



A Technology Overview for Nonprofit Leaders

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Does This Look Familiar?





The Plan

- Introduction
- Technological Evolution
- Technology and Nonprofits
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Five Keys to Success with Technology
- Summary

ONE/Northwest

Online Networking for the Environment



*To protect the environment,
ONE/Northwest applies the best uses of
communications technology, fostering an
effective and connected conservation
community.*



The Parking Lot

- What is your technology like?
- What challenges does your organization face?
- How does technology make you feel?
- What topics would you like to discuss?

Technological Evolution



*Historical perspective of how technology
has changed the way we work.*



Where It All Began

- Early use by large corporations, particularly technology companies and schools.
- Infrastructure evolves to serve the masses.
 - Ease of use – graphical interfaces
 - Lower cost
 - Software integration
- Corporations adopt new technology much faster than nonprofits.

Technology in Nonprofits



Where we are and how we got here.



Technology Milestones

- Standing in line to use the solo, stand alone, five-year old computer.
- Soon, there were more.
- One email account per organization.
- Multiple email accounts but only one Internet connection.
- Local Area Networks(LAN)



Reaping the Benefits

- Low, stable prices provide big bang for the buck.
- Software works together better (and is available via donation).
- Email explosion facilitates inexpensive and easy communication.
- Networks enable resource sharing including files, printers and the Internet.
- World Wide Web provides avenue to free publishing.

“We’re barely climbing out of the water”



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Challenges



*Steps and issues to consider when
building technological capacity.*



Where to Begin

- Assess current technology, create a plan
- The Basics
 - Good equipment and current software
 - Network and routine backups
 - Email and Internet access for all staff
 - Organizational Web site
 - Training and support resources
- Fund and budget for technology



Key Tools to Develop

- Simultaneous Internet access
 - Requires a network and a router – cheap!
- Online Donations
 - If you build it, they will not necessarily come.
 - Build yourself – customizable, high upfront costs
 - Use a service – per transaction costs
 - www.helping.org (2%), www.entango.com (5%),
www.egrants.org (6%)
- Email use, management and strategy

“Our database is old and lonely”

- Database of your members/clients
 - Store contact information
 - Track activity and communications
 - Identify type of interactions that you have





Non-technical Technology Issues

- Organizational culture and capacity to change
- Training and support for users
- Budgeting--ongoing expenses, not one-time capital investments
- Fundraising as part of program work

Opportunities



*Improving efficiency and effectiveness
through tools you can afford and new ways
to use them.*



Coming Onto Your Radar Screen

- Remote access to office files.
- Content sharing via secure Web pages.
 - Calendars, files, discussion boards, etc.
- Web-based, subscription software (ASP's).
 - Zoomerang, Office Online, Quickbooks.



Additional blips...

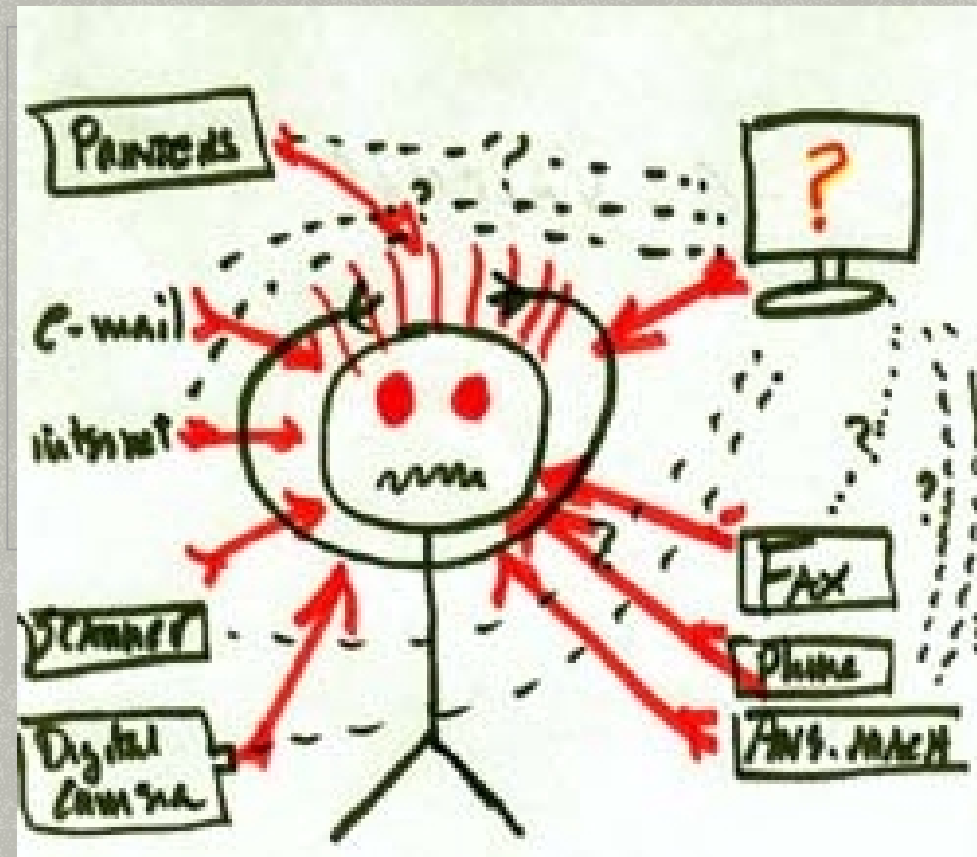
- Web accessible databases
 - Member/client resources, intake forms, etc.
- Client tracking, relationship management software
 - \$10,000 - \$50,000 upfront
 - Plus customization, training and support
- LCD Projectors – presentations
- Multimedia creation



And some more...

- Web-based conference calls
 - Phone call plus shared Web interface
 - www.phonecube.com - \$.27/min/line
- Voice (and video) over the Internet (for free!)
- Handheld computing devices
 - Palm Pilot
- Voice recognition software

“Many different pieces that don’t fit”



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5 Keys to Success with Technology

- Mission oriented investments.
- Plan AND budget for technology as part of your programs.
- Make sure the basic infrastructure works.
- Invest in training.
- Don't be afraid to ask (and pay) for help.



Be Mission-Minded

- Technology investments should be viewed through the lens of your mission.
- Organizational leadership must be committed AND involved.
- The technology should be appropriate to the culture of the organization.
- Did this decision incorporate other plans (communications, strategic, etc?)
- Are you reducing complexity, increasing efficiency and/or reaching more people?



Thinking Ahead - Planning

- Create a technology plan closely tied to a communications and strategic plan.
- Formalize organizational standards for equipment, software and training.
- Budget resources to achieve these goals.
- Again, incorporate technology only in support of your mission.



<http://www.jerryking.com/>
<http://fno.org>



*"It says here you can lead
a horse to water . . . "*



The Horse Before the Cart

- Make sure that the basic infrastructure exists and works.
- Sustainability and success through simplicity.
- Support and maintain these systems regularly.



Training...

- can significantly improve staff efficiency.
- can reduce support costs.
- can improve staff moral.
- is inexpensive to Puget Sound area nonprofits.
 - NPower offers training on most Microsoft applications for about half price.



Consulting Resources

- Don't develop plans in a vacuum.
- Use experts when experts can help.
- Be wary of tech volunteer dependency.
- Nonprofit specific/friendly consultants exist to serve you.
 - ONE/Northwest, NPower, Verve, Project Alchemy, Technology Access Foundation



Summary

- Think holistically about technology, within the context of your mission and communications plan.
- The basic infrastructure is within your reach.
- Technology is ongoing investment and not just a one-time capital expense.