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Welcome to the CTC VISTA Project Digest!

by Peter Miller

The [CTC VISTA Project](#) has begun to supplement our end of August program year with a constant stream of new VISTA additions made throughout the year. The new projects are an outgrowth of our expanding partnerships with the National Technology Enterprise Network ([NTEN](#)) and the Alliance for Community Media ([ACM](#)) along with the Association for Community Networking ([AFCN](#)) and our prime collaboration with [CTCNet](#). New organizations interested in obtaining community technology VISTAs for the new year in September should act immediately (see [Project guidelines](#)).

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CTC VISTAs beginning in February '06:

(l to r) Patrick Otton (Madison Park Development Corporation, Roxbury/Boston); Kamala Kalluri (Community Software Lab Inc., Lowell, MA); Jessica Rothschild (The Children's Partnership/Tides Center, Santa Monica, CA); Ross Musselman (Champaign Urbana Community Wireless Network [CUWiN]), Urbana, IL; Patricia Conrad-Wexler (Young Entrepreneurs Society, Orange, MA).

Technology Assistance to Non-profits: Area Update

by Jillaine Smith

The **Technology Assistance for Nonprofits** priority area was established for organizations that seek to use a VISTA to support technology services and support to organizations (in contrast to supporting the individual community members that CTCs traditionally serve).

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CTC VISTAs Empower Youth with Digital Media

by Nettrice Gaskins

This year more than fifteen CTC VISTAs were placed with community media and technology programs to help young people gain digital media skills that prepare them for college and tomorrow's workforce.

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The Community Organizing VISTA Difference

by Ed Schwartz

The traditional image of VISTAs is that of young people serving as apprentices in organizations where they play needed but essentially clerical roles around the office. In the [CTC VISTA Project](#) exactly the opposite is the case. Here, the VISTAs bring to their sites skills that most of the organizations do not have and could not otherwise afford.

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CTC VISTAs in Community Networking

by Frank Odasz

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Empowering Americans: CTC VISTAs in Community Networking

by Frank Odasz

The CTC VISTAs in the priority area of Community Networking deal directly with empowering low-income Americans through the smart adoption of Internet knowledge-access, collaboration, and self-publishing tools and skills. The quality of technical assistance CTC VISTAs bring to their client communities is unprecedented and represents cutting edge demonstrations of what needs to be happen in all our communities.

These Community Networking projects include new consortia for sharing digital video across community media projects, large scale community computer and Internet training programs, historical archiving and storytelling on the web, new community collaboration software systems, cost-effective wireless home access, and more. Here are some highlights from their mid-year reports:

- In San Diego, the Pangea Foundation's partnership with the CTC VISTA Project has continued to expand the Abilities-4-Resident Service Coordinators (A4RSC) program with three VISTAs this year: Mike Denegal, Daniel Richardson, and Sandra Hike. According to Supervisor Kristin Berry, "We currently have approximately 500 properties and 350 Service Coordinators for the A4RSC system nationwide serving 50,000 residents in low-income housing. This project was started by two CTCNet VISTAs at Pangea four years ago!"
- At the Neighborhood Technology Resource Center in Chicago, CTC VISTA Taylor Hales is creating multi-media curricula and training programs that engage youth with technology and new media. Supervisor Jillian Spindle says of Taylor that "his skills are unmatched in our organization with regard to multi-media development."
- At the Lowell (MA) Telecommunications Corporation (LTC), CTC VISTA Ben Sheldon has been busy working on the construction and open beta testing of the DigitalBicycle Project, designed to create a quick and easy-to-use electronic distribution mechanism for very large file video productions which would otherwise have to be mailed or "bicycled" to be shown in outside communities. Ben has also been building a web site to plot every community media center in the country on a web-based map called Mapping Access that contains data on over 900 PEG access television stations.
- Metropolitan Austin Interactive Network (MAIN)/TCRC, Bastrop/Austin, TX: CTC VISTA Nick Lewis has helped develop www.telecommunity.us, a new national community ICT resource project, and WriteOn, Austin! (working with the mayor and the public library), an online resource for citizens to share written reports of community and individual life
- CTCNet Chicago: Supervisor Michael Maranda writes: "We have been on a breakneck pace and I rely upon Dave Chakrabarti for a great deal. CTCNet Chicago has convened several major statewide events: the Digital Literacy Showcase, the Digital Neighborhoods Fundraiser, the Statewide Conference, and the launch of the statewide coalition on Community Tech Day. We've formulated the database strategy and a sustainability plan. We've made an impact on the vision for the state community technology sector and launched a ring of websites in addition to the relaunch of our own site on a content management system... Dave has ...allowed us to help some connected organizations to advance their web strategy, building the reputation of our organization in the process."
- At TINCAN (The Inland Northwest Community Access Network) in Spokane, WA, second year CTC VISTA Nora Lollar is the Director of TINCAN's Inland Northwest Memories Project (<http://history.tincan.org>) where, she reports, university students from Gonzaga and Whitworth have been filling the online museum with local veterans' oral histories, photographs, and more. (Supervisor Karen Michaelson's report on Nora's work appeared in the last Community Technology Review.)

