

Notes on Session #1 - Wireless State of the Cities

Costis Toregas, PTI

This is a very unique conference in the field; may need to temper our own expectations; if we aren't fully ready, how is the guy on the street going to make use of the technology. [<http://corpus-christi.texas.com/>] Corpus Christi's wireless web, started to do this to read water meters. Corpus Christi's "cloud capture day" to capture the imagination of the staff. Multiple technologies for communication is the key. Disruptive business technologies; not quite ready for that as a society...yet. Had to pay for it out of their own funds.

Guiding principles:

1. Equity; level playing field, enhancing the ability of every single resident.
2. Bring something to the table.
3. Interoperable; doing multiple things.
4. Attitude; when you come to the table as a partner, I want you to be smiling, permeating the process forward.

Q: Does it always have to be tagged on to other more "essential" services? [like fire, police, water information collection].

Jim Farstad, rClient

What is communications to urban problems; not the answers, just one of the answers. Vast majority of installations are owned by the city. Trend is more toward wireless, involving larger urban areas. New ways to connect our urban workforce, such as the 311 for non-emergency city services; there will be a need to send that information to deployed workers in the field. "Why not leverage it for city residents, for city visitors." It's not only about the "how" but about the "why". That's a bigger job than the how.

Q. What exactly is happening when cities become unwired? How exactly does the information flow? What real impact will this have on people's lives in the city? What is the relationship between public and private space in the city as these technologies are deployed? Looking at 1.5 meg per household to define as having broadband, 6 meg by 2010, 100 meg by 2020. Currently U.S. is ranked 16th, with Korea as #1 in availability. 6% of the fiber capability is used in Minneapolis, focused on downtown. Maybe the grids are coupled too tightly for best use and technology; cf. New Orleans, Mississippi; need to diversify the systems. City in context; merging the online experience.

Q. Does the messiness of a democracy get into the way of distributing broadband? Is it only a tool? Is there not something beyond? What's 'wrong' with it being a tool?

Matthew Lampe, City of Portland

Talked a little bit about Portland, with a description of the city as a offbeat, technology hub. "Open source" as a guiding principle. High education and technology coefficients.

Lots of spinoffs from the technology focus. Concept of an open service network; the company that comes in to do this can't be the ISP at the end of the process. Aggressive forward technology adoption plan. Described a shift from a wireless advocate, Personal Telco, from moving fast to install spots, then more reticent about their role in a fully wireless Portland. Extending e-government by tagging documents of the city based on their region of the city. Mentioned North Portland tool lending library, which started from a "back fence" (user initiated) discussion. Allowing comments back to bloggers and other posted documents, e.g. the mayors budget. Also testing some pre-WiMax with emergency services. The market isn't quite there; there needed to be something to do to lower the risk; the city services as "anchor tenants" so the vendor wouldn't be struggling for their first tenants. Showed a solar powered parking meter; using credit cards which need to connect back to a network; currently cell phone tech; expensive and slow. [\$35 per phone] Want to migrate to wifi. Goals for later use; giving Portland an edge; Discussion of driving the cost of broadband down; a lot of what's going on with the web requires people to clear the hurdle to broadband, which is substantial. Following the lead of "One Economy" [<http://www.one-economy.com/>] in looking at the "walled garden", for public and non-profit information access. Roles: anchor tenants, coordinate access, and facilitate hardware placement.

Audience questions:

Concerned about the engagement of the community with the city government. Farstad: this can be a spark, but we don't need to wait to solve all these problems. Maybe these networks are like a new type of sign to tell people about what people can do. But we the civic leaders need to take the action to make things happen. Lampe: I get concerned that these aren't going to be used as a spark. He's seeing a lot of connection with new active citizens, cf. single women. Getting people to be connected has to be much more than just having stuff up on the web; boots on the ground. Toregas; there's something here about being willing to capture people that have never been connected with government before; 'you need to engage new people'.
Q: how do you analyze and address the market, maybe in relationship to how you frame the market to vendors? They are looking at what is there now, not what could exist... Farstad: these are regional technologies, and what is important is the density of households. The new market that emerges is the mobile market; delivery trucks, etc, and they are a business scale, institutional market component. Toregas; the number of people are too small if you only look at pricing and penetration, that's someone else's job. [you have to look at the other benefits of what's happening under the cloud.] 'their business plans are too narrow...' Aggregation of clients on a vertical basis in order to make the system viable.

Q: Does the Open service provider come out of the community, as a parallel to your open source methods?

