means that any registration application of a new user has to be approved by at least five members of the kyberia.sk Senate), a upvoting system implemented years before Facebook's "Like" button. Other features worth mentioning include a flexible (node-specific) system of access right attribution, an internal bookmarking and mailing system and API templates. These were innovative in the period when they were released, although today they are common in other social networks as well.

Project History

Kyberia was started in 2001 as a personal website of Daniel D. Hromada who is the officially elected consul and first senator of kyberia.sk. Since then *Kyberia* evolved into a fully-fledged digital community, which has nonetheless succeeded in guarding its complete material independence from the external environment.

Kyberia in 2015 – a social body with a collective identity
Interview with Daniel Hromada, the founder of Kyberia

What is the secret of this project's longevity?

Daniel Hromada: The main secret is rather simple: *Kyberia* is one amongst the most ancients, it emerged before cyberspace was partitioned by the big corporate players. It attracted particular users (Slovak and Czech hackers, artists, scientists) before Facebook, Twitter or G+ even existed: for many among these users, *Kyberia* was first digital community/social network into which they were ever integrated. I suppose that such a loss of "virtual virginity" could, in minds of such users, create a non-negligeable trace, a sort of habitus which makes this "community kernel" to appear and reappear, either on a regular basis, or after shorter or longer pause.

In current era, when cyberspace is already partitioned and habits of its participants fixed, it is almost impossible to create such an intimate relation between the user and a new "start up" project: for today, any project is just one among thousands of other projects, any domain is only a point-without-interest in the space which is practically infinite.

But there are other reasons as well: *Kyberia* does not harass its users with advertisements, implicit business models, legal licences and other corporate mess. It is not a megapolis like *Facebook,* but rather a kind of a cybernetic village. This does not mean that it would be less memevirally insane than *Facebook,* it just means that in its "virtual insanity", it is nonetheless still more intimate, more personal and more human. The fact that a new user has to pass through the registration procedure makes it more difficult for toxic egos and propaganda bots to get in, whole community thus seems to be somewhat

more resilient to no matter what perturbation can come from the external world. Thus, *Kyberia* for almost 10 years already, *Kyberia* is in a state of slowly unfolding a homeostasis which is neither pure progress nor pure decay but something in the middle: Life, perhaps.

At last but not least, the community seems to be able to reproduce: in a sort of virtual-endogamy, non-negligeable amounts of *Kyberia* members who have kids with other *Kyberia* members and it can be expected that the old IDs shall, sooner or later, transfer their IDs to their progenies. Given that *Kyberia* exists already almost 15 years, we need 10 more years to go to attain the 25years considered to be "one human generation". Only if we succeed to surpass this threshold could we, I believe, start speaking about "secret of longevity".

You say it is a "social body with a collective identity" – what are the implications of such an approach for the community / members?

Daniel Hromada: It is about bi-directional flow of information between the whole (i.e. community) and its parts (i.e. members). The more feedback loops You have in the System, more complexity will emerge out of it: I have somehow intuitively implemented this principle into the very architecture of the system long before I knew anything about the theory of graphs, complexity or A.I. Later, there has been a tendency to make this intuition operational in scripts implementing the Parallel Democracy Model (PDM): ideally, PDM could make it possible for the users of the community to directly influence many parameters of *Kyberia*'s global functioning (related to imigration rate, amount of new

Ks generated and distributed, ostracization thresholds etc.) with simple act of vote-giving aggregated in a quite innovative way. The goal is to make system able to adapt more swiftly to any possible challenge which may emerge in the future, but to do so principially in a bottom-top fashion: netizens should decide, not the caste of administrators. Unfortunately not many members are in fact willing and ready to constructively participate on the construction of a common cathedral: it is much easier to criticize those "up there" than to accept that those "up there" are in fact "we here" and subsequently execute responsible decisions and perform courageous actions.

Which are your visions for the project?

Daniel Hromada: 0) To protect its existence and to protect the raison d'etre of its existence which is "protect the diversity in the cyberspace".
1) To endow it with our own, state-of-the-art natural language processing semantic search engine.
2) To get more distributed and more decentralized and to replicate into czech, german and potentially other regions of European cyberspace.
3) To use *Kyberia*'s database, or its specific subset, to train the collective artificial intelligence representing the mind of Slovak intelligentsia during the first decades of the third millenium.

Numbeo
http://www.numbeo.com

Numbeo is the world's largest database of usercontributed data about cities and countries worldwide. It provides current and timely information on world living conditions including the cost of living, housing indicators, healthcare, traffic, crime and pollution. By May 5, 2013, it had 744,662 prices in 3,390 cities entered by 87,370 users. In July 2015, it had 1,883,072 prices in 5,277 cities entered by 235,058 users.

