

From Digital Disconnect To Digital Empowerment

Building a More Equitable Society
Through Leadership, Investment,
and Collaboration

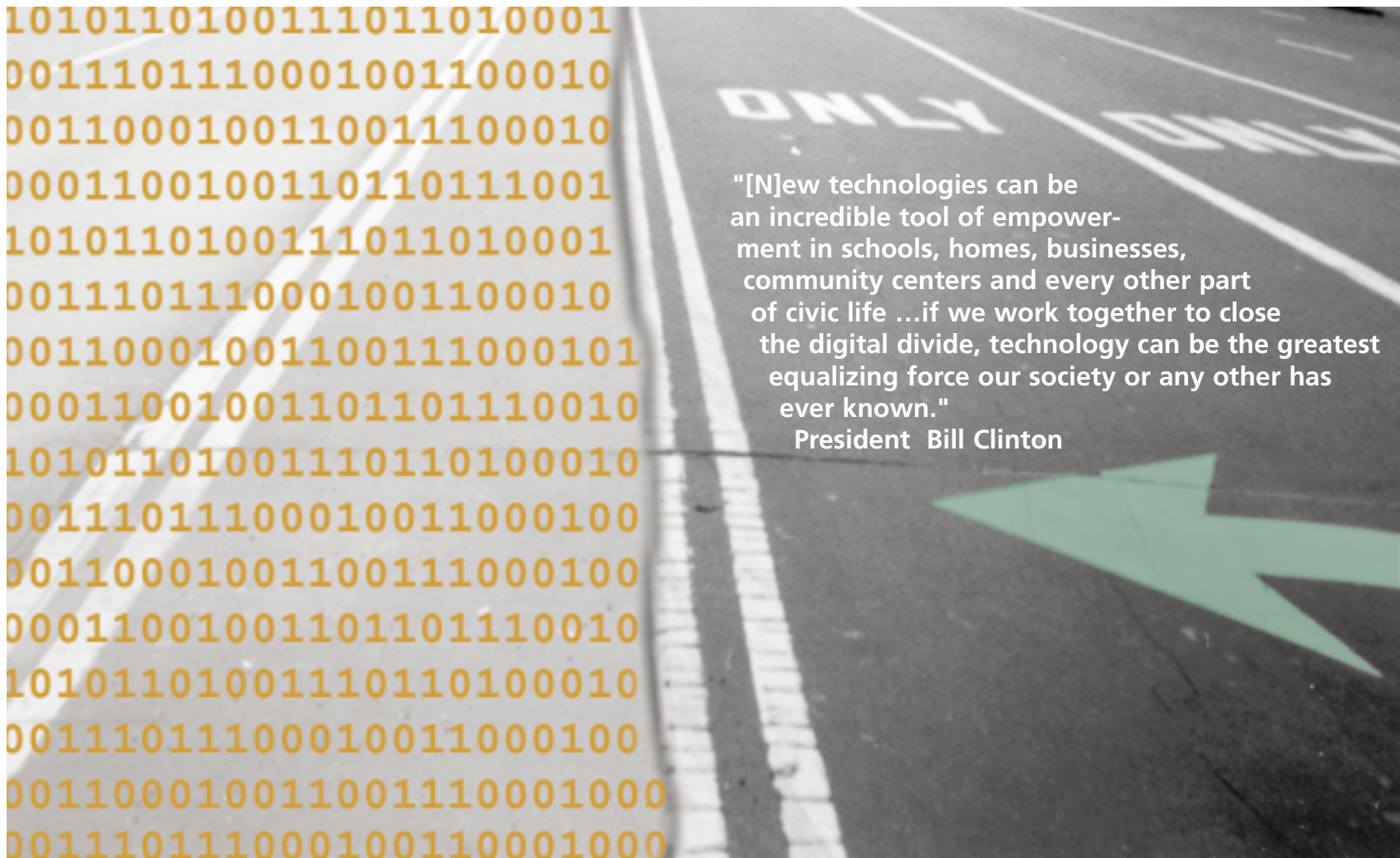


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Executive Summary

Introduction

Our society is in the midst of a profound technology-based communications revolution. This so-called "digital revolution" is transforming our economic, social, political and cultural life. These advances hold the potential to empower individuals and organizations interested in pursuing social and economic justice to harness technology to advance social change in new powerful ways.

For those with access to technology and the skills to use it, the digital age will bring unprecedented empowerment and opportunity. Unfortunately, not everyone has such access and there is evidence that technological advances may be aggravating existing patterns of inequality between those with access to Information Age tools and the skills to use them and those without (commonly referred to as the "digital divide").

The Need For This Report

One aspect of the divide that has not received much attention is the manner in which the digital age is impacting the civil and human rights groups who advocate for a more equitable and just society. Do they, like many of the constituencies they represent, stand on the wrong side of the digital divide? If so, what are the implications for their work to achieve social justice or to help shape the new digital society?

This report, a project of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) and the Leadership Conference Education Fund (LCEF), examines the capacity and use of new technologies among national civil rights organizations as well as their understanding and participation in communications and Internet public policy issues. The primary findings are: 1) while national civil and human rights groups struggle to join the digital age, they still remain far behind; and 2) more importantly, national civil and human rights organizations have not been among the organizations at the policy making table, influencing public policies that set the fundamental rules of engagement for the digital age.

During the kick-off of the White House's Digital New Markets tour in April 2000, President Clinton observed that the Internet promises to "be the greatest equalizing force our society or any other has ever known." But the question remains, how can that promise be realized if the principal advocates for equal opportunity over the years, the national civil and human rights community, remains largely disconnected?"

At the dawn of a new century that will be shaped by new technologies yet unimagined, under-served populations cannot afford to be shut out of these new opportunities. This report is intended as a first step toward assuring that those who represent the disadvantaged, those who advance the goals of equality and social justice, find a place at the digital opportunity table.

Key Findings

Examination of the civil rights community's technological capacity and policy awareness resulted in the identification of both opportunities and challenges that are highlighted below:

Technology Capacity

- Civil and human rights organizations are beginning to embrace new information and communications technologies, however, they still have a long way to go;
- Civil and human rights organizations agree that technology capacity is critical to successful pursuit of civil rights goals;
- Technology training has not been a priority for respondent organizations, particularly at the higher levels of management;
- Grassroots affiliates are far behind national offices in technology capacity and use;
- The civil and human rights community needs assistance in fully understanding what “accessible” means in the digital age;
- Few respondents have comprehensive communications and/or technology plans;
- Organizations rank themselves high on technology capacity and use, but believe the rest of the civil and human rights community is far behind;
- The civil and human rights community welcomes coordinated efforts to improve technology utilization.

Communications and Internet Policy

- Civil and human rights groups understand that digital policy is important to advancing social justice;
- Concern about the digital divide is not yet translating into activism on communications and Internet policy;
- Few civil and human rights organizations currently have plans to increase involvement or devote more resources to communications and Internet policy issues over the next one to three years;
- Civil rights organizations would place higher priority on digital issues if financial resources and technical assistance were made available.

Recommendations

Over the past several years, the world has witnessed a spectacular communications and technological revolution. This revolution has the potential to expand opportunity greatly for everyone, but the potential is especially great for under-served communities because of the remarkable new opportunities now being presented to apply new strategies to solve age-old inequities.

With appropriate leadership, investment and collaboration, we can help ensure that new communications advances are leveraged to improve people's lives, reinforce society's core values, and strengthen our institutions. While some progress is being made in improving the technology capacity and readiness of the civil rights community and its involvement in the development of communications and Internet public policy, much more is needed. Accordingly, we offer the following recommendations designed to help ensure that all segments of society can participate fully in the Digital Age.

Building Information Technology Capacity Among Leadership Conference Member Organizations

Develop A Coalition-Wide Technology Assistance Initiative

Given that the best hope for the civil rights community to develop a strong presence online is to work collaboratively, the coalition should develop a coalition-wide technology assistance initiative. Such a coalition-wide initiative would leverage limited resources from many sources to provide a wide-range of technical assistance including hardware and software development, network installation, database development, web site design, training, and broader technology consultation.

A coalition-wide initiative would include the development of an umbrella web site (portal), a trusted clearinghouse that would bring together like-minded socially responsible organizations as well as link loyal communities around them. The portal would allow for the efficient pooling of content and constituencies and could create a vibrant, issue-based community that grows along with the Internet, providing all participating sites a significant value-added entry point for their content. Such a portal could also ensure that social justice-oriented content is accessible and inclusive for all segments of the population.

Beyond the coalition-wide technology assistance initiative, there are several specific ways the civil rights community, the business community, and the foundation community can each help build the technology capacity of national organizations.

Civil Rights Community

Increasing the technology capacity of the civil rights community will not occur without national leadership and vision. Toward that end, the leadership of the civil rights coalition must use its prestige and influence to improve the coalition's knowledge and use of the emerging technologies in all its work.

- Develop Comprehensive Technology Plans That Stress Employee Training
- Utilize Technology More Effectively To Achieve Programmatic Goals
- Import Technology Knowledge Into The Coalition With Strategic Technology Consulting
- Convene Technology Leadership Forums For Civil Rights, Industry, And Foundation Leaders
- Convene Technology Assistance Forums For Staff
- Become Accessible And Inclusive
- Collaborate, Collaborate, Collaborate

Business Community

The business community, particularly the high-tech industry, is in the best position to help civil rights leaders realize the potential of recent technological advances. As the brain trust of the technology revolution, the industry has the vision and a staff uniquely qualified to serve as "trainers of trainers" for the civil rights community. While some companies within the high-tech industry have already made significant profits, the full potential of the industry has yet to be realized. As the industry seeks new ways to promote its products and services, civil and human rights organizations can play an important intermediary role to some of the communities that have been slower to adopt these new technologies.

- Provide Hardware, Software, And High-Speed Internet Access
- Encourage And Support Training Efforts
- Encourage And Support Employees' Volunteer Efforts
- Help Build Collaborative Web-Based Applications
- Convene Leadership Forums With Civil Rights Leaders
- Provide Direct Financial Assistance

Foundation Community

By all accounts, civil rights organizations have found it difficult to find support for the development of a technology infrastructure. Yet, as the survey makes clear, those costs remain a major hurdle for social justice organizations. While a number of organizations have achieved base-line capabilities, most remain far behind.

While some in the technology industry have stepped up to help with capacity building, most foundations that fund the core civil rights mission have not yet recognized the nexus between technology and equal justice in the digital age. As should now be clear, equality and social justice are now inextricably intertwined with the ability of organizations to organize, advocate and build the civil rights voice online. Because of their control over resources, foundations funding social justice organizations have a unique role to play in building the technology capacity of civil rights organizations.

- Improve Technology Culture In Foundation Community
- Support Technology Capacity Building Initiatives
- Fund Early Adapters
- Collaborate, Collaborate, Collaborate
- Demand Accessible And Inclusive Technology Utilization From Grantees
- Specifically Fund Organizations Working To Bridge Digital Divide

Increasing Leadership Conference Member Organizations' Participation On Communications And Internet Policy

Establish A Coalition-Wide Resident Scholar Program For Communications And Internet Policy

This report makes clear that in order to increase the civil and human rights community's participation on communications and Internet policy debates, there is a critical need for substantive and substantial research on the nexus between civil rights and digital policy. While specific recommendations for various sectors are posted below, one overarching recommendation that should be considered by all is the creation of a Resident Scholar on communications and Internet policy for the civil rights community.

Civil Rights Community

To date, the civil rights community has played a very limited role in the debates about advanced communications technologies. Increasing the civil and human rights

community's involvement in policy debates shaping the digital age will only occur with strong leadership and vision at the national level. LCCR's Executive Committee must add these issues to its agenda and establish a task force to spearhead this work.

- Develop Communications And Internet Staff Positions
- Create Communications And Internet Policy Education Campaigns
- Collaborate With Media Policy Groups
- Convene Communications And Internet Policy Leadership Forums

Business Community

It is in the high-tech industry's short-term and long-term interest to ensure that all segments of the population fully understand e-policy issues. The faster that civil and human rights organizations integrate technology policy into their missions, the faster their constituencies will begin integrating technology into their daily lives. Help is needed, however, in turning civil rights organizations into de facto "technology ambassadors," underscoring the critical need for the industry to accelerate the understanding, acceptance and use of information technology among underserved communities.

- Convene Policy Forums With Civil Rights Leaders
- Take A Leadership Role In Promoting Diversity In The Workplace

Foundation Community

Foundations that care about civil and human rights in the digital age must play a critical role in elevating communications and Internet policy among their grantees and in mobilizing social justice organizations on these critical public policy issues.