Notes on Session #2 - Legal and Legislative Issues

Adrian Herbst, Herbst Lazar Bell

Reiterated that the main impact is about 'community'; it's not just about broadband. Builds on the idea the city needs better communications with and from its citizens. Has extensive history with municipal impacts of cable television; one of the first systems in the country. Involved the development of city standards as well as combating "sour grapes" lawsuits. Much of congress' actions derived ideas from the Minnesota cable model. Critically it preserves a community's interest in the matter. It also allowed communities to band together for acquiring cable systems; a cable service territory through a joint powers agreement. Some local governmental access regulatory organizations have developed, supporting local access facilities. [to the extent of winning national Emmys]. Currently there is a strong effort to cut local government out of the process, eliminating franchise fees and cutting their regulatory strength. This may cut the access and input that is currently available to many users. He argued to the need to have a strong voice for local government in the wireless arena [as an extension of his knowledge in the cable field.] He anticipates that there will be a legal effort in the legislature to regulate the wireless arena. Internet type services are an "information service" a whole new classification of service without laws, rules, or direction. WiFi is not a [regulated] cable service or a [regulated] telecommunication service. Noted that there was a dramatic governmental savings from these type of services. Large number of risks involved in going forward by the city alone particularly due to the large range of possibilities in federal legislation. [see attachment]. Believes there is a need to connect with vendors to help provide services, but there is a strong need to include the residents in developing ideas and direction for wireless in the city. Is this déjà vu over again? Yes. Now is the time to make sure that communities benefit from these services; that it is more than just the delivery of the technology, the hardware for a fee. It's important for citizens and local officials to connect with legislators who will be flooded by lobbyists, pressing for legislation to limit the local rights of cities.

Does a daily link on telecom issues...contact by email.

Mike Linksvayer, Creative Commons

Commons and wireless: made a brief video presentation of the work of Creative Commons; it is a concept that collaboration, particularly in terms of creative works is important and valuable. They offer copyright tools for flexible copyrights; attribution, commercial use, verbatim copies. Requirement of derivative works. The concept of creative commons is built on existing copyright laws. Three types of denoting are then available; Copyright, creative commons, and digital tagging of materials. There are about 50 million CC'd objects on the web. They also work with the digital library for any thing that is freely licensed, to provide materials to the general public. Currently working with search engines such as Yahoo and LimeWire to look for CC'd material. Trying to create a culture of reuse and remixing, particularly those already on site. They are currently developing science publishing.

Some observations about wireless; could be thought of as just another technology for transmitting bits and/or a nexus of electronic creations. Papyrus to the eight track tape as... before. And after there is perfect copy-able with networked and non-networked

digital. And then there's wireless: more ubiquity for access; makes collaboration and creation easier with lesser boundaries. Copying is not the pinnacle of the technology. Fat digital pipes and fat digital storage. Reuse; making new mixes is much more possible and fluid now with the new technology. Find creative remix, a public radio piece on the creative commons site.

The artists and businesses that have continued to innovate will benefit from the 'cheap revolution' see also Forbes Magazine; the cheap revolution by content enabled by fat pipes will open up areas we'd haven't all noticed before. For example, we may begin to see real time drawing across the web. By it's very nature, wireless is much more collaborative than analog media, and is much more collaborative than wired technology. The expectation of sharing is built in. N to N principle.... demand that the commons not be locked out. Need to make sure that other routes of connection are available outside the provider. Demand open source ware, as it's not amenable to 'monkey wrenching'.

Cal Litsey, w/ Faegre and Benson

An expert in terms of intellectual property rights. Cited the concerns with copyright and 'fair use', particularly as connected with wireless access. Linksvayer noted that 'fair use' is not replaced by the Creative Commons. Guidelines developing for podcasts and bloggers.

Lampe raised a question/comment that cities have contributed to the regulatory environment; a Gordian Knot has been developed with a 'most favored nation' clause that most cable/wireless municipal contracts include: that if a better deal comes up someplace else, the same could happen here. Herbst responded with a brief reiteration of the statewide/regional model as a counter argument. These communications technologies serve to provide a benefit, and the question is how to allow the process to go forward while not having the city regulate and control everything.

Notes on Session #3 - Bridging the Digital Divide

Catherine Settanni, Digital Access Project

The civil rights issue of the 20th century.

Computer ownership white non-hispanic households twice as likely to own computers as Americans or Hispanics.

<\$15k 30% \$15k-50k 60% \$50k-75k 75% +\$75k 90%

Internet access varies with income, urban, wealthy more likely to have broadband, but statistics come from telephones, and there are still areas w/o telephones.

Digital disparity: technology literacy or competency, cost of ownership, and relevant content. Community informatics

Literacy: Variety of factors affect literacy; it's the one that truly affects access

Cost: hardware cost, software cost, access cost

Community technology centers in the twin cities: public access computer terminals.

Have no base of financial support.

Schools [DiDi usually about kids; but the access is much harder for adults.] they also do e-rate.

Content: relevant, valuable, not represented, not ADA compliant

[www.contentbank.org] content for low income communities

Without access, without a computer there are shortfalls: Serious workforce problems; few of those affected have access to the information. e-democracy remains a problem given the access. Education is a problem for both online higher education and K-12. Technology literacy is the most difficult problem. There are many communities that are now needing to have literacy to achieve access. How to improve the digital literacy of everyone in our community?

Stressed the need for much more interaction with the community in terms of web development. Multimedia is also quite valuable in terms of non-native English speakers.

Cited [<http://tcdailyplanet.info>] as an interesting project in this direction.