Numbeo provides a tool to see, share and compare information about costs of living worldwide, by providing online software which:
- provides a website with a free list of prices
- uses the wisdom of the crowd to obtain as reliable data as possible
- provides a system for systematic research on the cost of living and property markets
- calculates derived indexes such as the consumer price index, domestic purchasing power, etc.
- provides a system for other systematic economic research on huge dataset of worldwide data

Project History

Numbeo was created by Mladen Adamovic in 2009. He has worked as a software engineer developing internal applications at Google Ireland (2007–2009), as a software engineer for Sungard (2010–2011) and as a project manager for Troxo (2011). He was a senior teaching assistant at the University of Banja Luka (2004–2007). He obtained a BSc in mathematics from the University of Belgrade in 2003 and an MSc in electrical engineering from the University of Banja Luka in 2006.

Seeed Studio
http://www.seeedstudio.com/blog

Seeed Studio is an open-hardware facilitator based in Shenzhen (China). Its goal is to promote the maker movement and the spread of maker culture (do-it-yourself, do-it-together, innovative spirit etc.).
We started *Seeed Studio* because we love the concept of open hardware. With the development of the maker culture and the upsurge in open hardware, we are taking advantage of the favorable situation to start research and development in open-hardware components and modules and then to provide them to the community. Communicating with the community members, we learned that one of the main problems for innovators is the difficulty of getting ideas into prototypes and from prototypes into production.

Hence we decided to support the community by providing innovative and cost-effective prototyping solutions for innovators. We help innovators turn their concepts into reality, shortening the time consumed in the idea-to-prototype-to-product process. The participants are all the community members: *Seeed* staff, cooperative designers, artists, teachers, students, and many others. Open hardware is used in many fields, such as environmental detection and protection, near-space exploration, the Internet of Things, clean energy, fashion, wearable electronics, arts etc.

We also organize or support various activities/events in order to expand the community and strengthen the interaction. Currently, *Seeed Studio* is one of the world's most important open-hardware providers, maker-event participants and maker-culture propagators.

Project History

Seeed Studio (CN) was founded in 2008 in Shenzhen. The open-hardware facilitator supports the community by providing innovative and cost-effective prototyping solutions to innovators.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013 /** 2014

Seeed Studio in 2015
Interview with Eric Pan, founder of *Seeed Studio*
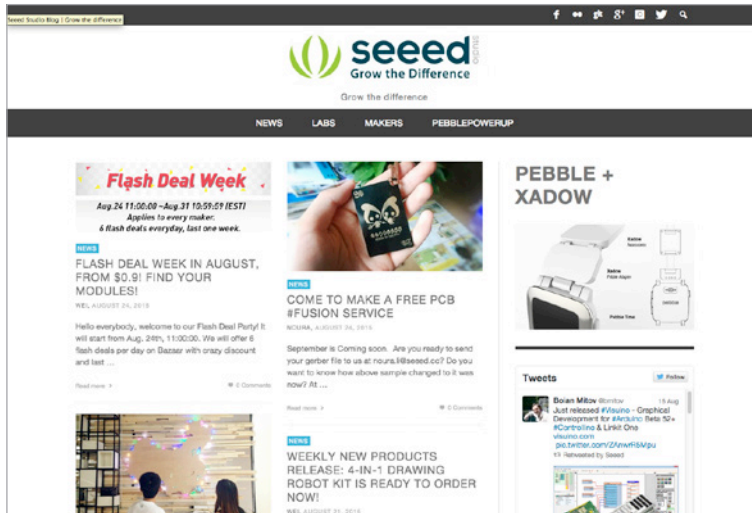
What have been the main challenges / achievements?
Eric Pan: The challenge was mainly to coordinate complexities, as technology innovations becoming pervasive and long tail. For *Seeed Studio*, it was very difficult to convert traditional industrial resources to support new types of cross boundary projects. Luckily we formed the basic infrastructure and keep it going.

What is the biggest impact of the project?
Eric Pan: We are proud that people without engineering background can have the latest technologies at their disposal and bring their ideas all the way to distributable products.

(How) does it foster innovation?
Eric Pan: Thanks to open hardware and maker culture, people with different background can inspire each other and collaborate easily. As the difficulty of technology is lowered, it's adding a powerful element to bottom up innovations.

How do you relate to the international network of makers?
Eric Pan: We see the network as an ecosystem and actively support its development. Besides providing open source parts and services, we also help promote maker culture globally.