- Build The Civil Rights Community's Knowledge Base And Capacity For Communications And Internet Policy
- Collaborate With Media And Internet Programs
- Include Communications And Internet Policy At Foundation Community Meetings Focusing On Civil Rights
- Support Communications And Internet Research Projects
- Support Communications And Internet Demonstration Projects For Grassroots Constituencies

Conclusion

The survey results make it clear that the civil and human rights community recognizes the importance of this moment; but also that a significant disconnect remains between understanding and action. The pursuit of equal opportunity and social justice, and enhancement of civil rights cannot be severed from the realities of the digital age. The time for leadership, investment and collaboration is now. If the civil and human rights community is to ensure a voice for the voiceless in the years ahead, if it is to help shape the emerging digital society, it must act now to build capacity and policy knowledge. In this fast-paced century, those who hesitate may indeed risk being left behind. **This is a result that must not occur.**

Introduction

Our society is in the midst of a profound technology-based communications revolution. This so-called "digital revolution" is transforming our economic, social, political and cultural life. Technological advances, particularly the Internet, are not only reshaping how we learn, work, shop, correspond, and recreate, they are fundamentally reshaping the way individuals and institutions relate — *"a potentially radical shift in who is in control — of information, experience, and resources."*¹

Every day, through the power of technology, individuals and organizations seize power away from large institutions such as the media by accessing, aggregating, producing, manipulating, and disseminating information on their own terms. Technology-based communications advances (in particular, the Internet) are providing individuals and organizations with the unprecedented ability to bypass intermediaries — in commerce, culture, and politics — and do for themselves that which they previously relied on others to do for them. These advances hold the potential to greatly empower individuals and organizations interested in pursuing social and economic justice to harness technology to advance social change.

For those with access to technology and to the skills to use them, the digital age will bring unprecedented opportunity. Unfortunately, not everyone has such access and there is evidence that technological advances may be aggravating existing patterns of inequality between those with access to Information Age tools and the skills to use them and those without (commonly referred to as the "digital divide").

Before we can work to bridge the "digital divide," however, we must understand its various dimensions. Fully measuring or anticipating its impact is impossible because the Internet is still in its infancy. As the medium continues to evolve and mature, the nature of the divide is likely to evolve as well.²

One aspect of the divide that has not received much attention is the manner in which the digital age is impacting the civil and human rights groups who advocate for a more equitable and just society. Do they too stand on the wrong side of the digital divide? If so, what are the implications for their work to achieve social justice or to help shape the new digital society?

These are not merely academic questions. Heretofore, traditional media has, at times, been an obstacle rather than a tool for a more just society. Rather than building community or promoting tolerance, it has often perpetuated stereotypes and limited opportunity. The digital society provides an unprecedented opportunity for those who care about diversity and equality to break free of media gatekeepers and communicate with the public on their own terms.

But while the civil and human rights groups struggle to join the digital age, they still remain far behind. By contrast, many individuals and organizations that have been longstanding opponents of diversity and equality have been some of the early adopters of the new technologies, and are using the Internet to attract new members and get their message out. The number of hate groups that have developed sophisticated web presences is perhaps the most telling example.

"...[N]ew technologies can be an incredible tool of empowerment in schools, homes, businesses, community centers and every other part of civic life ...if we work together to close the digital divide, technology can be the greatest equalizing force our society or any other has ever known."

-President Clinton

¹Shapiro, Andrew L. *The Control Revolution: How the Internet is Putting Individuals in Charge and Changing the World We Know*, Public Affairs, Inc. New York, New York (1999).

²Some early research on the nature of the digital divide includes: [Falling Through the Net](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fallingthru.html), July 1995 (<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fallingthru.html>); [Falling Through the Net II](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/net2/), July 1998 (<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/net2/>); [Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fttn99/contents.html), July 1999 (<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fttn99/contents.html>); [Falling Through the Net: Towards Digital Inclusion](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fttn00/contents00.html), October, 2000 (<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fttn00/contents00.html>)

More importantly, civil and human rights organizations, with few exceptions, have not been among the organizations at the policymaking table, influencing public policies that set the fundamental rules of engagement for the digital age.³ But without question, the time for policy engagement is now. If the leadership of the civil and human rights community is not helping shape the rules for the new medium while it is still in its infancy, it will find it far more difficult to change them after the fact.

During the kick-off of the White House's Digital New Markets tour in April 2000, President Clinton observed that the Internet promises to "be the greatest equalizing force our society or any other has ever known." But the question remains, how can that promise be realized if the principal advocates for equality of opportunity over the years, the civil and human rights community, remain largely disconnected?

At the dawn of a century that will be shaped by new technologies yet unimagined, civil and human rights groups cannot afford to be shut out of digital opportunities. This report is intended as a first step toward assuring that those who serve the goals of equality and social justice find a place at the digital table.

The report examines the capacity and use of new technologies by member organizations of the LCCR/LCEF⁴ as well as their understanding and participation in digital public policy. The report concludes with a set of recommendations aimed at building leadership, investment, and collaboration among civil rights advocates and their supporters.

Background

In the past several years, the national civil and human rights community has begun to take bold steps to integrate technology into its mission and activities. It has developed an increasingly robust web presence and has begun to examine the civil rights stake in communications and Internet policymaking.

The LCCR/LCEF have been at the center of the civil rights community's involvement in this arena, spearheading efforts to educate and increase not only the civil rights community's involvement on the policy front but also its use of technology. The Leadership Conference's website, www.civilrights.org, was first launched in November 1997 with the assistance of the Bell Atlantic Corporation

³For example, while civil rights groups have been only peripherally involved in telecommunications and Internet policy, the Cato Institute has issued a report calling for an end to traditional Universal Service, which assures that local phone service is affordable for consumers (see "Universal Service: The New Telecommunications Entitlements and Taxes," <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-310es.html>) and the Heritage Foundation attacked the E-rate which makes the Internet affordable to underserved schools and libraries as a "secret tax" (see "The Hidden Phone Bill Tax," <http://www.heritage.org/views/2000/ejf00-12.html>). Together, these actions represent an opening salvo in a campaign to eliminate any rules governing fairness, nondiscrimination and equal access in the digital age.

⁴The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) consists of more than 180 organizations representing persons of color, women, children, labor unions, individuals with disabilities, older Americans, major religious groups, gays, lesbians, and civil liberties and human rights groups, and is committed to fighting to preserve and defend equal justice, equal opportunity, and mutual respect. Leadership Conference Education Fund (LCEF) is an independent, non-profit, tax-exempt, research organization established to support educational activities relevant to civil rights which enjoys a close relationship with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. LCEF's mission is to strengthen the Nation's commitment to civil rights and equality of opportunity for all. Through a number of forums, LCEF seeks to communicate to the American people about the progress made in civil rights, the continuing challenges, and the strength of the Nation's diversity.

(now Verizon) to respond to the civil rights coalition's need to harness the power and reach of technology to advance social change in the digital age.

During the same year, LCCR co-convened a Technology Forum with IBM Corporate Community Relations to begin a dialogue among different constituency groups to improve technological access for underserved communities. This forum entitled, "For Use By Us All" represented the first time that leaders from the nation's leading civil and human rights organizations came together to discuss the importance of technology and the barriers they face in bringing technology to their communities.

Since the launch of the site, the Leadership Conference has continued to expand civilrights.org and to encourage the civil rights coalition to embrace new technologies and become involved in shaping the rules for a digital society. Most recently, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights has sponsored the UnitedAgainstHate.org campaign, an Internet-enhanced grassroots campaign to promote passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act by the U.S. House of Representatives. The campaign is using technology to help mobilize and energize the coalition's local contacts to coordinate local UnitedAgainstHate.org coalition events all across the nation. While the campaign continues, preliminary results demonstrate the tremendous promise of using Internet technology in a coordinated manner to advance social change.

In May 1999, the Leadership Conference invited Steve Case, Chairman and CEO of America Online, to deliver a luncheon keynote address at the Leadership Conference's annual Civil Rights Policy Conference, "Working Towards One America," in which he observed that access to the Internet and technology "may well be the civil rights issue of the 21st century." Case's challenge to the civil and human rights community echoed the Leadership Conference's call for digital empowerment.

Shortly thereafter, the Leadership Conference, in partnership with the America Online Foundation, launched the Digital Opportunity Partnership to "unleash the power of information technology on behalf of the nation's civil rights agenda." The Partnership is designed to provide online and offline tools and assistance to help civil and human rights organizations build technology capacity and incorporate technology into their efforts to create a more just and equitable society. Additional support has been provided by the Ford Foundation, the Markle Foundation, IBM, the Verizon Foundation (formerly Bell Atlantic Foundation) and Verio, Inc. In the spring/summer of 2000, the Leadership Conference conducted a survey of the member organizations of LCCR to inform the direction and scope of the Digital Opportunity Partnership and civilrights.org. Specifically, the survey sought to:

1. Determine the capacity of organizations to use new information and communications technologies to advance the civil rights' mission;
2. Evaluate the extent to which civil rights organizations are currently engaged in helping their affiliates, chapters and constituencies move into the digital age; and
3. Determine the extent to which civil rights organizations understand and are engaged in shaping digital public policy issues.

The Methodology

Surveys (see Appendix A) were sent out to approximately 130 LCCR member organizations. Sixty-eight organizations submitted completed or partially completed surveys (see Appendix B). One third of the respondents represented small organizations with less than 15 full time staff and almost half of the respondents were from groups with less than 30 full time staff. Larger organizations with over 75 staff accounted for slightly more than a quarter (27%) of the responses.

Despite the range in size and structure of the responding organizations, it is not possible to say whether the sample is fully representative of the LCCR organizations as a whole. For that reason, the findings must be treated carefully. Indeed, while one may reasonably hypothesize that non-respondents lag further behind on technology integration than respondents, more research is needed to test this hypothesis.

The initial survey mailing was followed up by telephone calls and additional survey transmittals as necessary. The survey itself was comprised of two distinct parts, the first covering technology capacity and use, and the second covering technology policy. These two distinct parts reflect the Leadership Conference's belief that any attempt to increase the civil and human rights community's involvement in the policy debates shaping the new digital society will be more successful if complemented by efforts to increase the technology capacity of civil rights organizations.

In many organizations, several individuals were involved in completing the survey based on their technical or policy background. In a few instances, the first section of the survey was completed and the second left blank because the respondent believed that the organization did not know enough about the policy questions to respond, clearly demonstrating the lack of involvement on these important policy issues.

The survey was divided into two parts because the technology gap facing the civil and human rights community is multifaceted. One aspect of this gap is access to and use of new technologies (what is typically meant by the term digital divide). This aspect of the survey examined the degree and speed of connectivity, types of applications, web presence, how technology is used to enhance communication with members and affiliates, and the extent of use of technology at the chapter and affiliate level.

The second area the survey focused on was the extent that communications and Internet policy issues are being incorporated into the public policy agenda of civil and human rights organizations. If civil and human rights organizations are not at the table when the rules and regulations governing the digital society are written, the diverse interests they represent may ultimately go underrepresented. It was important therefore, to assess the scope of the current extent of policy work, gauge the level of interest in more active participation and learn more about the resource requirements that would support more robust policy engagement.

Survey Findings

I. Technology Capacity

The first part of the survey focused on member organizations’ current capacity and use of technology. Among the most important findings:

- Civil and human rights organizations are beginning to embrace new information and communications technologies, however, they still have a long way to go;
- Respondents agree that technology capacity is critical to successful pursuit of civil rights goals;
- Technology training has not been a priority for respondent organizations, particularly at the higher levels of management;
- Grassroots affiliates are far behind the national offices in technology capacity and use;
- The civil and human rights community needs assistance in understanding what “accessible” means in the digital age;
- Few organizations have comprehensive communications and/or technology plans;
- Organizations rank themselves high on technology capacity and use, but believe the rest of the civil and human rights community is far behind;
- The civil and human rights community welcomes coordinated efforts to improve technology utilization.

“In the last few years, the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium has begun to invest more money on improving and expanding our use of technology, within our office and in everything we do. Effective use of technology is essential for advancing our mission, now and in the future.”

-Karen Narasaki, Executive Director, NAPALC

Civil And Human Rights Organizations Are Beginning To Embrace New Information And Communications Technologies

Of the sixty-eight organizations responding to the technology portion of the survey, every single organization indicated that they were connected to the Internet. Furthermore, almost 95% of the organizations indicated that they have a website, and 55% indicated that they update their websites at least once a week. Roughly 15% of the organizations surveyed update their website daily. Moreover, respondents report that they are starting to focus more attention on building internal technology capacity.

