

# Stanford SOCIAL INNOVATION REVIEW

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## **Working Wikily**

By Diana Scarce, Gabriel Kasper, & Heather McLeod Grant

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Email: [info@ssireview.org](mailto:info@ssireview.org), [www.ssireview.org](http://www.ssireview.org)



MOST NONPROFITS USE SOCIAL MEDIA LIKE FACEBOOK AND TWITTER AS AN ANCILLARY PART OF WHAT THEY DO. A FEW ORGANIZATIONS, HOWEVER, ARE USING THESE TOOLS TO FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE THE WAY THEY WORK AND INCREASE THEIR SOCIAL IMPACT.

# Working Wikily

BY DIANA SCEARCE,  
GABRIEL KASPER, &  
HEATHER MCLEOD GRANT

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Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) has been in existence for more than 40 years, with an impressive track record of policy victories and influential corporate partnerships. In 2009, the organization began a new experiment. Under the leadership of Dave Witzel, a veteran social media strategist, EDF launched a network called the Innovation Exchange, focused on bringing together companies interested in sharing ideas and approaches to creating environmentally sustainable businesses.

Since it started, the Innovation Exchange has used networks and social media tools as core elements of its strategy. For example, the organization made its internal strategy documents available to everyone by sharing them on a Google Group, and then solicited public feedback. In one instance, the Innovation Exchange posted a draft version of its elevator

Illustration  
by  
Federico  
Jordan

pitch on its blog; a university professor picked it up and shared it with her students, who proceeded to edit the statement. The result was a better pitch that the Innovation Exchange now uses.<sup>1</sup>

The Innovation Exchange's efforts are at the forefront of a new way of working that is now being tested throughout EDF. At last year's all-staff retreat, 350 EDF employees—including lawyers, scientists, and economists—participated in two days of intensive social media training and were given a charge from the top: Forget message control, go forth and engage with your stakeholders. "This isn't just a fad or a new way to dress up a press release," says Executive Director David Yarnold. "It's about continually finding new ways to solve the planet's most pressing problems faster, smarter, and more effectively."

EDF's efforts are examples of an emerging leadership style that we call "working wikily," an approach that is characterized by greater openness, transparency, decentralized decision making, and collective action. (The term *working wikily* is based on the word *wiki*, a Web site that allows groups of people to collectively create and edit the Web site and information on it. The best-known use of a wiki is Wikipedia.) Although EDF is a relatively early adopter of this new way of working, its experiments are no longer unusual. What once

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seemed a marginal activity became mainstream after President Barack Obama's election campaign combined grassroots organizing with online tools to mobilize more than 13 million supporters<sup>2</sup> and raise nearly \$750 million for his 2008 election.

Indeed, for anyone serious about social impact, it's quickly becoming difficult to imagine *not* working wikily. Network strategies have helped the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup become one of the largest volunteer events of its kind, growing from a single site cleanup to a global coordinated effort that in one day, on Sept. 19, 2009, mobilized 400,000 volunteers to pick up 6.8 million pounds of trash in 100 countries.<sup>3</sup> Online giving marketplace Kiva has used its technology platform and a web of international partners to help individuals make more than \$100 million in microloans.<sup>4</sup> And

DIANA SCEARCE is a consultant at the Monitor Institute, the social change practice of the global professional services firm Monitor Group. She is one of the leaders of the institute's network practice, based in the San Francisco office.

GABRIEL KASPER is a consultant at the Monitor Institute. He is one of the leaders of the institute's philanthropy practice, helping funders understand and adapt to the rapidly changing context that surrounds their work.

HEATHER MCLEOD GRANT is a consultant at the Monitor Institute. She helps lead the institute's network and social entrepreneurship practices. She is also the coauthor of the best-selling book *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits*.

fundors such as the Barr Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Hawaii Community Foundation are working to strengthen ties within local networks of people and organizations as a way to build healthier communities and create greater social impact.