Will Craig, Community GIS (CURA)

Cited Arnstein's Ladder of Participation. "if the public wants to know, why didn't he go to the web site?" When you get beyond the line of only being able to object, then you've obtained some critical mass in the public discourse. GIS as an add to community participation. Illustrating crime locations, vacant lots, [seems to pull the information from a history in geography] locating potential spots for future problems [arrears in water...], They are at the point where it's too expensive to keep GIS going in most of their projects. Neighborhoods should start putting data up on the web to better understand, promote, and improve their area. [<http://chicagocrime.org>]

Shane Price, African American Men Project

Project began with a question about the non-employment of African American men in a time of full employment; where the jobs and wealth are associated with location in Minneapolis is connected to this phenomenon. For some reason, these young men would be better able to attain success standing around over on the corner of 26th and James. Within the concentration of poverty, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, for the neighborhood to perceive itself as becoming successful. AAMP project was created for African American men to make the steps necessary to succeed.

Technology was not something that was present growing up in north Minneapolis, but that it's been forced on him through his professional career. 'They' often find themselves locked in to a context that denies them advancement and keeps them removed from technology. Now technology is a requirement for much advancement. Their project "Right Turn" begins with a team approach to aggressive 'street outreach'. One question was how to gather, manage and correlate the information from their street contacts, once they had them engaged. Database developed to hold/sort information gathered by street teams, which will change the relationship of the participant with the county government. And it will help the participant to redirect his life. Computer labs at both sites used to change the view of each man, and to help them understand and modify their lives.

This information takes us further than we are emotionally prepared to go.

Q: How will your job change with wireless? **Price:** We'll go out and get people recorded and connected right out in the neighborhood; we'll be able to show them what is possible, right where we meet them, in coffee houses, in bedrooms, in libraries and elsewhere. **Settanni:** we have and continue to use a mobile lab that we have had people access governmental services in libraries, parks, and even laundromats [which are great; it's a captured audience]

Q: I have a great distrust of data; how will you address that problem in very complex jobs? I have this phenomenal paranoia about the use of data? **Price:** you have to build trust right from the beginning, and we have, in building our work, the information will be held in a community organization instead of with the government. **Settanni:** seniors audiences are the ones that are the most reliant on data and the most paranoid users around. The goal is to get rid of the red herrings, the unneeded barriers.

Asset based community development; asset mapping community skills; mapping digital and technology literacy skills being mapped?

Q: Could you comment on public access to computing? **Settanni:** There is not agency that is concerned with the access to technology; Hosmer library turns away 22000 people per year [visits] Over all all centers are maxed out in the city. **R:** it seems we have a problem we can't even size. Community and technology indicators project; what are some of the hallmarks of a communities literacy...

Notes on Session #4 - Wireless Arts and Culture

Daniel Gumnit, Intermedia Arts [<http://intermediaarts.org/index2.html>] Described some of the work of Intermedia Arts; trying to build understanding among people through art. Process important as well; not just doing art for art sake. They view their role as being a cultural broker for new immigrants. "to make our virtual presence as palpable as our physical presence" The wireless cloud will have a profound effect on the organization; ten and fifteen years from now, the immigrant communities will have a history of connection to IA. It also helps to build their world connections back down to a local level, immigrants scattered over the world. Media consolidation a concern; corporations owning the pipes and the material that goes down the pipes. The primary issue we deal with every day is class. "It's probably the issue we deal with most every day; especially as it relates to media access, class as it relates to art." Other topics include race, free expression, economic and world power [in the communities that are to this point, the least economically advantaged.]
ref to [www.hearusnow.org]

Kathleen Kvern, mnartists.org

Building on a web based community of artists, supported by McKnight Foundation and Walker Art Center. About 7000 members, 35000 works on the site. Grows by 120 per month. 400% increase from last year. Developing an improved calendar and an email w/ art. Thinks that wireless in the city will be 'explosive' for the arts.

A lot of the artist that work with wireless are interested in dealing with the every day elements of life. The work renders dramatic the everyday; makes the invisible, visible. [how space is produced in the city both visually and sonically.] The work forces us to think of technology as procedural, rather than as object. As moving through the landscape, rather than as an artifact. The tension between the artifact and the process is heightened. The objects are made more interesting ... engages them in the city.

Wayne Ashley, independent curator

Spectropolis, built on the critical., aesthetic, and playful opportunities of the new downtown manhattan. Reviewed and presented the 10 day event for artists. One focus was on 'non-goal oriented behavior' as well a mobilize large groups of people in concerted action. Making the invisible visible, the opposite of ubiquity, which encourages us to question the use of the technology.

Chuck Olsen, mnstories.com

Doing a daily video blog. An aesthetic that is growing up in the community; much like a podcast, but in video. An online channel for aggregating that material from throughout the state. He collects work from all over; the immediacy is important; you can shoot something and have it up the next day. He mentioned the possibility that video or images can be uploaded directly from wireless cameras, almost immediately including it on line on the network. An online citizen media channel, implying however that the media upload is instant. [www.nycwireless.net/labdays]
node runner Public broad casting cart.

Hyperlocal; combining video blogging with wireless.

Wireless connections between the city center and the 'hood.

Q. what control should there be on the wireless broadcasts; what support can the community provide? **Ashley:** content is more negotiated than it may appear; some messages presented should be edited.