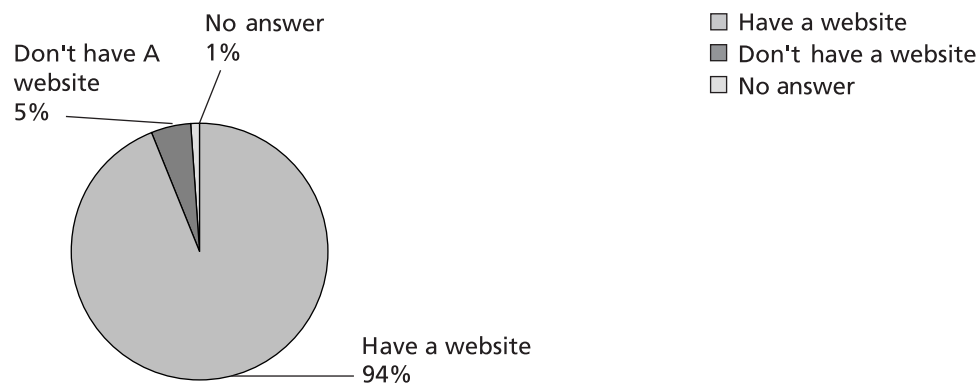


Chart 1: Respondents With Websites

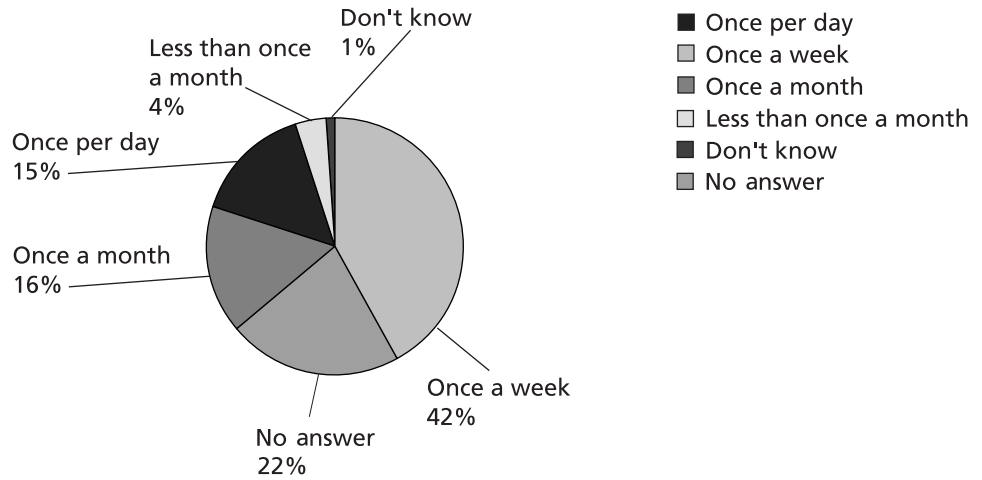


Chart 2: How Often Respondents Update Their Websites

While only 13% of organizations reported that their technology capacity was exceptional or very good 2 years ago, more than 50% believe their capacity is exceptional or very good today. This dramatic increase indicates that many respondent organizations are starting to ramp up and join the ranks of the "wired."

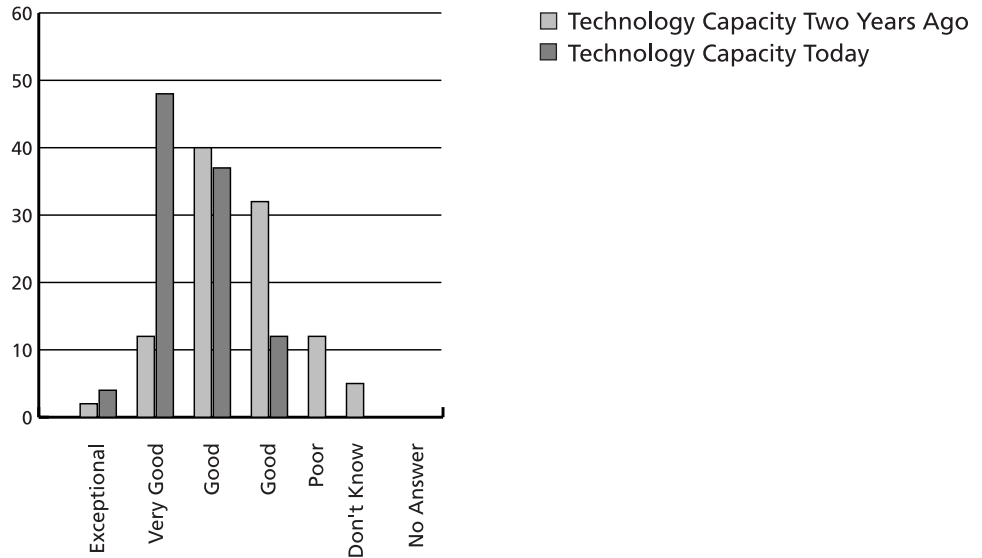


Chart 3: Technology Capacity: Two Years Ago vs. Today

The move to embrace technology is also reflected in how the civil and human rights community is connecting to the Internet. Almost 70% of the organizations responding to the survey are using high-speed (digital) Internet connections. Most of these are dedicated circuits (32%) or DSL (26%).

Connectivity Type	% Respondents Using
Dial Up	32%
ISDN	9%
Dedicated Circuit	32%
DSL	26%
Cable Modem	0%
No Answer	0%

Table 1: Internet Connectivity Technologies Being Used By Survey Respondents

Overall, the level of connectivity among survey respondents appears to be relatively good. However, not all respondents are in the fast lane of the information superhighway. Roughly one-third of the organizations responding still connect to the Internet through a basic analog dial-up connection typically used by individual residential Internet users for their personal needs. Dial-up is a far from adequate solution for multiple users in the workplace when one considers the increasing bandwidth demands that new applications are placing on computers.

Although respondents have started to better integrate technology into their missions, the majority of organizations surveyed are not taking advantage of more sophisticated technologies. For example, while 91% report using e-mail and 68% are using listservs, barely a quarter are using electronic bulletin boards or password-protected websites.

In general, the LCCR members are using the web largely as a non-interactive publishing medium. Survey respondents use the Internet to publish alerts (72%), provide publications (75%), distribute press releases (78%), and educate the public (81%). They are largely not using the Internet to provide training for their members (19%), to provide in-depth electronic reading rooms (12%), or using the web to engage in other interactive activities like surveys or chats. Only 39% of respondents are using the web for fundraising.

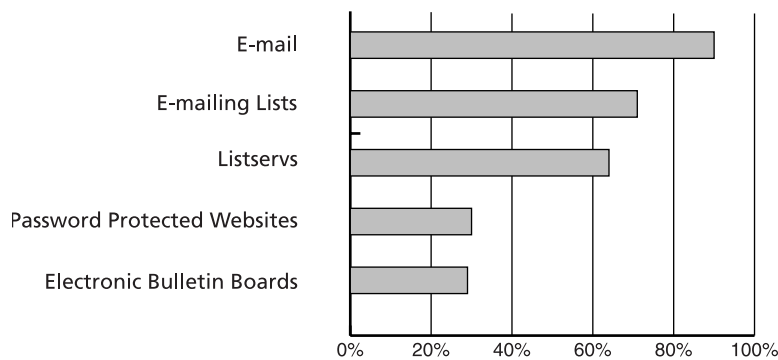


Chart 4: Technology Services Being Used By Survey Respondents

Among the materials posted online by respondent organizations, the majority are policy alerts (85%), press releases (79%), traditional action alerts (69%), and general issue discussions (63%). Relatively few organizations are using the web for providing congressional voting records (25%).

Website Services	% Using
Public Education	81%
Distributing Press Releases	78%
Providing Publications	75%
Sending Member Alerts	72%
Calendar Of Events	63%
Recruiting Members	62%
Communicating With Affiliates	56%
Electronic Activism	51%
Fundraising	40%
Selling Materials	35%
Training	18%
Providing Electronic Reading Rooms	12%

Table 2: Website Services Being Used By Survey Respondents

The LCCR members responding to the survey are adopting the basics of the Internet, which is a good first step. However, these organizations still have a long way to go toward fully realizing the potential of the Internet to advance their mission. The more advanced tools available on the Internet – such as interactivity, personalization, and customized content – are largely not being implemented by responding LCCR member organizations.

Civil And Human Rights Organizations Agree That Building Technology Capacity Is Critical To Successful Pursuit Of Civil Rights Goals

Clearly, the civil and human rights community understands that access to and effective utilization of technology is critical for the future success of all Americans in the information age. Within the civil rights community, however, the issue has even greater significance, since unequal access to technology exacerbates existing inequalities.

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that "[b]uilding stronger technology capacity within civil rights organizations will be critical if the civil rights community is to continue serving the interests/needs of underserved

communities," 90% "strongly" or "very strongly" agreed that it was. Furthermore, two-thirds of those surveyed indicated that they "strongly" or "very strongly" believed that building technology capacity within the civil rights community would accelerate the "understanding, acceptance, and use of information technology among under-served communities."

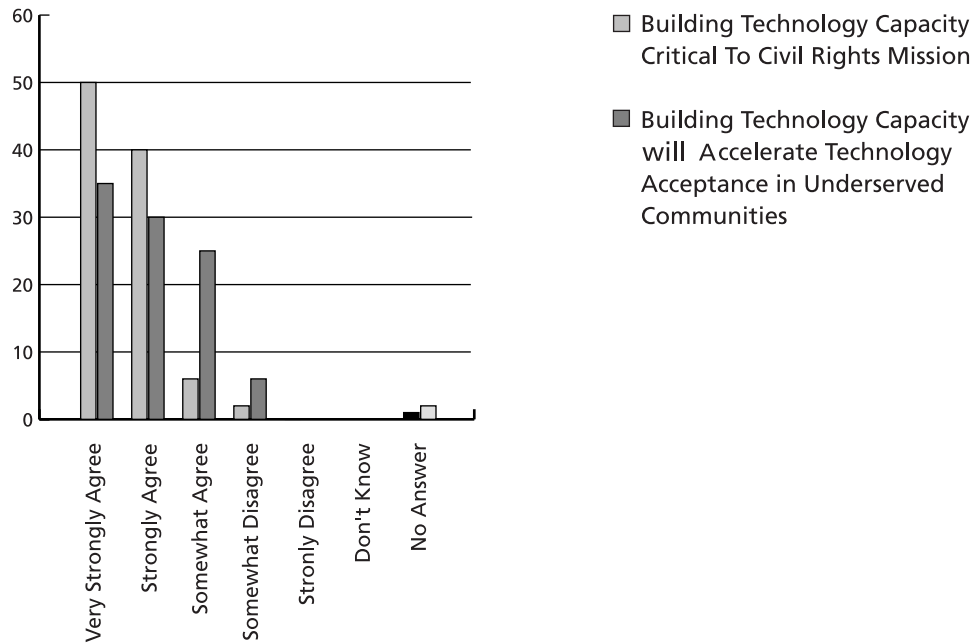


Chart 5: Technology Critical To Civil Rights Mission And Building Technology Acceptance Among Underserved

The recognition that building technology capacity is important to the effectiveness of the civil and human rights community’s mission represents a critical watershed for the civil and human rights community and strongly validates the work and direction of LCCR’s Digital Opportunity Partnership.

Technology Training Has Not Been A Priority For Respondent Organizations, Particularly At The Higher Levels Of Management

Technology training is key to ensuring that staff effectively understand and use technology. But, among the organizations responding to the survey, few staff are receiving significant technology training. Perhaps most disturbing, the more senior the staff, the less technology training they receive. For example, more than 60% of support staff received more than 6 hours of training in the past year, while almost 60% of senior staff received less than 6 hours. Barely a quarter of executive directors received that amount of training, virtually no executive directors received more than 20 hours and almost a third received no technology training at all in the past 12 months.

"Emerging technologies, particularly the Internet, hold the potential to expand opportunity greatly. Yet, if society chooses to repeat past mistakes when new technologies emerge, it will aggravate existing patterns of discrimination. We must have the same diversity among information technology producers as among information technology users, or our constituencies risk being left behind, underserved and underrepresented. The broad civil rights community must act to ensure such a result does not occur."

– Hugh Price, President, National Urban League

Amount Of Training	Executive Director	Senior Staff	Professional Staff	Support Staff
None	32%	18%	15%	10%
Less Than 5 Hours	41%	40%	41%	30%
6-20 Hours	12%	24%	21%	32%
21-40 Hours	1%	4%	4%	9%
40+ Hours	1%	3%	6%	7%
No Answer	12%	12%	13%	12%

Table 3: Amount Of Training In Last 12 Months By Position

Having a rudimentary understanding of the promise and the capacity of new digital technologies is critical if organizations are to effectively leverage technology to advance their missions. Further, a basic understanding of technology is critical to understanding and participating in communications and Internet policymaking. Ultimately, leadership in this area must emanate from the top. This cannot happen unless senior officials and even Board members are familiar with and understand the value of the new technologies.

Grassroots Affiliates Lag Far Behind Their National Organizations In Technology Capacity And Use

While the technology capacity of the national headquarters of civil and human rights organizations is growing, respondents report far less progress in the field. In response to a survey question, more than 30% said that one-quarter or less of their affiliates are connected to the Internet and almost 50% said that less than half of their affiliates are connected to the Internet. The numbers are almost identical for the percentage of affiliates with websites. In contrast, every single Washington-based organization responding to the survey indicated that they are connected to the Internet and 95% have a website.

However, not all the news is bad. Approximately one-fifth of the groups responding to the survey (19%) report a high level (50% or greater) of connectivity among their affiliates and chapters, with the majority using the Internet to communicate with the national organization. Still, a large number (25%) of respondents stated either that they did not know or were unable to comment on the connectivity levels among their affiliates, suggesting a lack of communication and collaboration with their affiliates and chapters on technology decision making.

Percentage Of Affiliates Connected To Internet		Percentage Of Affiliates With Website	
0-25%	31%	0-25%	34%
26-50%	16%	26-50%	19%

51-75%	6%	51-75%	1%
76-100%	13%	76-100%	10%
Don't Know	6%	Don't Know	7%
No Answer	28%	No Answer	28%
Percentage Of National Organizations Connected To Internet		100%	
Percentage Of National Organizations With Website		94%	

Table 4: Comparison Of National Organizations And Affiliates: Internet Connectivity And Web Presence

At present, few national organizations are involved in helping their affiliates, chapters and members understand the value of, and need for, incorporating new technologies into their work. Only about one quarter of the organizations responding to the survey indicated that they are currently "extremely active" or "fairly active" in providing technology support to their affiliates. On a more positive note, roughly half indicated that they intend to become "extremely active" or "fairly active" in providing support two years hence.