What is your vision for the next years? Will open hardware go mainstream?
Eric Pan: Both major corporations and grass root innovators are involved more and more in the ecosystem, and open hardware is the key language to communicate between them.
Additionally, the Chinese maker environment will be greatly accelerated by government measures, thus creating a huge potential market and partner pool.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / **2013** / 2014

Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan
http://fumbaro.org

On March 11, 2011, Eastern Japan was hit by a massive earthquake. The great East Japan earthquake and the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant accident plunged Japan into a national crisis. The numbers of missing and dead reached 18,800, and a further 2,916 died from the wider effects of the complex disaster. In all, 21,716 people lost their lives (as of June 2014).

Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan (PFEJ) is an autonomous crowd-sourced platform using social-network services (SNS) and the philosophy of structural constructivism systemized by Takeo Saijo PhD. It made it possible to cope with the critical situation by inviting people to connect autonomously and to set up various projects quickly. *Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan* became the largest volunteer community organization, with each group having a wide range of skills and cooperating on the Internet.

Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan began as an emergency supplies project. At first, the damage level of this massive and unprecedented earthquake varied so widely depending on the area that it was extremely difficult for the government and the existing framework to identify and determine every area and provide the necessary support. Thus large quantities of supplies sent by many citizens around the country did not reach small and medium-size shelters and people in houses hit by the tsunami. What victims really needed varied from situation to situation. A shelter in a village suffering from power failure did not need large quantities of clothes or picture books but a chainsaw to cut wood to keep themselves warm. Everything in the devastated areas had been washed away, and it was difficult for the survivors to move around or access the Internet, so their actions were extremely limited. First, Saijo visited the devastated areas and started by listening to the individual requirements. With this information he set up a homepage (HP), where he published details of the individual and unofficial shelters' needs as well as in his blog the next morning. He linked the URL of this homepage to his Twitter account, publicized the fact that survivors living in small shelters and individual shelters could not receive supplies, and listed what was currently needed in the affected areas. Publishing

Project History

Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan (PFEJ) is a new support model constructed by Takeo Saijo, PhD to cope with the unprecedented disaster after the massive earthquake hit Japan on March 11, 2011. "Fumbaro" means "hang in there", especially used by local people in eastern Japan. Our basic purpose is supporting the earthquake/ tsunami survivors. And our system using social networking services (SNS) serves to link supporters from all over Japan with the survivors. About 3,000 SNS members in the Facebook group maintain and assist our activities. There are various types of volunteer workers in PFEJ, such as businesspeople, full-time home workers, medical workers, artists and craftspeople, educators, scientists and technicians and people from the media, who use their respective skills to contribute to the maintenance, management and development of the project. In addition, over 1,000 supporters around the country donate to PFEJ regularly. Everybody works without pay and all donations go to the devastated region.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / **2014**

these requirements on Twitter tended to cause an over-supply, on the other hand the HP could update the information in real time. So donors were requested to update information about their donations as soon as they had been sent, and the HP announced it as soon requirements were satisfied, thus avoiding continued unnecessary supply.

Based on all this information about survivors' needs and effective means of delivery, Takeo Saijo published a downloadable version of the *Fumbaro* brochure and asked volunteers to act as salespeople spreading the *Fumbaro* methodology when they were delivering the supplies, asking survivors about their needs and handing out the brochure. This enabled survivors to call *Fumbaro* directly, making it possible to rapidly cover hundreds of shelters scattered around a wide area and provide continuous support. As the result, direct support reached more than 3,000 small and medium-size temporary shelters with 155,000 items and more than 35,000 deliveries to places not covered by municipal support. In addition we applied Amazon's wish list to direct support, delivering more than 55,000 items. Because the administration was unable to get large quantities of supplies to affected areas, we matched these supplies to shelters in need and were able to send more than 800 tons of supplies to the victims.

Since supporters put their names and phone numbers on the delivery box, survivors knew who they were receiving the supplies from and could make a thank you call. Hearing the voices of the survivors, supporters understood how severe the situation was and how much their help was appreciated. This connection motivated supporters to further action. Some started direct support for *Fumbaro*, others visited the affected area with supplies personally. The structure thus directly connected supporters and survivors.

In an emergency, when conventional top-down administration systems did not function, we struggled to construct a structure that could establish an autonomous victim-support system connecting supporters' wishes to victims' needs. Sharing Saijo's structural constructivism system among the volunteers made it possible to realize autonomous and organizational activities. For example, there is "the principle of methods" in the meta-theory. According to this, the effectiveness of a method depends on purpose and situation. So individuals may disagree about the right method, but there is no general method. In fact almost nobody knew what they should do in the face of the unprecedented disaster in which existing methods did not work. However, the definition of the principle of method, "the effectiveness of a method depends on purpose and situation," could be universal. So we can return to this principle any time we need to devise a good method.