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The National Summit on Community Wireless

by Ross Musselman

The 2006 National Summit on Community Wireless Networks brought together wireless experts and community activists from around the world to set an agenda for developing community and municipal wireless technologies. The Summit was organized by the Champaign-Urbana Community Wireless Network and the Mid-Rivers Wireless Initiative, and held in St. Charles, Missouri, from March 31-April 2, 2006.

The Summit kicked off with rousing speeches by Mark Cooper of the Consumer Federation of America, Robert McChesney of Free Press, and Esme Vos of Muniwireless.com. Saturday sessions followed three tracks: technology, implementation, and policy/outreach. Sessions included such diverse themes as "How to Put the Community in Your Community Wireless Network" to "Multimedia Applications and Wireless Integration." The closing ceremony focused on creating specific agendas for the three tracks and included a video message from Federal Communications Commission Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein.

Participants included representatives from more than 100 organizations from nine countries around the world. Five CTC VISTAs were also on hand. Video, pictures, blogs, and more from the Summit can be found at <http://cuwireless.net/summit>.

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CTC VISTAs & 21st Century Digital Media Skills

by Nettrice Gaskins

Digital art and media making address both visual and media literacies, as well as using software, computer technology, and digital equipment in increasingly more collaborative ways. Over the past few years, the CTC VISTA Project has developed a variety of approaches for VISTAs (and supervisors) to communicate, share, explore and brainstorm ideas around digital media, including the priority area mailing list/listserv, [a discussion forum/bulletin board](#), the [Community Technology Review and Project newsletter](#), individual VISTA weblogs, and the upcoming the priority area portal (see also the current [Digital Media for Youth portal](#)).

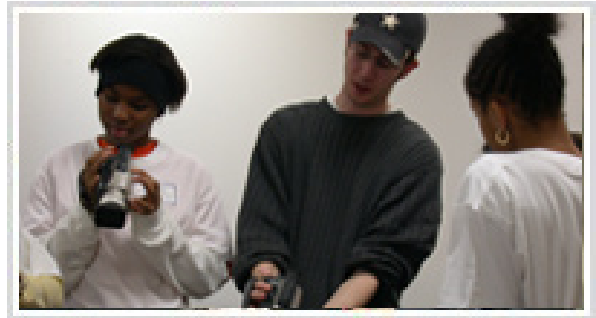
Consider some of the major trends that are emerging and that impact society and the digital media for youth CTC VISTAs: open source media applications (e.g., Picasa and Nvu), online video and audio (using iTunes, Google Video, and YouTube, participatory media and personal broadcasting (weblogs or blogs, video blogging or vlogging, and video podcasting or vodcasting), dynamic knowledge creation and social computing tools (Second Life).

In the spirit of these new media trends, the CTC VISTAs are not only using the Project's new media resources and tools to collaborate with fellow VISTAs, but they are also sharing and teaching use of these open tools to their youth participants in each of their community technology and media programs. Here are a few specific examples:

- Christy Park contributed several movie projects created by Somerville Community Access Television youth that were showcased using Broadcast Machine, software that was installed on the Digital Media with Youth website to easily publish the video files and create an Internet TV channel. Some of the youth projects were also made available as video podcasts or vodcasts that can be viewed on portable devices like iPods and through iTunes on computers.
- San Diego LGBTG Community Center VISTA Morgan Sully created an open source Do-It-Yourself Digital Media Toolkit/CD-ROM that included a small collection of free creative tools/software for youth (and adults) to manipulate images, record sound and upload/share their media.
- Ryn Shane-Armstrong created his own video blog, 5thTone, to explore participatory media and integrate the knowledge in his work at Portland Community Media.
- Molly Szymanski has also contributed several movie projects created by youth at Korean American Community Services to the priority area's Digital Media Channel.