"While the NAACP's national branch has made strides in embracing technology, there is a lot of progress to be made at the local branches to ensure that all segments of society are able to participate fully in the Digital Age."

– Hilary Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau, NAACP

In sum, while the national organizations surveyed have come a long way in the past few years, their affiliates still have a long way to go.

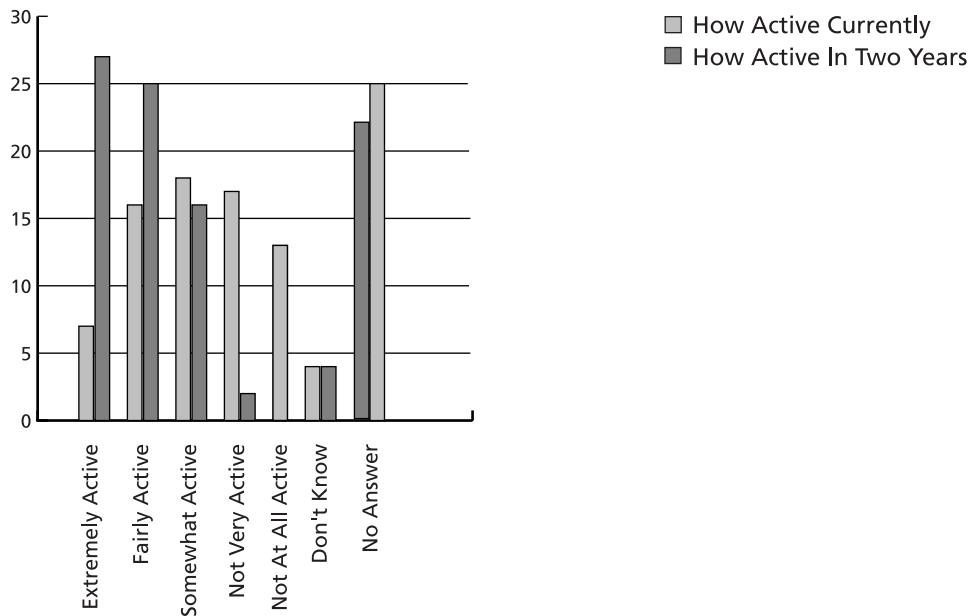


Chart 6: Level Of Technology Outreach To Affiliates (Today vs. Two Years From Now)

The Civil And Human Rights Community Needs Assistance In Fully Understanding What "Accessible" Means In The Digital Age

The LCCR/LCEF survey revealed important data regarding accessibility of member organization websites. Of those responding to the survey, 38% indicated that their websites were "fully accessible" to people with disabilities, 16% said that they knew their sites were "not accessible," 15% said their sites were "partially accessible," and significantly, almost 30% said that they didn't know whether their website was accessible or not.

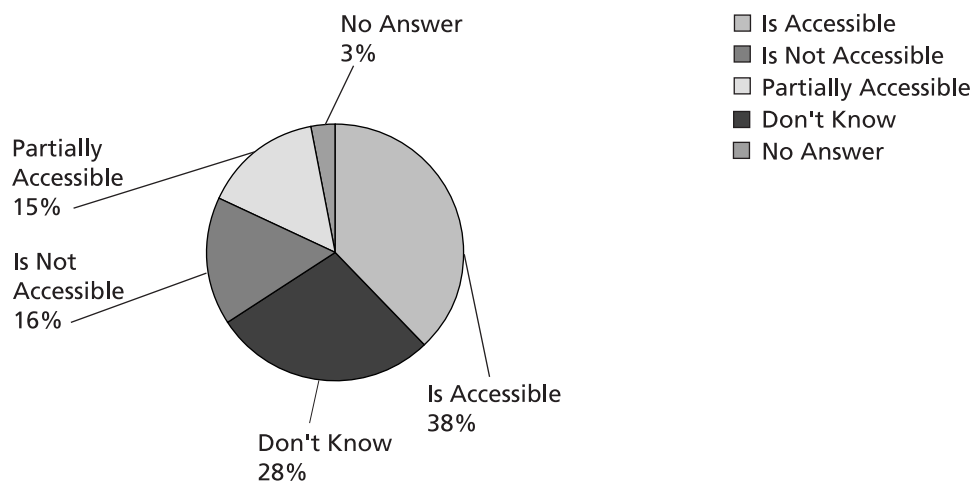


Chart 7: Website Accessibility To Disabled

Just as the civil and human rights community has fought for full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into American society, so must it ensure full inclusion in the emerging digital society. LCCR member organizations have a proud history in their support for people with disabilities in the campaigns of the last 30 years. Despite the relatively high percentage of respondents who have inaccessible sites or are not sure whether their websites are accessible, there is a growing recognition within the civil rights community that this lack of access could undercut the work for disability rights in the digital age. If civil rights groups get the help they need to fully understand what is involved in ensuring "accessible media," they will be able to assume a leadership role in this area.

Few Organizations Have Comprehensive Communications And/Or Technology Plans

Technology is not a panacea, nor is it a goal in its own right. Rather, it is a means to an end; a tool which, when properly integrated into an organization's operations, can exponentially expand its capacity to accomplish its goals. Therefore, it is important that as civil and human rights groups increase their technology capacity, that technology planning be integrated into overall institutional plans, and more particularly that communications plans integrate new technologies.

But of the organizations responding to the survey, 58% of respondents indicated that they did not have a written communications plan that integrates the use of technology. Only 19% indicated that they had such a plan, and 22% said they didn't know whether they had such a plan or not. Technology provides organizations with a powerful communications tool. Organizations need to understand that the success of their civil rights agenda is directly connected to their ability to use the medium as part of their overall communications and advocacy strategy.

Response	Have A Communications Plan Integrating Technology
Yes	19%
No	59%
Don't Know	22%
No Answer	0%

Table 5: Organizations With Communications Plan Integrating Technology

"Just as breaking down barriers to full inclusion for individuals with disabilities in American society has been a priority for the broad civil rights community, so too must ensuring that emerging media is accessible to underserved populations such as disabled persons, language-minority users, and people with low literacy skills."

– Andrew J. Imparato, President and CEO, American Association for Persons with Disabilities

Respondents Rank Themselves High On Technology Capacity And Use, But Believe The Rest Of The Civil And Human Rights Community Is Far Behind

When asked to rank themselves on technology capacity, respondents gave their organization high marks. More than half of all the organizations responding indicated that they had "exceptional" or "very good" capacity to use information technology today. Almost 90% said they had "very good," "exceptional," or "good" capacity to use information technology today. For the most part, those high marks held true even when the group is still relying on dial-up Internet access.

In contrast, only 12% believed that the civil and human rights community as a whole was "cutting edge" or "fairly advanced" in its use of technology and only a third rated the community as "advanced." At the same time, almost 40% gave the community very low marks, either "not very advanced," or "just beginning."

Organization's Capacity To Use IT Today?		Civil & Human Rights Community's Overall Use Of Technology	
Exceptional	3%	Cutting edge	3%
Very Good	49%	Fairly advanced	9%
Good	37%	Advanced	34%
Not very good	12%	Not very advanced	29%
Poor	0%	Just beginning	10%
Don't know	0%	Don't know	13%
No Answer	0%	No answer	1%

Table 6: Organizational Self-Ratings vs. Civil And Human Rights Community Ratings

Why respondents rate themselves as having very good technology capacity while viewing their colleagues as far behind is not easy to explain. One interpretation is that survey respondents represent the "early adoptors" who are in fact far ahead of the broader civil and human rights community. It is more likely, however, that the self-ratings are somewhat inflated given the capacity findings above. This is a fairly common phenomenon in survey research. For example, when asked to rank Congress or the state of public education, survey participants often rank them unfavorably. But when asked to rank their local school or member of Congress, people generally give them high marks.

The Civil Rights Community Welcomes Coordinated Efforts To Improve Technology Utilization

As part of the Digital Opportunities Partnership (DOP), LCCR/LCEF have proposed a number of outreach programs to help Washington-based civil and human rights organizations move forward into the digital age. Of the DOP programs listed in the survey, the technology assistance forums, shared Internet applications, website accessibility assistance, and the technology e-rider were the most popular, with over 80% of the respondents finding them useful, somewhat useful or very useful. While the leadership policy forums received slightly lower rankings, they were still considered useful by the vast majority of respondents, over 70%. Given the low level of engagement on communications and Internet policy, the strong demand for the leadership policy forums is encouraging. What the finding strongly suggests is that LCCR members understand the importance of collaboration in this area. They know they face a steep learning curve and welcome pooling of both knowledge and resources.

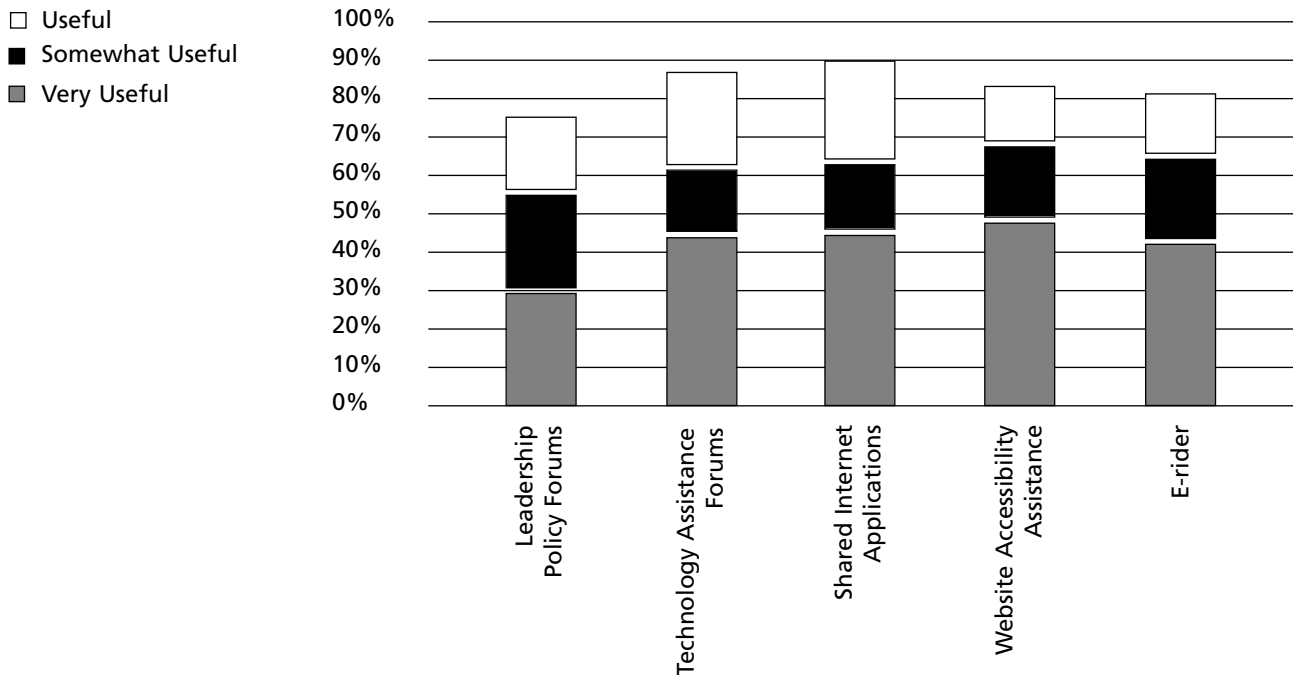


Chart 8: Usefulness Of Various DOP Initiatives

II. Communications And Internet Policy

The second part of the survey sought to measure Leadership Conference organizations' awareness and involvement in key communications and Internet policy issues that inform the digital divide. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of a number of issues, to rate their current and anticipated involvement in those issues, and to indicate what internal changes would be necessary to make communications and Internet policy a greater priority. A number of important findings emerged:

- Civil and human rights groups understand that digital policy is important to advancing social justice;
- Concern about the digital divide is not yet translating into activism on communications and Internet policy;
- Few civil and human rights organizations currently have plans to increase involvement or devote more resources to digital issues over the next one to three years.
- Civil rights organizations would place higher priority on digital issues if financial resources and technical assistance were made available.

Civil And Human Rights Groups Understand That Communications And Internet Policy Issues Are Important To Promoting Social And Economic Justice

Survey respondents were asked on a scale ranging from "extremely important" to "not important" to rate a set of 15 policy issues that many consider integral to bridging the digital divide and promoting social and economic justice. Significantly, over 90% of the responding organizations ranked all but one of the issues as "extremely important," "somewhat important," or "important."

The top three issues ranked as extremely important were "ensuring the availability of education technology in classrooms in low income and underserved areas," "ensuring that the Internet and other new information technologies are accessible to all persons (i.e. physical access, language access)," and "training and hiring women and minorities into high tech careers."

The three issues that were ranked least important were the "extension of high speed Internet access (also known as broadband access) to underserved and rural communities," "the provision of opportunities for citizen groups to use radio, television and the Internet for community and educational programming," and the "increase of minority ownership of media/Internet businesses and services." Yet, even on these issues, clear majorities believe the issues important.