More than 3,000 volunteers were mobilized for more than 30 projects such as Study Aids for Kids, Job Assistance, Sewing-Machine Job, Teaching Traditional Nuno-Zouri Making, Hand-Made Goods, Encouragement Letters, Geiger counter Use, Entertainment, PC + Internet Use, Horticulture, the Fishery Project and the Manga/Illustration Charity Auction Project.

Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan has realized the support of disaster-affected areas as the next generation crowd-sourcing model, which functions autonomously for the citizens and by the citizens, and also as an autonomous network model for civil volunteers. According to its essential principle, the effectiveness of this method depends on the situation and the aim. *Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan* maintains the approach of not clinging strictly to one model, by promptly winding up a project team when it has completed its role, even changing the organizational structure according to the situation. In the face of a massive disaster, problems of organization immobilized by precedentalism tend to surface. We have learned a lot from these lessons in our creative approach.

Freemuse
http://freemuse.org

Freemuse is the world's largest database on music censorship. Its goal is to document violations of freedom of musical expression, lobby internationally for musicians rights to freedom of expression, support musicians at risk and establish a knowledge center for media, the public, artists and cultural organizations. *Freemuse* contains news stories, interviews with persecuted and censored musicians from all over the world, more than twelve reports on music censorship, and research articles and actions supporting music creators at risk.

Freemuse was born out of the 1st World Conference on Music and Censorship, held in Copenhagen in November 1998. The conference brought together professionals from diverse fields and countries – musicians, journalists, researchers, record industry professionals and human-rights activists – to examine, discuss and document a wide variety of abuses from the apparently benign to the overtly extreme. The alarmingly widespread nature of censorship of music prompted the conference delegates to initiate the creation of a new organization, *Freemuse*. Its guidelines are the principles outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights as they apply specifically to musicians and composers. The *Freemuse* Secretariat was established in August 2000.

Since 2011 *Freemuse* has broadened its scope to include projects advocating freedom of all artistic expression and initiated the Artsfex global network for the protection of artistic freedom. In 2013-2014 *Freemuse* was involved in several projects analyzing and defending artistic freedom of expression.

Freemuse is guided by its charter: http://freemuse.org/archives/198

From The Jury Statement 2014
For the second Award of Distinction, we have chosen *Freemuse* (The World Forum on Music and Censorship), an independent international membership organization advocating and defending freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide. In the words of *Freemuse*: "[In] countries like Sudan, Afghanistan and China, violations of musician's rights to freedom of expression are commonplace. In the USA and Algeria, lobbying groups have succeeded in keeping popular music off the concert stage, and out of the media and retail. In ex-Yugoslavia musicians are often pawns in political dramas, and the possibility of free expression has been aversely affected." We believe that music is a powerful tool to bridge language and cultural barriers and convey strong messages that can help drive change. The fact that musicians are being targeted throughout the world, arrested, harassed and repressed, makes it even more relevant in a scenario of increasing surveillance and censorship to promote a community that empowers them and advocates free speech.

Project History

Freemuse is an international organization advocating freedom of expression for musicians and artists worldwide. *Freemuse* was initiated by Marie Korpe, its director from 1999 to 2013. Currently the team consists of Ole Reitov, Mik Aidt and Rikke Nagell. Over the years, numerous journalists, scholars, artists, media workers and activists have been involved.

Goteo
http://goteo.org
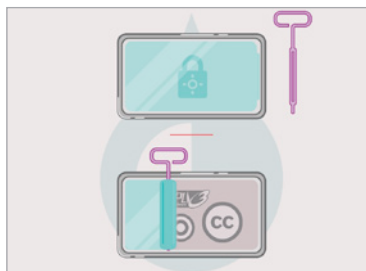
Goteo, the open crowd-funding and crowd-sourcing platform, is an initiative that started at the end of 2011 and in two years has helped raise more than €1.5 million for open-source, copyleft and commons-based projects, as well as thousands of non-monetary collaborations, configuring a community of communities. Managed by the Fuentes Abiertas Foundation, a non-profit organization created to assure the principles of openness, neutrality, transparency and independence in the development and maintenance of the project, apart from being itself *Goteo* stands out as an open-source tool for managing its "capital riego" (feeder capital fund) via specific calls with partner institutions.
We also promote an experimental laboratory and develop co-creation methodologies around the commons, open-source and free knowledge in different social, cultural and economic fields, having facilitated more than 50 #LearnByFunding workshops. This means that more than 1,000 people from cultural, social, academic, entrepreneurial, environmental and many other areas have trained and advised on collective funding, as well as being involved in facilitating discussions about openness, transparency and copyleft licensing among other things for projects they care about.