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Technology Assistance to Nonprofits: Priority Area Update

by Jillaine Smith

...Some notable VISTA activities in the Technology Assistance for Nonprofits priority area include:

- Aliya Abbasi (NetCorps, NC) conducted a number of technology assessments that resulted in her installing wireless telephone systems, critiquing and creating web sites, providing routine maintenance and training organizations.
- Blake Hall (DANENet, WI) coordinated a recycled computer program that involved recruiting and training volunteers to refurbish used computers and distribute them to area nonprofits. He also created a Web portal for youth serving activities and agencies and helped write a successful Youth Visions proposal that he now coordinates.
- Brian Pastori (CEDC-SM, MA) established a database for a network of 225 all volunteer organizations and provided direct technical assistance to a local homeless shelter; he also established and administers a mailing list for a network of youth service organizations.
- Greg Osmun (CWCC, MI) set up computer labs, documenting the process of formatting the computers. He also helps re-format the computers that the organization donates. He provides TA to three organizations that coordinate remote computer training facilities.
- John Miller (CSL, MA) helped increase his organization's ability to serve local organizations; they now serve 30% more organizations.
- Vahid Nourani (Durham Literacy Center, NC) maintained the center's network and computer labs and provided training to staff. Outside organizations were helped on an informal basis.
- Ellen-Rae Cachola (Homeless Prenatal Program, CA) designed and delivered curriculum for area homeless women to help them build technology job skills and provided TA to local area nonprofits, but she did end up providing significant TA to her own organization. She helped establish procedures that improved staff's ability to process forms; she trained and provided ongoing support to new and existing staff. And she is representing the organization at community efforts to involve CTCs in the city's plan to provide free wi-fi Internet access.

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Mr. Sheldon Goes to Washington

From the blog of CTC VISTA Leader [Ben Sheldon](#), May 31, 2006

Last week I took a trip south to attend a reception and [forum](#) in Washington, DC, commemorating [40 years of fighting poverty beneath the VISTA banner](#). In these years, VISTA has engaged more than 177,000 Americans to better their communities and nation.



Pictured here (clockwise from upper left): Ben with Abe Lincoln, Ben with Corporation for National and Community Service CEO David Eisner, Ben with AmeriCorps*VISTA Director Jean Whaley, and Ben with Lynda Bird Johnson Robb, daughter of President Lyndon Johnson.



Building Community Using Listservs

by Ed Schwartz

Even before the World Wide Web made its formal appearance online, the introduction of email—and especially of listservs that permitted us to interact simultaneously with hundreds, even thousands of people online—held enormous appeal to those engaged in community organizing. Organizing is about getting people together. In the past, this was possible only through live, person-to-person meetings and an occasional conference call. Now we could reach out to potential friends and allies online and involve them in an ongoing process of sharing information and ideas relevant to our concerns.

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Telecommunications Policy Resources

by Danielle Martin

[From the blog of Danielle Martin, May 30, 2006]

There is currently a huge debate around the state of telecommunications policy in the U.S. As stated on the Tactical Media Group's (students of the UMass Boston's Community Media & Technology program) blog: "We are currently seeing the emergence of the communications and media systems we will live with for the next several decades." The proposed legislation in both the House of Representatives and the Senate will affect many community media and technology in terms of funding and regulation of how we develop and share on the Internet (network neutrality). As community media and technology advocates on the front-lines, it seems logical for VISTAs to become more knowledgeable about telecommunications policy, especially in order to educate the citizens we serve to express their voice in the media. Here's some links to get you started:

- [Tactical Media Group's Telecommunications Policy Primer](#)
- [Manhattan Neighborhood Network's \(NYC's PEG Access Station\) Save Access Toolkit](#)
- [SavetheInternet.org](#) - The SavetheInternet.com Coalition is an alliance of organizations, citizens, businesses and bloggers that have banded together to protect Internet freedom.
- [SaveAccess.org](#) - Group of individuals involved in various aspects of community media and the struggle for a democratic media.
- [Andy Carvin's Waste of Bandwidth blog](#)

[Read more](#) about Danielle's work at Project HQ on her blog. [login](#) or [register](#) to post comments

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