Policy Initiative	Extremely Important	Somewhat Important	Important
Ensure the availability of education technology in classrooms in low income and underserved areas	75%	7%	15%

Ensure that the Internet and other new information technologies are accessible to all persons	68%	19%	10%
Train and hire women and minorities into high tech careers	61%	22%	14%
Ensure that the Internet remains an open forum for free expression and diverse content	58%	17%	17%
Provide adequate support for training of teachers, students, and broader citizenry to ensure digital literacy	58%	20%	19%
Ensure that affordable telephone access is available to everyone	56%	20%	17%
Provide media/Internet content relevant to and/or created by minorities	53%	24%	20%
Provide affordable access to computers and the Internet for your constituency	53%	15%	20%
Use the Internet as a means to educate and increase civic engagement and participation in the political process	51%	22%	20%
Provide sufficient funding and support for community technology centers and other public Internet access points	49%	20%	22%
Ensure that the Internet and other digital media evolve to protect the privacy of consumers and citizens	46%	24%	20%
Keep media/Internet free from hate speech and offensive or demeaning content	44%	17%	12%

Provide opportunities for citizen groups to use radio, television, and the internet for community and educational programming	41%	22%	31%
Increase minority ownership of media/ Internet businesses and services	39%	27%	25%
Extension of high speed Internet access (also known as broadband access) to underserved and rural communities	37%	27%	24%

Table 10: Importance Of Various Communications And Internet Issues For LCCR Members

Overall, respondents gave the highest rankings to policy proposals aimed at making technology available and accessible to the community. The simpler the proposal and the closer it resembled traditional civil rights concerns, the higher the level of support.

For example, almost 75% of respondents ranked ensuring the availability of education technology in classrooms in low-income and underserved areas as "extremely important." Almost 68% of respondents believed that making the Internet accessible to all people was "extremely important." And 61% viewed training and hiring women and minorities into high tech careers as "extremely important."

Issues that required a more sophisticated understanding of communications and Internet policy were generally rated as less important.⁵ For example, only 37.3% of responding organizations ranked extension of high-speed Internet access to rural and underserved communities as extremely important. Yet, there is a clear relationship between the extension of broadband to the issue ranked most important to the civil rights community—ensuring the availability of education technology in the classroom. While it is possible that respondents do not yet fully understand the importance of bringing broadband to underserved communities, it is more likely that they are focused at present on policies that bring the Internet to their constituencies in any form.

Finally, the policy issues that typically rank highest in importance to Internet consumers, such as the elimination of hate speech and the protection of consumer privacy, were not as important to the civil rights respondents, with only about 45% ranking them as "extremely important." Again, it is clear that the critical issue for the civil rights community is helping to get its constituencies online. Policy questions about privacy and security are not yet on the civil rights radar screen, and are not likely to be until and unless basic access is secured.

"Before we can close the digital divide, we have to understand its dimensions. But fully measuring or anticipating its impact is impossible because the Internet is still in its infancy. As the medium continues to evolve and mature, the nature of the divide is likely to evolve away from access to technology and toward utilization of technology. It is critical for organizations representing the underserved to be engaged in these issues."

—Wade Henderson, Executive Director, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

⁵See Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability: Second Report, August, 2000 (http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/Orders/2000/fcc00290.pdf)

Concern About The Digital Divide Is Not Yet Translating Into Activism On Communications And Internet Policy

There is a clear and measurable disconnect between respondents' recognition of the importance of public policy in the digital age and the respondents' engagement in those issues. Although civil and human rights organizations have a nascent understanding of the issues, the community is at the earliest stages of translating that knowledge into action.

"Effectively utilizing technology is essential to defend historic civil rights gains and advance the pursuit for social and economic justice. At the same time, these recent communication advances, particularly the Internet, create unprecedented opportunities for the civil rights community to find new ways for the world's most diverse people to live and work together. Leveraging the Internet to promote civic engagement and participation in the political process, particularly among young people, is a top priority for the civil rights community."

—Raul Yzaguirre, National Council of La Raza

When asked to evaluate their own level of activism on the same set of policy issues they ranked in importance, the overwhelming majority of responding organizations described themselves as being either "not very active" or "not active" on most issues. The only two policy areas in which respondents reported significant engagement were "using the Internet as a means to increase civic engagement and participation in the political process" and "providing media/Internet content relevant to and/or created by minorities."

Similarly, respondents were also asked to characterize their level of activity on the policy issues from "leader" to "not involved." Here again, respondents gave themselves a significantly higher rating on civic engagement, with 17% describing themselves as leaders and 31% indicating they were actively tracking the issue.

It is not entirely clear whether the reports of higher involvement reflect an assessment of their own online activities to increase civic engagement or rather advocacy on behalf of policies toward that end (such as online voting). Nevertheless, the finding is significant and warrants further consideration. At a minimum, the strong response suggests a starting point for more robust participation in digital policies. Plainly, the civil and human rights community understands the Internet's power as a decentralized communications medium and hopes to harness it to achieve a more powerful presence for civil rights causes in public life.

Other than their reported activity on civic engagement issues, civil and human rights organizations do not report significant activity on the other communications and Internet policy issues. A significant number of respondents did not know how to characterize their involvement on digital divide policy issues, or did not answer the question.

Finally, when respondents were asked to rank their involvement in ongoing policy debates in the 106th Congress, few reported significant activity. This held true even when the respondent had previously identified the issue as "extremely important". For example, 75% of respondents believed that bringing educational technology into the classroom was "extremely important" for closing the digital divide. Yet only 29% saw the reauthorization of Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as important to their organizations and only 32% said that full funding for the E-Rate (the universal service program that helps with technology infrastructure for schools and libraries) was important.

Similarly, 68% of respondents believed that making the Internet accessible to all was extremely important to closing the digital divide. But only 36% believed that the President’s plan to increase funding for community technology centers was very important to their organization.

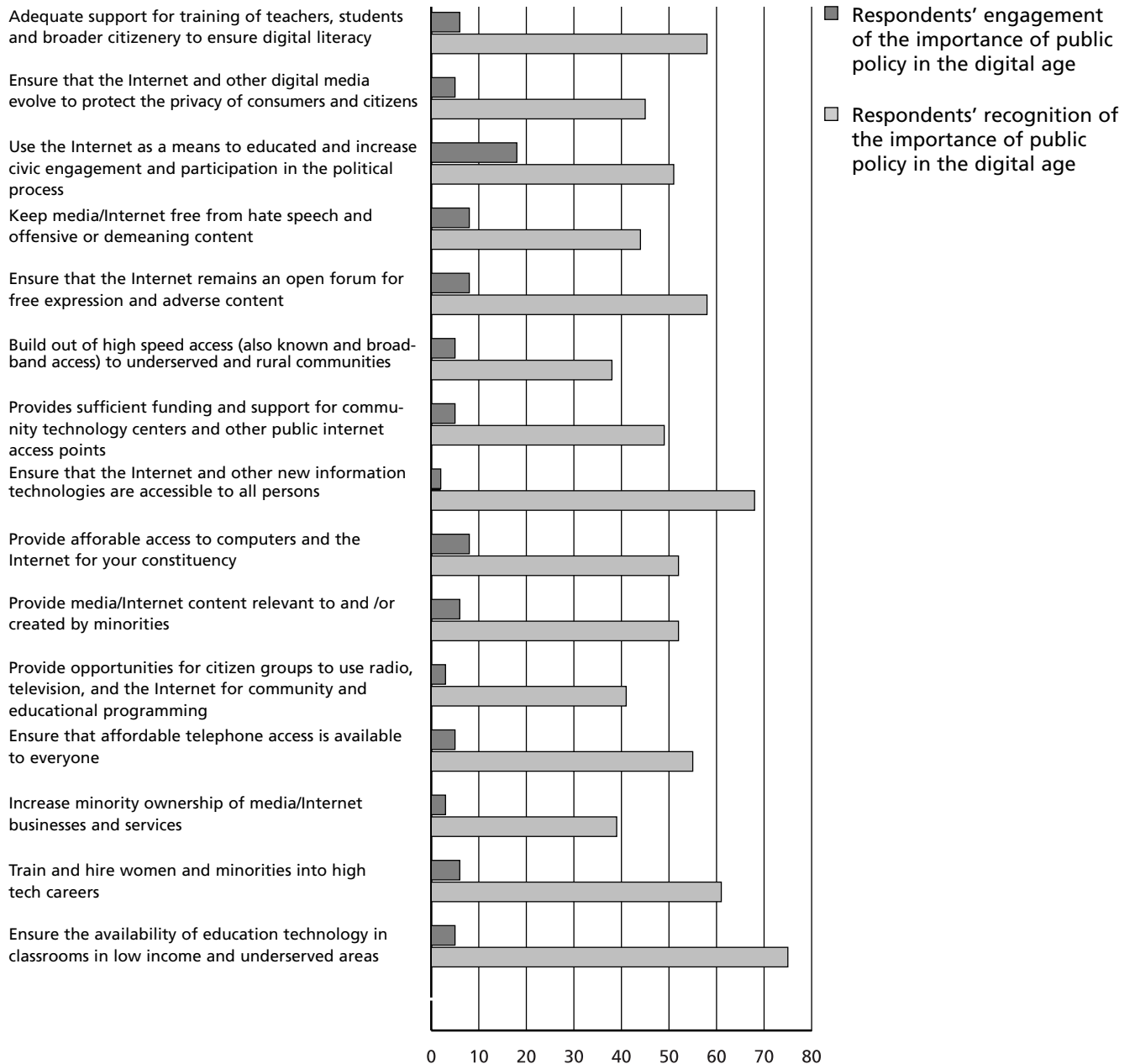


Chart 8: Issue Importance vs. Civil Rights Community Participation

Few Civil And Human Rights Organizations Have Plans To Increase Involvement Or Devote More Resources To Communications And Internet Policy Issues Over The Next One To Three Years

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they planned to spend more or less time and resources on the list of policy issues over the next one-to-three years. Overall, few organizations report plans for a more active role. There were a few significant exceptions, most notably almost 56% of the respondents stated that they intended to increase the time and resources they allocated to policies related to "using the Internet as a means to increase civic engagement."

In addition, some respondents reported plans to become more involved in policy related to "providing Internet content relevant to minorities" (37%), "making the Internet accessible to all people" (36%) and "ensuring the availability of education technology in low-income areas" (34%). Again, the significantly higher response to policies related to civic engagement needs to be further examined by the LCCR community.

Policy Initiative	More Active	Same	Less Active
Ensure the availability of education technology in classrooms in low income and underserved areas	34%	27%	2%
Ensure that that the Internet and other new information technologies are accessible to all persons	36%	32%	0%
Train and hire women and minorities into high tech careers	19%	47%	0%
Ensure that the Internet remains an open forum for free expression and diverse content	25%	41%	2%
Provide adequate support for training of teachers, students, and broader citizenry to ensure digital literacy	19%	34%	2%
Ensure that affordable telephone access is available to everyone	10%	46%	3%
Provide media/Internet content relevant to and/or created by minorities	37%	31%	0%

Provide affordable access to computers and the Internet for your constituency	25%	39%	0%
Use the Internet as a means to educate and increase civic engagement and participation in the political process	56%	17%	0%
Provide sufficient funding and support for community technology centers and other public Internet access points	24%	39%	0%
Ensure that the Internet and other digital media evolve to protect the privacy of consumers and citizens	14%	46%	2%
Keep media/Internet free from hate speech and offensive or demeaning content	19%	42%	0%
Provide opportunities for citizen groups to use radio, television, and the internet for community and educational programming	25%	32%	2%
Increase minority ownership of media/Internet businesses and services	8%	47%	0%
Extension of high speed Internet access (also known as broadband access) to underserved and rural communities	17%	42%	0%

Table 11: Expected Level Of Activity On Policy Issues In Two Years

By and large, organizations either did not have a clear picture of how time and resources would be allocated during the next one-to-three years or did not anticipate shifting their resource allocation for work on communications and Internet policy. Moreover, there appears to be no clear correlation between the percentage of organizations that identified an issue to be important for closing the digital divide and future allocation of time and resources for that issue.

For example, almost 75% of respondents stated that the availability of education technology in classrooms in low income areas was extremely important to closing the digital divide, but only 34% responded that they would be allocating more time and

resources to the issue in the next one-to-three years. Similarly, 61% of respondents believed that hiring women and minorities into high tech careers was extremely important for closing the digital divide, yet just 19% stated that they intended to increase resources for that issue. Again, the only issue where ranking closely tracked future allocation of resources was civic engagement.

Civil Rights Organizations Would Place Higher Priority On Technology Policy Issues If Additional Resources And Technical Assistance Were Available

"While there is tremendous potential for the civil rights community to participate in the debates that will help shape the digital age, and in doing so to ensure the information age creates opportunity for all, the limits of our expertise and our resources prevent us from doing everything we should do."

—JoAnn K. Chase, National Congress of American Indians

Respondents were asked to describe what would need to take place internally for their organization to make communications and Internet policy issues a greater priority. Respondents pointed to a range of help needed to increase their involvement, and identified two areas as being of greatest concern. More than 60% of respondents ranked acquiring additional financial resources and expanding staff expertise as "important," "somewhat important," or "very important." Additionally, a majority of respondents also identified other types of assistance including coalition support and senior staff education as important.