Why are we different
- Distributed collaboration: In *Goteo*, apart from monetary contributions, people collaborate by offering services, material resources, infrastructure or by participating in specific microtasks needed for the development of projects.
- Collective return: *Goteo* seeks a social return on investment and for this reason, apart from individual rewards for backers, the system is based on collective returns for the development of the commons.
- Transparency: Each campaign must specify the details of where the money will go if it succeeds. Added to the two-rounds scheme, it makes even very successful campaigns responsible for how to use extra money obtained.
- Two co-funding rounds: Each with a duration of 40 days, the first is an "all or nothing" round for the minimum essential budget, while the second is for an optimum sum to carry out additional improvements.
- Tax-deductible: Donations to projects via *Goteo* are tax-deductible
- Training: More than 1,000 people from cultural, social, academic, entrepreneurial, environmental and many other areas trained and advised throughout the 50 workshops.
- Community of local nodes: *Goteo* grows as a community of communities, a network of local, independent, inter-coordinated nodes which serve to localize the digital, contextualizing it. The first has started already in the Basque country, supported by the Basque government. The next ones are in Andalusia (Spain) and in Nantes (France).

From the Jury Statement 2014
As one of our Awards of Distinction, we chose *Goteo*, a social network for crowd-funding and distributed collaboration (services, infrastructures, micro-tasks and other resources) for encouraging the independent development of creative and innovative initiatives that contribute to the common good, free knowledge and open code. We find *Goteo* to be very precisely shaped and making a difference by implementing the crowd-funding model from an opensource framework. It focuses on funding projects that can have a strong local / national / regional impact and empowers citizens and highlights the power of communities in addressing the mounting challenges of Spain in the context of financial crisis and social cuts.

Project History

Goteo is an initiative managed by a non-profit organization Fundación Fuentes Abiertas (Open Sources Foundation), promoted by Platoniq, with a current staff of eight people) in order to ensure that the core principles of openness, neutrality, transparency and independence are maintained through all its development and management, the foundation also promotes an experimentation laboratory through practical workshops which in turn are applied for the benefit of the common good, open-source code and free knowledge in various social, cultural, and economic spheres. The Fuentes Abiertas Foundation is mainly promoted by Platoniq, an international cultural association founded in 2001, which works from the social base through bottom-up processes, cooperating with public institutions, universities and companies with affinity for the collaborative economy's philosophy and the principles of free knowledge.

iFixit
https://www.ifixit.com

iFixit is an international, open-source, online repair manual for everything. Our mission is to teach everyone to fix their things. We provide people with the knowledge to make their stuff work for as long as possible. We believe that repair saves money, fosters independence and protects the planet.

Our culture is filled with innovative engineers and beautiful designs. But our desire for new products has fostered a throwaway culture. Manufacturers are adding proprietary measures to prevent repair and our repair shops (and skills) have diminished. But people cannot afford to keep throwing away cell phones every two years or throw clothes into the trash every time seams tear. It is important to get every bit of functionality from the things we own before we safely recycle or repurpose them. If everyone had free access to repair manuals for everything – if we could replace the throwaway culture for a repair culture – we would see social, environmental, and economical improvements around the world.

The *iFixit* digital community is diverse and growing. In 2013, we taught repair skills to over 40 million people from almost every country and published over 10,000, crowd-sourced repair guides. People everywhere are providing a continuous stream of information by writing step-by-step repair manuals, participating in forums and telling their repair stories.

Every year, over 20 million tons of e-waste is produced globally. People are throwing away devices – from appliances to game consoles – just because of cracked screens or insufficient RAM. Often – if devices are not left to molder in drawers – they are shipped overseas into developing regions, where they are burned for their raw materials. Worse, communities that are burning the e-waste do not know that they are breathing in toxic chemicals such as mercury and lead.

Project History

iFixit is the international, open-source, online repair manual for everything. Founded in 2003, by Kyle Wiens and Luke Soles, *iFixit*'s thousands of repair manuals and product teardowns have helped teach repair to people all over the world. Their mission is to provide people with the knowledge to make their things work for as long as possible. Because they believe that repair saves money, fosters independence and protects the planet.

Even recycling is not as effective as we would like to think. There are critical rare earths inside every electronic device, and most are not salvageable. For example, cell phones are composed of 500-1000 components and it is too difficult or too expensive to separate them out. Recycling is better than throwing away, but it is not the solution.

Our community has banded together to fight obsolescence in many forms. Our cell-phone unlocking campaign, Free Our Phones, which involved a White House petition with over 100,000 signatures, recently led to the US House of Representatives passing a bill that could legalize cell-phone unlocking. Our repair pledge is activating people to pledge that they are moving beyond being consumers.