Importance	Very	Somewhat	Important	Not Very	Not Important
More board education	22%	12%	15%	12%	3%
More staff expertise	25%	22%	17%	2%	3%
Increased financial resources	47%	10%	5%	2%	3%
Coalition support	20%	17%	19%	8%	3%
More senior staff education	17%	20%	15%	10%	3%

Table 12: Internal Changes Necessary To Increase Priority Of Media/Technology Policy Issues

Recommendations

Over the past several years, the world has witnessed a spectacular communications and technological revolution that is transforming our economic, social, political, and cultural life. This revolution has the potential to expand opportunity greatly for everyone, but the potential is especially great for under-served communities because of the remarkable new opportunities now being presented to civil and human rights groups that represent those communities.

With appropriate leadership, investment and collaboration, we can help ensure that new communications advances are leveraged to improve people's lives, reinforce society's core values, and strengthen our institutions. We can seize the opportunity to utilize new technologies to help foster a rich culture of ideas and perspectives. Through the power and reach of technology, we can help create new, sustainable ways to educate and mobilize the widest possible coalition of conscience to promote equal opportunity and fight discrimination in all its forms in the United States and around the world. In moving from digital disconnect to digital empowerment, we can continue building a more equitable society.

While some progress is being made in improving the technology capacity and readiness of the civil rights community and its involvement in the development of communications and Internet public policy, much more is needed. Accordingly, we offer the following recommendations designed to help ensure that all segments of society can participate fully in the Digital Age.

Building Information Technology Capacity Among Leadership Conference Member Organizations

Develop A Coalition-Wide Technology Assistance Initiative

As Arnold Aronson, co-founder of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, stated, "The struggle for civil rights cannot be won by one group acting by or for itself alone, but only through a coalition of groups that share a common commitment to equal justice and equal opportunity for every American."

This same coalition model represents the best hope for the civil rights community to develop a strong presence online, and therefore the coalition should develop a coalition-wide technology assistance initiative. The initiative would leverage limited resources from many sources to provide a wide-range of technical assistance including hardware and software development, network installation, database development, web site design, training, and broader technology consultation.

A coalition-wide initiative would include the development of an umbrella web site (portal), a trusted clearinghouse that would bring together like-minded socially responsible organizations as well as link loyal communities around them. The portal would allow for the efficient pooling of content and constituencies could create a vibrant, issue-based community that grows along with the Internet, providing all participating sites a significant value-added entry point for their content. Such a portal could also ensure that social justice-oriented content is accessible and inclusive for all segments of the population.

This initiative would also assist those interested in funding technology capacity building for social justice organizations by serving as a trusted entity where funders would be assured that their scarce resources were being leveraged to maximize their impact.

Beyond the coalition-wide technology assistance initiative, there are several specific ways the civil rights community, the business community, and the foundation community can each help build the technology capacity of national organizations.

Civil Rights Community

Increasing the technology capacity of the civil rights community will not occur without national leadership and vision. Toward that end, the leadership of the civil rights coalition must use its prestige and influence to improve the coalition's knowledge and use of the emerging technologies in all its work.

Develop Comprehensive Technology Plans That Stress Employee Training

The first step in making more effective use of technology is having a comprehensive technology plan outlining the role technology can play in the larger operations of the individual organizations. The plan should include an assessment of the organization's current allocation of resources, to give a clear picture of an organization's current access to and utilization of advanced technologies. To the extent possible, the coalition should develop a standard technology assessment tool to assist organizations in their efforts to establish technology plans. Those organizations that have developed technology assessment plans should assist those who have not yet done so.

Another key component of the technology plan should be staff training on the use of technology. Many technology consultants advise that at least 70 percent of the technology budget be devoted to training. This helps ensure that technology will advance the organization's mission rather than drive the agenda. Thus, the application of technology is never an end in itself, but a means to an end.

Utilize Technology More Effectively To Achieve Programmatic Goals

In addition to developing comprehensive technology plans, organizations should begin thinking creatively about how new technologies can help them more efficiently and effectively achieve their programmatic goals. So, for example, rather than thinking about how a report can be posted on the web, organizations should consider how the Internet may assist in the creation of the report in the first place. At a minimum, all foundation proposals should incorporate strategies on how technology can assist an organization in achieving the goals of the project.

Import Technology Knowledge Into The Coalition With Strategic Technology Consulting

If the civil rights community is to utilize technology more effectively to achieve programmatic goals, there is a critical need to bring individuals more proficient with

the effective use of technology into the national civil rights community. Given that most organizations do not have funding available to hire full-time employees (and the questionable value of doing so vis-à-vis other priorities), organizations should consider strategic relationships with technology consultants.

Convene Technology Leadership Forums For Civil Rights, Industry, And Foundation Leaders

National civil rights organizations should convene leadership forums that bring civil and human rights leaders together with high tech leadership, to discuss the value of emerging and established technologies. Similar forums should be convened for those within the foundation community to discuss the potential of technology to build institutions, and facilitate advocacy and civic engagement.

Convene Technology Assistance Forums For Staff

National civil rights organizations should also convene Periodic Technology Assistance Forums that focus on supporting the Information Technology (IT) staffs at civil rights organizations. These Forums would create opportunities for IT employees to share knowledge and learn from each another. They should highlight promising applications of technology, and train staff to utilize these promising applications within their own organizations. In addition, the Forums should address organizational barriers to leveraging the latest technologies more effectively, including: technical resource information, fiscal resources, and staff technical training.

Become Accessible And Inclusive

National civil rights organizations must play a leadership role in ensuring that all segments of society are able to participate fully in the Digital Age. Full participation is defined not only as ensuring access to individuals with disabilities, but also enabling full and complete access to information for individuals with limited English proficiency, limited literacy, or slow Internet connections.

Larger organizations or those organizations with a specific focus on disability issues should provide technical assistance, demonstrate best practices, and link to information and tools to help improve accessibility for all. Among the organizations that could play an important role are: National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM), World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the National Federation of the Blind, and Children's Partnership.

Collaborate, Collaborate, Collaborate

National non-profit organizations have similar technology needs. The LCCR coalition should coordinate the development of technology applications directed toward fulfilling the shared needs of its member organizations. The civil rights community should consider utilizing its shared resources to develop a suite of applications similar to an application service provider that addresses the needs of national, state and local coalition members. To jump start collaborative efforts, the

civil rights coalition should consider sponsoring a coalition-wide initiative among organizations working on a common issue.

Business Community

The business community and specifically the high-tech industry, is in the best position to help civil rights leaders realize the potential of recent technological advances. As the brain trust of the technology revolution, the industry has the vision and a staff uniquely qualified to serve as "trainers of trainers" for the civil rights community. By lending their technology and intellectual capital, and by making their skilled staff available to help the staff of civil and human rights organizations build their technology capacity and leadership in this area, the high-tech industry would make a major contribution to the pursuit of economic and social justice in the United States and around the world.

While some companies within the high-tech industry have already made significant profits, the full potential of the industry has yet to be realized. As the industry seeks new ways to promote its products and services, civil and human rights organizations can play an important intermediary role to some of the communities that have been slower to adopt these new technologies.

Provide Hardware, Software, And High-Speed Internet Access

There is a critical need for civil rights organizations to utilize the latest hardware and software tools and to acquire high-speed Internet access. Given the cost of these innovations, which may be prohibitive to most organizations, the high-tech industry should provide in-kind contributions to support the civil rights community's technology needs. A special initiative focused on providing technology resources to civil rights organizations and community centers serving low-income communities may be warranted.

Encourage And Support Training Efforts

It is not enough to have access to the latest hardware and software applications. Knowing how to utilize these technologies requires extensive training. Perhaps the starkest finding of this report is the dearth of training currently taking place within the civil rights community, particularly among the leadership of coalition organizations. The business community is acutely aware of the important role technology training plays within their institutions and would contribute greatly to the work of the coalition by funding collaborative technology training programs for employees at civil rights organizations. The business community could invest in the development of online training modules to guide organizations and their grassroots components through technology planning, staff development and integration.

Encourage And Support Employees' Volunteer Efforts

Bridging the technology divide requires understanding organizations' needs before

using technology to solve them. It requires a significant time commitment and lots of training, nurturing and handholding. The business community should actively encourage their employees to share its time and skills with civil rights organizations, particularly those working to bridge the digital divide.

Help Build Collaborative Web-Based Applications

The business community should assist civil rights organizations in building web-based applications that every coalition member could utilize.

Convene Leadership Forums With Civil Rights Leaders

There is a real need for greater collaboration among the leadership of the business community and civil rights leaders. The business community, and high-tech leaders in particular, should convene forums where civil rights leaders can discuss their technology-related challenges and barriers.

In turn, these forums would provide leaders in the business community a venue to express their priorities to civil rights leaders. Establishing a structure for on-going discussion and debate, creates the opportunity to build trust, collaboration and a shared agenda among business, the non-profit world and government.

Provide Direct Financial Assistance

While intellectual support and capital is important, there is a demonstrated need for industry to provide direct financial support to help civil and human rights organizations build their technology capacity. Many high-tech companies and foundations including America Online, Cisco, Microsoft, IBM, Bell Atlantic (now Verizon), Intel and Verio have devoted significant resources to bridge the digital divide and bring technology capacity to non-profits. Even so, greater investments are sorely needed. A lack of resources (financial and intellectual) remains a major obstacle to building the technology capacity of the civil and human rights community.

Foundation Community

By all accounts, civil rights organizations have found it difficult to find support for the development of their technology infrastructures. Yet, as the survey makes clear, those costs remain a major hurdle for social justice organizations. While a number of organizations have achieved base-line capabilities, most remain far behind.

Within the non-profit community, foundations have been very slow to provide technology support/advice to national and local civil rights organizations. While some in the technology industry have stepped up to help with capacity building, most foundations that fund the core civil rights mission have not yet recognized the nexus between technology and equal justice in the digital age. This is particularly troubling given that many right-wing foundations and organizations (e.g. Olin Foundation, Southeastern Legal Foundation, Federation of America Immigration Reform (FAIR),

and the Christian Coalition) have aggressively pursued high-tech education and advocacy strategies. As should now be clear, equality and social justice are now inextricably intertwined with the ability of organizations to organize, advocate and build the civil rights voice online. Because of their control over resources, foundations funding social justice organizations have a unique role to play in building the technology capacity of civil rights organizations.

Improve Technology Culture In Foundation Community

Just as there is a dearth of technical knowledge/skills in the civil and human rights community, there is a lack of these skills in foundations that support social justice organizations. Foundation executives and program officers who understand the need to support technology capacity building should take a leadership role in convening Foundation Leadership Forums to help educate their colleagues not yet sold on the importance of funding such initiatives. These forums should focus on improving the technology culture within the foundation community as well as assisting foundations to develop the means necessary to review and differentiate between well-defined initiatives and those with little merit.

Support Technology Capacity Building Initiatives

Foundations must begin to view requests for capacity building favorably and to understand that often a program cannot be separated from the technology capacity. Moreover, foundations can help encourage the social justice community to move towards technology literacy and leadership by requiring grant applicants to include technology components in their proposals. Foundations should begin to require their grantees to have technology plans and if necessary, provide funds for that task. Foundations that fund groups to help nonprofits better utilize technology must take steps to direct the work of those grantees towards the civil rights community as well. The foundation community should consider establishing a special technology assistance initiative for civil rights organizations.

Fund Early Adopters

It can be very difficult to get organizations to embrace change. Some organizations have a natural aversion to change, perceiving it as scary, complicated or costly. Funders can do much to help civil rights organizations build capacity by funding "early adapters" who use technology for effective capacity building and by supporting well-defined aggregation initiatives. As these projects show promise, those institutions less anxious to adopt new technological advances will soon follow.

Collaborate, Collaborate, Collaborate

Foundations must work together on technology-related issues. One of the most important things that foundations can do is to forge better working relationships with each other and combine their resources to work across portfolios. Many national social justice organizations do very similar tasks, and therefore, have very similar

approaches to fulfilling their missions and goals. Technology capacity building is a program area that is ideal for collaboration. While non-profits are sometimes hesitant to partner with one another, the encouragement and facilitation of such collaboration by the foundation community would contribute greatly to building the technology capacity of the civil rights community.

Demand Accessible And Inclusive Technology Utilization From Grantees

Foundations should use the "power of the purse" to require that all of their grantees deploy accessible and inclusive technology applications.

Specifically Fund Organizations Working To Bridge Digital Divide

Additional funding is required for those organizations taking a leadership role in accelerating the understanding, acceptance and use of information technology among under-served communities. National civil and human rights organizations have a critical leadership role to play in demonstrating the importance of technology skills to their grassroots constituencies. Initiatives are needed that not only sponsor technology demonstrations in under-served communities, but also help low-income individuals find low-cost ways to access and begin utilizing computers.

Increasing Leadership Conference Member Organizations' Participation On Communications And Internet Policy

Establish A Coalition-Wide Resident Scholar Program For Communications And Internet Policy

In order to increase the civil and human rights community's participation on communications and Internet policy debates, there is a critical need for substantive research on the nexus between civil rights and communications and Internet policy. While specific recommendations for various sectors are posted below, one overarching recommendation that should be considered by all is the creation of a Resident Scholar on Communications and Internet Policy for the civil rights community.

Communications and Internet Policy is a large, complex, and persistent policy area that requires time, care and focus. Freed from day-to-day obligations, and thus able to develop a big picture perspective, the Resident Scholar would be in an excellent position to facilitate the development of a comprehensive e-civil rights public policy agenda. By overseeing the commissioning of papers, the convening of conferences, and in general facilitating the translation between knowledge and action as it bears on communications and Internet policy issues the Resident Scholar would represent a long-term effort to ensure the civil rights community has the necessary research to participate fully in the policy debates that will shape the digital age.

A primary responsibility of the Resident Scholar would be to interact with academia and those engaged in applied policy work and help to bring those worlds together. The Resident Scholar would help to educate the civil rights community about

existing research relevant to communications policy; and would provide academic researchers a clearer understanding of the research needs of the civil rights community in this area.

In short, the Resident Scholar would bridge the worlds of research and advocacy, helping policy advocates appreciate what the research community can provide and helping the research community understand how it can contribute to social problem-solving. The central aim of the Resident Scholar program would be to build capacity and a legacy of collaboration around communications and Internet policy. The work would be centered in the civil rights community and would reflect its concerns about social and economic justice.

The Resident Scholar should be placed at an organization that focuses on both advocacy and knowledge and public education, so as to be positioned to assist those who engage in advocacy to broaden their understanding; and to help those who pursue knowledge to target their efforts to advance social and economic justice.

Civil Rights Community

To date, the civil rights community has played a very limited role in the debates about advanced communications technologies. Increasing the civil and human rights community's involvement in policy debates shaping the digital age will only occur with strong leadership and vision at the national level. LCCR's Executive Committee must add these issues to its agenda and establish a task force to spearhead this work. Those member organizations already engaged in this area should take leadership roles, such as co-chairing a task force overseeing a range of communications and Internet policy debates. Civil rights organizations should also explore adopting official resolutions outlining the organizations' interest in these issues as well as focusing on these issues at annual conferences.

Develop Communications And Internet Staff Positions

Civil rights organizations need to develop their programmatic capacity to increase awareness and understanding of important communications and Internet policies. New communications and Internet staff positions need to be established. These new staff should be charged with: promoting communications and Internet policy on the agenda of national civil rights organizations; demonstrating to the media that these issues are civil rights issues; and, assisting efforts in local communities to build diverse grassroots coalitions that will work to ensure that everyone is included in the debates over communications issues.

Create Communications And Internet Policy Education Campaigns

There is a real need for organizations representing under-served communities to participate at a much greater level in the discussions that will shape how these policies are implemented in communities across the nation. Civil rights organizations should develop educational outreach campaigns involving the civil rights commu-

nity, policy makers, the media and lay public. The campaigns should include the creation and dissemination of materials on communications policies; a community outreach and coalition building component in several regions around the country; and, the development of an online resource center on the nexus between civil rights and communications and Internet policies.

Collaborate With Media Policy Groups

Civil rights groups need not enter the complex media and technology space alone. Just as there is a rich tradition and knowledge base in the civil and human rights community, there is a longstanding community of nonprofits and academics who have strived to keep media of all types open, diverse, affordable and accessible. Among those organizations are: Civil Rights Forum on Communications Policy, Media Access Project, Center for Media Education, and Consumers Union.

While the two communities have come together at historic moments to support the creation of public television or more recently, low power radio, more often they work on parallel tracks, separated by language, culture and priorities. Yet, they are remarkably united in their ultimate vision of a more equitable and diverse America and a more empowered and knowledgeable citizenry. In the twenty-first century, the divide between these two communities must be bridged.

Convene Communications And Internet Policy Leadership Forums

LCCR and its member organizations must continue to hold leadership forums for civil and human rights leaders to educate their constituents, high-tech leaders and those within the foundation community about the civil rights implications of communications and Internet policy debates. These forums will create opportunities for civil rights leaders and those within the foundation and business communities to discuss a wide variety of technology-related issues. Civil rights organizations should also explore emphasizing these issues at annual conferences.

Business Community

It is in the high-tech industry's overarching interest to ensure that all segments of the population fully understand e-policy issues. The faster that civil and human rights organizations integrate technology policy into their missions, the faster their constituencies will begin integrating technology into their daily lives. Help is needed, however, in turning civil rights organizations into de facto "technology ambassadors," underscoring the critical need for the industry to accelerate the understanding, acceptance and use of information technology among under-served communities.

Convene Policy Forums With Civil Rights Leaders

To foster greater collaboration between business leaders and civil rights leaders, a structure for ongoing policy discussion and debate should be created. Through leadership forums convened by the business community, civil rights leaders can be

provided the opportunity to share the technology-related challenges and barriers that they are facing. In turn, these forums would provide business leaders with a venue to express their policy priorities to the civil rights leadership.

For example, in November of 1997, IBM Corporate Community Relations, in partnership with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, convened a Technology Forum entitled, "Technology -- For Use by Us All." The Forum represented the beginning of an ongoing collaborative dialogue among different civil rights constituency groups about improving technological access for under-served communities. In April of 2000, America Online, Inc. convened a similar meeting with the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and more recently with leaders in the disability community.

These meetings presented both high-tech and civil rights leaders the opportunity to examine traditional civil rights issues through the lens of the digital age. For example, how is online voting impacted by the voting rights laws? How does a moratorium on Internet taxation affect the goals of social justice? What policies are necessary to assure media diversity and accessibility? Is the lack of minority workers in high-tech careers a simple failure of leadership and outreach among technology companies or is something more at play? The business community should continue to support these Forums.

Take A Leadership Role In Promoting Diversity In The Workplace

All corporations should develop and implement standards that are not merely inspirational but that substantively address the need for a workplace that is free of discrimination and reflects the diversity of the country. The technology business community should be a leader in promoting diversity within its work place by embracing equal opportunity through anti-discrimination policies and affirmative action. The civil and human rights community should be called on to share its expertise and experience in this area.

Foundation Community

Foundations that care about civil and human rights in the digital age must play a critical role in elevating communications and Internet policy among their grantees and in mobilizing social justice organizations on these critical public policy issues.

Build The Civil Rights Community's Knowledge Base And Capacity For Communications And Internet Policy

There is a pressing need for more research and analysis on communications and Internet policy issues so that civil and human rights groups will have a firm analytical base on which to shape their priorities. Leadership is needed to help build a knowledge base within the civil rights community about the nexus between civil rights and communications and Internet policy. Academics need to be encouraged to examine the civil rights implications of high stakes Internet policy issues. In

addition to original substantive policy research, there is a great need to translate research on civil rights and technology into materials that civil rights advocates can utilize in their advocacy efforts.

In addition, foundations must fund civil and human rights organizations' efforts to monitor and educate their constituencies on these matters. The survey indicates that scarce resources are a major barrier to policy participation. Civil and human rights groups cannot forego work on their "traditional agenda" to enter this new policy space. In order for the civil and human rights community to have an impact on communications and Internet policy, additional support is essential.

Collaborate With Media And Internet Programs

Because financial support is a key element in bridging the knowledge gap, it is important for funders to be fully informed about the issues across traditional program areas. Grantmakers who support civil rights, community building, civic engagement and media policy need to share knowledge and strategies and identify the synergies among program goals. The foundation community can play a special role in facilitating collaboration between civil rights and media policy communities. This collaboration should include educating about issues and priorities across constituencies, and working together on public policy issues of mutual interest. Those program officers within the foundation community who work with media policy groups need to interact more with program officers who fund social justice organizations. Program officers should consider developing jointly funded program initiatives and convening meetings that bring both communities together. The Ford Foundation and the Markle Foundation deserve special recognition for their understanding and efforts at crossfertilization between media policy and civil rights groups.

Include Communications And Internet Policy At Foundation Community Meetings Focusing On Civil Rights

Those foundation executives who understand the nexus between technology, social policy, and economic justice in the digital age should take a leadership role in educating their colleagues within the broader foundation community. This education should address both the needs of the social justice community in terms of technology capacity building and philanthropic policies around support for capacity building, technology and communications strategies, and general support. Leaders within the foundation community should consider holding briefings for foundation staff and boards, and developing a workshop for the next Council on Foundations meeting as part of the education process.

Support Communications And Internet Research Projects

As noted, there is a pressing need for more research and analysis on the nexus between civil rights and communications and Internet policy. Support is needed for academics and others to conduct original substantive policy research as well as projects that bring together and synthesize a wide-ranging body of existing

academic research on these issues. Foundations should convene meetings with leading academics and advocates to help identify additional areas for investigation and communicate that need to concerned researchers.

Support Communications And Internet Demonstration Projects For Grassroots Constituencies

Given the complexity of some communications and Internet policies, there is a real need to help civil rights advocates at the grassroots level understand the implications of these policies. Efforts should be made to develop demonstration projects that show in user-friendly, easy-to-understand terms why communications and technology policies are fundamental civil rights issues.

Conclusion

What is clear from the survey results is that the civil and human rights community recognizes the importance of this moment; but a significant disconnect remains between understanding and action. The pursuit of equal opportunity and social justice and enhancement of civil rights cannot be severed from the realities of the digital age. It is still early in the digital age and there is still ample opportunity to help the civil rights community assume its rightful place at the table. But the time for investment, leadership and collaboration is now. If the civil and human rights community is to ensure a voice for the voiceless in the years ahead, if it is to help shape the emerging digital society, it must act now to build capacity and policy knowledge. In this fast paced century, those who hesitate may indeed risk being lost. That is a risk that must not be taken here.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Technology Capacity Survey:

1)

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Title: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Total number of employees at the national organization: _____

2) How many chapters, affiliates, or branches does your organization have? (best estimate please) If your organization does not have affiliates, go to question 9.

- 1-5
- 6-15
- 16-30
- 31-50
- 51+
- Don't Know

3) What percent of your chapters or affiliates are connected to the Internet?

- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%
- Don't know

4) What percent of your chapters or affiliates maintain their own web site?

- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%
- Don't know

5) What percent of your chapters or affiliates use the Internet for regular communication with the national organization?

- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%
- Don't know

6) How active is your organization in providing your affiliates with technical or strategic assistance on technology capacity and use decisions? Please rank your level of activity using the scale below: _____

- 1 Extremely active
- 2 Fairly active
- 3 Somewhat active
- 4 Not very active
- 5 Not at all active
- 9 Don't know

7) Does your organization have individual members?

- ___ Yes
- ___ No
- ___ Don't know

If so, what is your best estimate of your members' use of the following?

	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8) What percentage of your members do you communicate with electronically? (Please provide your best estimate)

- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%

9) How much training in the use of information technology did your organization provide its employees in the last 12 months

Technology training	Executive Director	Senior Staff	Professional Staff	Support Staff
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than 5 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6-20 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21-40 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 40 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10) What percentage of your employees are connected to the Internet?

- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%

If your organization has Internet access, please skip to Question 12.

11) If your organization does not have access to Internet services, please rate the following factors, using the scale below.

- 1 Very important
- 2 Fairly important
- 3 Somewhat important
- 4 Not very important
- 5 Not at all important
- 9 Don't know
- ___ Financial cost
- ___ Lack of appropriate equipment
- ___ Lack of in-house technical expertise
- ___ People we communicate with are not online
- ___ Board/Senior Executives do not believe access to Internet services is critical to organization's mission
- ___ Other (please explain)

12) Does your organization have at least one full-time information technology (IT) staff?

_____ Yes

_____ No

_____ Don't know

_____ If yes, how many full-time employees?

Does your organization have part-time IT staff?

_____ Yes

_____ No

_____ Don't know

_____ If yes, how many part-time employees?

_____ What percentage of time does each of those part-time employees devote to IT?

If you do not have full or part-time IT staff, does someone on your staff perform this role on an as-needed basis?

_____ Yes

_____ No

_____ Don't know

What would be a more efficient use of your organization's resources to gain the needed IT support? (check all that apply)

_____ Hiring full-time IT staff

_____ Sharing IT staff with other organizations

_____ Working with consultants

_____ Other

13) Using the scale below, how would you rate your organization's capacity to use information technology to enhance its work two years ago? _____

1 Exceptional

2 Very good

3 Good

- 4 Not very good
- 5 Poor
- 9 Don't know

14) Using the scale below, how would you rate your organization's capacity to use information technology to enhance its work today?

- 1 Exceptional
- 2 Very good
- 3 Good
- 4 Not very good
- 5 Poor
- 9 Don't know

15) If your organization is connected to the Internet, what technology does your organization use to connect? (Check all that apply) If your organization is not connected to the Internet, please skip to Question 16.

- Dial up modems
 - ISDN
 - Dedicated circuit (such as dedicated 56K circuit, T-1, T-3, OC-3, etc.)
 - DSL
 - Cable Modems
 - Other (please explain)
-
-

16) What speed is the connection linking your organization to the Internet?

- 2400bps – 28.8kbps
- 28.9kbps – 56kbps
- 57kbps – 65kbps
- 66kbps – 112kbps
- 113kbps – 256kbps
- 257kbps – 384kbps
- 385kbps – 750kbps

- 751kbps – 1.544mbps
- greater than 1.544mbps
- Other (please explain)

17) Does your organization have a website?

- ___ Yes
- ___ No
- ___ Don't know

If no, please proceed to Question 23.

18) How often is your website updated?