We cannot keep producing billions of electronic devices every year, and we cannot rely on recycling alone. Repair is necessary, now more than ever. Because repair will give your things second, third, and fourth lives – meaning less stuff in landfills, other countries, and in recycling markets.

iFixit will continue to expand its range of repair manuals. We are preparing a collection of outdoor equipment and bike repair tutorials, and developing partnerships with leading manufacturers such as Patagonia. We are expanding internationally much faster than in the US. We recently launched German, Italian, French, and Dutch versions – and we will be adding more languages and expanding our translations throughout 2014.

Each of us has a responsibility to keep things working as long as possible and to dispose of them properly. Being responsible is easy: sell or donate stuff you no longer need to people who can reuse it. Repair things you can still use, and recycle it when there is no longer any use for it. We are making great progress, but we have a long way to go.

Islibrary Project
http://www.islibrary.com
http://www.weibo.com/islibrary

The *Islibrary Project* was started in 2009. Today there are 140 Islibraries in 56 cities in China with more than 5,500 members, 4,800 volunteers, 80,000 books and over 100,000 visitors a year.

Islibrary is more than just a library. It is a community interaction platform for reading and communicating. Residents can enjoy reading here for free, participate activities or be a part of the volunteer team. By providing a platform like this we hope that we can help to generate communication between residents and to make a better and loving community.

The credit for its huge influence in communities and the successful expansion of our library to more than 100 branches is due to the Web2.0 philosophy on "co-construction and sharing":
Space 2.0: Building up Islibraries with the support of its partners (cafes, youth hostels, unused space in residential communities) saves costs on space;
Funds resources: Funds provided by the space supporter, for example the real estate of the community, cover the operational funds of the *Islibrary*, and the cafes and hostels support the operation of their Islibraries themselves.
Books 2.0: Most of the books in an *Islibrary* are donated by readers, which not only solves the problem of the costs of book purchasing but also builds up a link between the library and the readers.
Management 2.0: The daily management of an *Islibrary* is assumed by volunteers. Everyone in the community is the owner of the library, they can organize activities whenever they want.
Promotions: Weibo, WeChat and Douban are three of the most popular social media tools in China. We have registered official accounts to maintain active interaction between our readers and all the Islibraries.

Project History

Islibrary (CN) was founded by Liu Qiong-xiong, executive editor of Cityzine, founder of Happy Intern, LCY Management Consulting and iMart. Chief consultant: Yu Zhihai, founder of 1KG More, project leader of 1kg Box and a project leader of *Islibrary*. Executive director: Liang Jiaxin, MSc psychology, change maker, member of the Association of Science Communicators and founder of the One Minute Class. Director of project development: Zeng Yongyan, master of marketing research, leader of *Islibrary*. Project manager: He Ziwen, a leader of the Human Library project and other LCY projects, experienced in activity planning and public relations.

Lifepatch
http://lifepatch.org/

Lifepatch is a citizen initiative that works in creative and effective applications in art, science and technology. It focuses on the arts and science through education and accessible technologies that are practical and useful for citizens around them through the development of creative and innovative practices such as biological technology, environmental technology and digital technology. In practice, *Lifepatch* enriches the culture emphasizes the spirit of DIY and DIWO by inviting the target audience to become involved, to examine, explore, develop and maximize the function of technology in both the theoretical and practical use to society and culture itself.

Lifepatch's main focus is in disseminating tactics for dealing with day-to-day issues within specific communities, mainly through education, collaborating with individuals and communities from art and science, either from formal or non-formal practical background. It collaborates closely with formal educational institutes such as the Microbiology Laboratory of Agriculture Faculty Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, to initiate Jogja River Project from 2011 to 2013. This invited citizens to investigate water quality of the rivers in urban areas of Yogyakarta while also documenting the social activities of the communities along the riverbanks.

Lifepatch consciously chose to style itself as a "citizen initiative" in order to not limit the results of its activities just to an art outcome/artwork. It sets a flexible platform and conditions for its members to initiate projects that can be implemented according to the needs of the surroundings, society, the public and the people, yet which are still based on each person's own interests and the community's vision. In talking of a target audience, *Lifepatch* is pointing at different groups of people depending on what they are working on. Each target group then has the chance to be more than just participants but also to develop, hack or disseminate a shared idea. To reach a wider audience, *Lifepatch* combines real physical activities with a virtual platform to share the knowledge and expanding networks both locally and internationally.

Larger-scale and long-term projects initiated by *Lifepatch* members include: Urbancult (an online mapping and location-based database of street art), the Jogja Rivers Project (a citizen initiative in river environment monitoring, mapping and documentation), and they have recently finished a collaboration with the International Hackteria Society for HackteriaLab 2014, Yogyakarta, a two-week intensive meeting point and multidisciplinary collaborative opportunity for makers, whether they are artists, scientists or hackers, etc).

Project History

Lifepatch was established on March 26, 2012 by several people from various disciplinary backgrounds with both formal and informal education. Even though the organization is still relatively new, the collaboration between has been established for years. *Lifepatch* now has members in various cities, such as Yogyakarta, Pekanbaru and Bogor. Its members include: Agus Tri Budiarto, Agung Firmanto, Budi Prakosa, Andreas Siagian, Nur Akbar Arofatullah, Adhari Donora, Arifin Wicaksono, Ferial Afiff and Wawies Wisdantio. Collaborators: the Microbiology Laboratory of Agriculture Faculty Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, led by Irfan Dwidya Prijambada and Donny Widianto (http://faperta.ugm.ac.id); Green Tech Community, Yogyakarta; Hackteria (http://hackteria.org); (Art)ScienceBLR and School of Life Sciences EPFL in Bio-Design for the Real World (http://biodesign.cc).

Montenoso
http://montenoso.net/
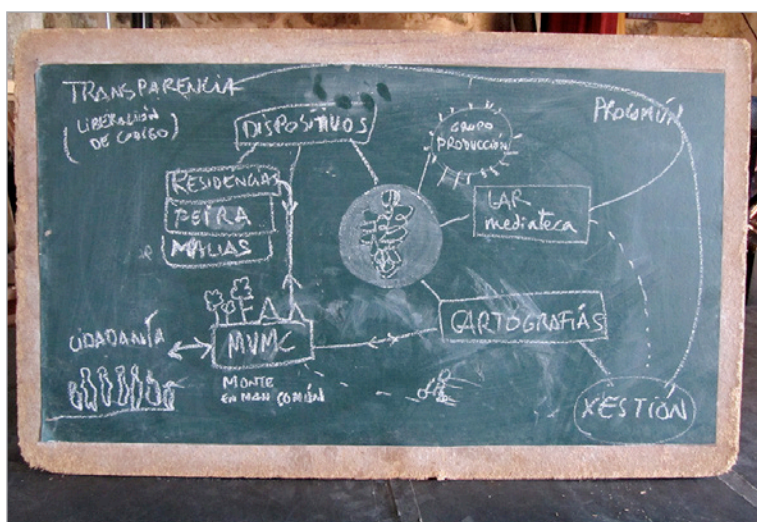
Montenoso is an open project whose main aim is to promote and high-light communal land communities (Comunidades de Montes Veciñais en Man Común, CMVMC) of Galicia (Spain). Communal land communities in Galicia represent a property modality and a type of good management that breaks the classic dichotomy of pubic against private, introducing an alternative kind of collective property. The specificity of these lands is determined by the fact that the property holders are people who live on the land and this land is not hereditary. Neighbors are those who manage their CMVMC as a whole.

Montenoso is a community developed through the coordination of some Galician collectives and several land communities. We are a multidisci-plinary group operating between digital art, commons studies, commu-nication, rural empowerment and social architecture. Researchers and specialists in MVMC (Montes Veciñais en Man Común), geographers, lawyers, PhD students in contemporary history, philosophers, digital storytellers and art history specialists are also involved. They collabo-rate with *Montenoso* in a specific way for each part of the project.

Project **History**

Montenoso is a collaborative project com-posed of the following groups/individu-als: Rural Contemporánea, Fur Alle Falle, Artesáns da Innovación, Conselaciones, Tecnoloxías Apropiadas and Pablo Blanco and so on. They started in 2013 and they combine digital actions with face-to-face initiatives. Exhibitions, papers, videos, wikis and performances are different ways that they work.

2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / **2014**

*2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / **2014***

Today there are 640,000 hectares of CMVMC in Galicia, 25 percent of our territory. About 150,000 community members manage about 2800 communal lands, an experience of self-government. These communities have been able to create their rules to guarantee their sustainability from generation to generation. This is why we are focusing on the societal and participatory processes in these areas. *Montenoso* works from/for/with these communities from their realities with a bottom-up methodology, working at a micro level, combining the political and artistic potential of digital systems and others networks.

At the same time that we keep contact with the main organization of MVMC, the ORGACCMM (Organización Galega de Comunidades de Montes Veciñais en Man Común), we have been working with some of them, focusing on visiting its common land and talking face to face about the situation, problems, cases of success and necessities. One recurrent issue is the lack of contact between them. At the same time we are creating networks with these communities and with militant researchers, social movements or institutions like Medialab Prado, Intermediae, USC University, Museo do Pobo Galego, other collectives such as Alg-a Lab and CMVMCs such as Argozón, Mántaras, Torres-Vilamateo, Mouriscados, Guillade and Ombre.