- At least once a day
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- Less frequently than once a month
- Don't know

19) Which of the following applications does your organization use to communicate with others outside the organization? For each application listed, please check yes, no, or don't know.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Password protected websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic mailing lists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic bulletin boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listserv	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facsimile	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20) What kind of activities does your organization use the website for? For each activity listed, please check the yes, no, or don't know

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Sending member alerts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating with chapter, affiliates and branches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distributing press releases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrating contact functions for electronic activism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selling materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing electronic reading rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruiting members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing public education on organizational issues and concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing a calendar of events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other			

21) What materials are being distributed electronically? (Check all that apply)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Member alerts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy/action alerts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Press releases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Congressional voting records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General issues discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22) Is your website accessible to people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No
- Partially
- Don't know

23) Which of the following services are maintained by in-house staff or consultants?

Services	In-house	Consultant	Don't Have
Website hosting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website maintenance/updates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Network maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Database design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Database maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other: _____

24) Does your organization have a communications plan?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If yes, does it include technology to get your message out?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

If not, why not: _____

25) For each of the following categories, please characterize your organization's approach to communications? Please indicate yes, no, or don't know for each category.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Full-time communications staff/department with _____ employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Responsibility of Executive Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with public relations firm for major events only	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have ongoing contract with public relations firm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use communications on an ad hoc basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No real communications approach/strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

26) Using the scale below, please indicate how useful each of the training and technical assistance programs described below would be to your organization in meeting its technical needs.

- 1 Very useful
- 2 Somewhat useful
- 3 Useful
- 4 Not very useful
- 5 Not useful at all
- 9 Don't know

_____ Leadership policy forums with high tech leaders;

_____ Technology assistance forums for staff to share knowledge and information on an on-going basis;

_____ Shared Internet applications to assist the broad civil and human rights community utilize the Internet more effectively;

_____ Assistance in ensuring that your website is accessible.

_____ Traveling technology workers (E-riders) to assist civil rights organizations better achieve their missions through broader and wiser use of technology; and,

_____ Other (please explain)

27) Using the scale below, how would you characterize the civil rights community's overall use of technology and the Internet to further its mission? _____

- 1 Cutting edge
- 2 Fairly advanced

- 3 Advanced
- 4 Not very advanced
- 5 Just beginning
- 9 Don't know

28) Using the scale below, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Building a stronger technology capacity within civil rights organizations will be critical if the civil rights community is to continue serving the interests/needs of under-served communities. ____

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Somewhat agree
- 3 Somewhat disagree
- 4 Strongly disagree
- 9 Don't know

29) On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Very Strongly Agree and 5 being Very Strongly Disagree, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Building a stronger technology capacity within civil rights organizations will accelerate the understanding, acceptance and use of information technology among under-served communities. _____

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Somewhat agree
- 3 Somewhat disagree
- 4 Strongly disagree
- 9 Don't know

Policy Survey

1)

Policy Contact _____

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Title: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Fax _____

2) The Digital Divide is an issue that is still in the process of being defined. Some believe that it is primarily about access to technology, while others have suggested that there are multiple factors. Please rank each of the issues below based on how important your organization believes each of the following issues is for closing the digital divide, using the scale below.

1 Extremely important

2 Somewhat important

3 Important

4 Not very important

5 Not important

9 Don't know

_____ Ensure the availability of education technology in classrooms in low income and underserved areas

_____ Train and hire women and minorities into high tech careers

_____ Increase minority ownership of media/Internet businesses and services

_____ Ensure that affordable telephone access is available to everyone

_____ Provide opportunities for citizen groups to use radio, television, and the Internet for community and educational programming

_____ Provide media/Internet content relevant to and/or created by minorities

_____ Provide affordable access to computers and the Internet for your constituency

- _____ Ensure that the Internet and other new information technologies are accessible to all persons (i.e. physical access, language access)
- _____ Provide sufficient funding and support for community technology centers and other public Internet access points
- _____ Build out of high speed Internet access (also known as broadband access) to underserved and rural communities
- _____ Ensure that the Internet remains an open forum for free expression and diverse content
- _____ Keep media/Internet free from hate speech and offensive or demeaning content
- _____ Use the Internet as a means to educate and increase civic engagement and participation in the political process
- _____ Ensure that the Internet and other digital media evolve to protect the privacy of consumers and citizens
- _____ Adequate support for training of teachers, students and broader citizenry to ensure digital literacy

3) For each of the media/technology policy issues listed below, describe your current level of involvement in the policy debate according to the scale below. Are you:

- 1) Extremely active
- 2) Somewhat active
- 3) Active
- 4) Not very active
- 5) Not at all active
- 9) Don't know

- _____ Ensure the availability of education technology in classrooms in low income and underserved areas
- _____ Train and hire women and minorities into high tech careers
- _____ Increase minority ownership of media/Internet businesses and services
- _____ Ensure that affordable telephone access is available to everyone
- _____ Provide opportunities for citizen groups to use radio, television, and the Internet for community and educational programming

- _____ Provide media/Internet content relevant to and/or created by minorities
- _____ Provide affordable access to computers and the Internet for your constituency
- _____ Ensure that the Internet and other new information technologies are accessible to all persons (i.e. physical access, language access)
- _____ Provide sufficient funding and support for community technology centers and other public Internet access points
- _____ Build out of high speed Internet access (also known as broadband access) to underserved and rural communities
- _____ Ensure that the Internet remains an open forum for free expression and diverse content
- _____ Keep media/Internet free from hate speech and offensive or demeaning content
- _____ Use the Internet as a means to educate and increase civic engagement and participation in the political process
- _____ Ensure that the Internet and other digital media evolve to protect the privacy of consumers and citizens
- _____ Adequate support for training of teachers, students and broader citizenry to ensure digital literacy

4) For each of the issues listed below, please indicate whether you plan to spend more or less time and resources during the next 1-3 years

- 1) Expect to spend more time and resources
 - 2) Expect to spend the same amount of time and resources
 - 3) Expect to spend less time and resources
 - 9) Don't Know
- _____ Ensure the availability of education technology in classrooms in low income and underserved areas
 - _____ Train and hire women and minorities into high tech careers
 - _____ Increase minority ownership of media/Internet businesses and services
 - _____ Ensure that affordable telephone access is available to everyone
 - _____ Provide opportunities for citizen groups to use radio, television, and the Internet for community and educational programming

- _____ Provide media/Internet content relevant to and/or created by minorities
- _____ Provide affordable access to computers and the Internet for your constituency
- _____ Ensure that the Internet and other new information technologies are accessible to all persons (i.e. physical access, language access)
- _____ Provide sufficient funding and support for community technology centers and other public Internet access points
- _____ Build out of high speed Internet access (also known as broadband access) to underserved and rural communities
- _____ Ensure that the Internet remains an open forum for free expression and diverse content
- _____ Keep media/Internet free from hate speech and offensive or demeaning content
- _____ Use the Internet as a means to educate and increase civic engagement and participation in the political process
- _____ Ensure that the Internet and other digital media evolve to protect the privacy of consumers and citizens
- _____ Adequate support for training of teachers, students and broader citizenry to ensure digital literacy

5) How would you characterize your organization's overall involvement in media/technology policy?

- 1) Leader in the debate
 - 2) Actively involved in the debate
 - 3) Tracking the debate
 - 4) Not involved in the debate
 - 5) Do not consider technology policy a civil rights issue
 - 9) Don't know
- _____ Ensure the availability of education technology in classrooms in low income and underserved areas
 - _____ Train and hire women and minorities into high tech careers
 - _____ Increase minority ownership of media/Internet businesses and services

- _____ Ensure that affordable telephone access is available to everyone
- _____ Provide opportunities for citizen groups to use radio, television, and the Internet for community and educational programming
- _____ Provide media/Internet content relevant to and/or created by minorities
- _____ Provide affordable access to computers and the Internet for your constituency
- _____ Ensure that the Internet and other new information technologies are accessible to all persons (i.e. physical access, language access)
- _____ Provide sufficient funding and support for community technology centers and other public Internet access points
- _____ Build out of high speed Internet access (also known as broadband access) to underserved and rural communities
- _____ Ensure that the Internet remains an open forum for free expression and diverse content
- _____ Keep media/Internet free from hate speech and offensive or demeaning content
- _____ Use the Internet as a means to educate and increase civic engagement and participation in the political process
- _____ Ensure that the Internet and other digital media evolve to protect the privacy of consumers and citizens
- _____ Adequate support for training of teachers, students and broader citizenry to ensure digital literacy

6) If your organization is not currently working on media/technology policy issues, what would need to take place internally for your institution to make these issues a greater priority? Please rank each of the issues listed below using the following scale:

- 1 Very important
- 2 Somewhat important
- 3 Important
- 4 Not very important
- 5 Not at all important

9 Don't know

_____ More board education

_____ More staff expertise

_____ Additional financial resources

_____ Coalition support

_____ More senior staff education

Other _____

7) In the President's State of the Union address he identified a number of areas where he proposes to increase funding in this year's budget to help bridge the Digital Divide. Please rank each of the proposals from the State of the Union, using the scale below.

1) Very important

2) Somewhat important

3) Important

4) Not very important

5) Not important

9) Other

_____ \$100 million to create 1,000 Community Technology Centers, tripling current funding;

_____ \$150 million to help train new teachers to use technology effectively in the classroom, doubling current funding;

_____ \$50 million for a new grant program for expanding access to computers and the Internet for low-income families and for skills development. The grants would be administered by the Commerce Department and would be for local public-private partnerships;

_____ \$45 million for the Technology Opportunities Program (TOP), formerly the Technology Information Infrastructure Assistance Program (TIIAP), for innovative applications of technology, tripling current amount;

_____ \$25 million for a new program to accelerate, through grants and loan guarantees, private sector deployment of the broadband networks in under-served urban and rural communities;

- _____ \$10 million for preparing Native Americans for careers in information technology and other technical fields
- _____ \$2 billion over 10 years in tax incentives to encourage private sector donation of computers, sponsorship of CTCs, and technology training for workers.

8) This year, Congress is reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title III of the Act has been the principle federal vehicle for bringing new technology into the classroom particularly for rural and underserved communities. It has also provided support for teacher training in technology and for community technology centers. Using the scale below, please indicate how important the reauthorization of Title III is to your organization: _____

- 1) Very important
- 2) Somewhat important
- 3) Important
- 4) Not very important
- 5) Not important
- 9) Other

9) The E-Rate, a universal service program established by the 1996 Telecommunications Act, provides discounts to schools and libraries of 20-90% on telecommunications services, Internet access and internal connections (wiring and servers). In its first two years, the E-Rate has connected over one million classrooms to the Internet, with the highest discounts going to low income and rural schools. Some in Congress want to cut back or eliminate the program. Using the scale below, please indicate the how important it is to your organization to make sure that the E-Rate continues at full funding. _____

- 1) Very important
- 2) Somewhat important
- 3) Important
- 4) Not very important
- 5) Not important
- 9) Other

10) Please indicate which of the following activities would be helpful to your organization's work on media/technology issues:

- _____ Technology Forums that bring together leaders from the civil rights community and the technology industry to discuss issues related to the Digital Divide;
- _____ A Task Force to increase the participation of civil rights organizations in the debates over emerging communications and technology policy;
- _____ Briefings by public interest advocates on technology issues that impact consumers and have implications for the civil rights community;
- _____ Briefing memos and backgrounders on technology policy issues;
- _____ Other _____

11) Are there any other communications/media/technology policy issues that you believe the civil rights community should be pursuing?

Appendix B: Survey Respondents

American Association for Affirmative Action
 Amer. Fed. of State, County & Mun. Employees,
 AFL-CIO
 American Association of University Women
 American Civil Liberties Union
 American Council on Education
 American Ethical Union
 American Federation of Government Employees
 American Jewish Congress
 American Psychological Association
 Americans for Democratic Action
 Arab-American Institute
 Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
 ASPIRA Association, Inc.
 Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
 Catholic Charities
 Center for Community Change
 Center for Women Policy Studies
 Children's Defense Fund
 Church and Society of the United Methodist Church
 Church Women United
 Citizen's Commission on Civil Rights
 Communications Workers of America
 Evangelical Lutheran Church In America
 Families USA
 Feminist Majority Foundation
 Friends Committee on National Legislation
 Human Rights Campaign
 International Human Rights Law Group
 Japanese American Citizens League
 Jewish Council for Public Affairs
 Lawyer's Comm. For Civil Rights Under Law
 League of Women Voters
 League of Women Voters
 Mexican Amer. Legal Defense and Education Fund
 Minority Business Enterprise Legal Def. & Ed Fund
 National Assoc. of Social Workers
 National Asian Pacific American Bar Association
 National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
 National Assoc. for the Advanc. of Colored People
 National Assoc. of Latino Elected and Appointed
 National Association for Bilingual Education
 National Association for College Admission Counseling
 National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc.
 National Association of Homecare
 National Congress of American Indians
 National Council of Jewish Women
 National Council of La Raza
 National Council of Negro Women
 National Education Association
 National Fair Housing Alliance
 National Federation of Filipino Amer. Assoc.
 National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
 National Immigration Forum
 National Italian American Foundation
 National Org. of Women Legal Def. & Edu. Fund
 National Partnership for Women and Families
 National Urban League
 National Women's Law Center
 Navajo Nation
 Organization of Chinese Americans
 People for the American Way
 Poverty And Race Research Action Council
 Presbyterian Church USA
 Project Equality, Inc.
 Service Employees International Union
 Union of American Hebrew Congregations
 United Church of Christ - Office of Church in Society
 United States Student Association

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Wade Henderson, Executive Director, LCCR

Karen McGill Lawson, Executive Director, LCEF

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