Montenoso in 2015
Interview with the Montenoso team

What are the challenges of the project?
Montenoso: Since 2012 we have been trying to put commons into political agenda and public debate as a different form of organization of our lives. Sometimes it has been difficult to give visibility to common mountains (MVMC) as a success of management. Thoday, there is a process of shutting down commons in a global way. This is also happening in Galicia, the government is trying to appropriate these kind of commons.
Another *Montenoso* challenge is the capacity to transfer this communal knowledge to other common experiences like open source code communities and other social movements. Connecting this reality with other commons to create synergies between them. Also to foster a generational exchange between community members.
We developed the first phase of our digital platform this year to connect those communities. This tool focuses on the transparency, highlighting best practices, promoting discussions and helping those community members at their online experience. This network is growing as a mechanism of research, analysis and communication between communities, contributing to the empowerment of community members in managing their common woodlands.

And the lessons learned?
Montenoso: There's a lack of knowledge about MVMC in our society. There's a general ignorance on basic legal issues in those communities to protect their own goods. It seems urgent to make visible and valuing the whole patrimony of these communities. Focusing on intangible assets and immaterial heritage. Sharing good initiatives about multifunctional use of common woodlands. Spreading good practices for a cultural and environmental sustainability.
We keep having serious difficulties to get funds from public institutions cause the ideas we are promoting clash with their interests. Most of the funding of *Montenoso* project is achieved through voluntary work, provided by members, groups and other people involved in specific tasks of the project. It's also difficult to get financial support from MVMC because they're not accustomed to invest on digital and social projects.

What is the biggest impact of the project?
Montenoso: *Montenoso* puts in common the experience of these communities with researchers and specialists in MVMC, geographers, lawyers, PhD students in contemporary history, philosophers, digital story-

tellers, farmers, activists or art history specialists. We're working with open code communities,open source hardware experiences, participatory neighborhood movements, and smart citizen movements or institutions like Rede Revolta, Medialab Prado, Intermediae Matadero, Econcult (Universidad de Valencia), USC University, Museo do Pobo Galego, MARCO museum.

The biggest impact of *Montenoso* is the network we have created involving many actors. Thanks to that network many communities are empowering themselves because there's a strong network giving support to them. Now there's more people who knows something about the existence of MVMC.

We've created a knowledge bank (cartography, researches, videos, posts, web, audios, pictures) to be used for people, including the voices, discourses and meanings of commoners. We've impulsed enunciation spaces where commoners can explain what they do and what they think about commons and they can explain their abilities to get sustainability of MVMC. So people can learn how replicate it in other fields as culture or economy.

Does it also have political / legal impact?
Montenoso: It's difficult to think about how our work have a political/legal impact because a lot of people, communities are involved in the defense of commons. But it is true that thanks to *Montenoso* we are creating a barrier against those what want to extinguish common mountains, as construction companies. A good examples is the called "Cabral Spring". Cabral MVMC is situated close to Vigo. These lands are a green lung in the city. Eurofund Company with the support of the City Council and some commoners' representatives wanted to promote

a huge commercial center for the area, affecting to these MVMC. The neighborhood began a big fight and finally they could stop the process and save their MVMC.

The representation system of MVMC is not so equal. Most community members who are representing the house are old man. Many of them decide for al the house's members without consensus, regardless of the ideas of young people and women living in the house they're representing. There is low participation of women, LGTBI+ and minorities in MVMC communities. We address these question and thanks to that some communities are trying to improve this situation.

How does it change people's life in the area?
Montenoso: We work with local communities and we focus on creating the process with them. We prioritize the implication of local community to perceive its particularities and its identity. We have been working with some communities, focusing on visiting their MVMC and talking face to face about their situation, their problems and needs, and other cases of success. A repeated problem is the lack of contact between them.

Every community has a different story and its local problems. Although they think their problems are local and isolated, most of the communities have similar problems. Most commoners are worried only about economic profits, so social profits and non tangible assets are in the background. Many commoners want to have economic benefits on a short period, but that's not the way to manage a MVMC.

What is your vision for the next years?
Montenoso: Communal mountains and their communities have big challenges for the next years

and we have to try to work with them. Some of these challenges are lack of generational replacement and a cleavage between old and young ways of understanding the life. There is a need to involve new and old ideas. At this point we can do something, because now we can build other ways of living, between us and with our environment.

Unfortunately the absolute precariousness of our work and the little resources available to us makes the future more than uncertain. There's lack of public or private funds to finance this kind of projects in our country. We don't want to talk about future, only about this 3-year that we have now. We really want to keep spreading the knowledge we have gained about MVMC and other commons and contribute to enlarge it. We want to improve our digital platform and keep doing workshops, meeting with other MVMC, participating in congress and other forums, and work on many new projects what we have on our minds.