Of course, social networks themselves are as old as human society. Everyone participates in networks, such as their family, the schools they attend, the organizations they work for, the churches they belong to, and their groups of friends. (See "Networks Come in Different Forms" on page 33.) For many social activists, from Mahatma Gandhi to Saul Alinsky, networks, organizing, and community building are nearly synonymous and have long been core tools of their trade. The study and practice of multi-stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and organizational development are also well-established disciplines that inform our understanding of networks. And there is a wealth of knowledge from social science research and from decades of on-the-ground experience about what helps and hinders the performance of groups and larger human systems.

What's different now is that a wave of new technologies—from conference calls and e-mails to blogs, wikis, tags, texts, and tweets—allow people to more easily visualize, communicate with, and act on existing personal and professional networks, and to forge strong

connections with new ones. These tools make it possible to link with any number of people (irrespective of geographic distance), to access a greater diversity of perspectives, to accelerate the sharing of information, and to drastically reduce the costs of participation and coordination. That makes them well suited to facilitating progress on complex social and environmental challenges that require people and organizations to coordi-

nate their efforts across traditional boundaries and sectors.

As important as these new technologies are, the most important change goes well beyond the tools themselves. The real transformation that is taking place today is the fundamental shift in the way that people think, form groups, and do their work—in part because of the widespread accessibility of the tools and the networks they can help to create.

In other words, it's not the wiki; it's how wikis and other social media tools are engendering a new, networked mind-set. And we are still only at the beginning of that transition. Early pioneers of working wikily are merging existing knowledge about community building and collaboration with new tools and approaches to allow them to do old things in new ways, and to try new things that weren't possible before.

Since early 2007, the Monitor Institute, in partnership with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and other clients, has been conducting research, piloting experiments, and developing new strategies for working in more networked ways. We have conducted more than a dozen pilot programs to test social media tools and network approaches to social change, and we have interviewed and worked with more than 200 experts in nonprofits, social media, collaborative processes, and social network analysis. As a result, we have begun

## Networks Come in Different Forms

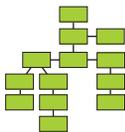
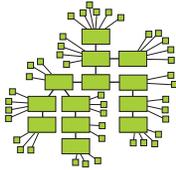
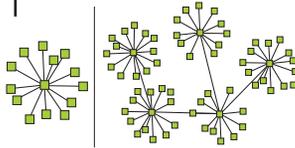
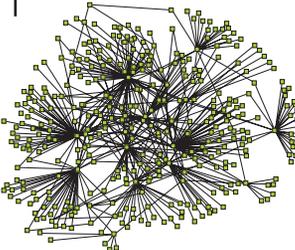
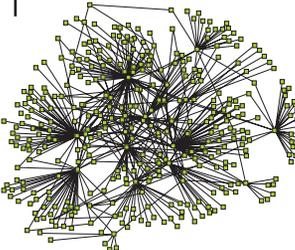
Increasingly, the word *network* is used to describe any group or collective action—within, among, or outside of organizations. It is often used to refer to both a *how*—a way of working—and a *what*—a structure for organizing. This article focuses primarily on the *how*—working wikily. It is also important to clarify the meanings of networks as a structural form.

Our research focuses on *social networks* made up of individuals or organizations that are connected through meaningful relationships; in which there are many participants (and the potential to grow); with some space for self-organization; fueled by new technologies for connection and collaboration.

In many cases, the word *network* is used as a new frame for an old organizing structure, like a coalition or an alliance. For students of network theory, a network is any collection of things—data, people, technologies, organizations—that are connected together.<sup>1</sup> When we focus on the network, the emphasis is on the relationship and connection between nodes, not just the objects themselves.

In an effort to be clear about the range that networks can span, we put together the typology of organizing structures at right.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Duncan J. Watts, *Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- 2 Several sources were particularly helpful in developing this model: Peter Plastrik and Madeleine Taylor, *Net Gains: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change*, Innovation Network for Communities, 2006; Patti Anklam, *Net Work: A Practical Guide to Creating and Sustaining Networks at Work and in the World*, Burlington, Mass.: Elsevier, 2007; and Valdis Krebs and June Holley, “Building Smart Communities,” 2006.

	TYPE	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLES
CENTRALIZED ▲	Nonprofit organizations without explicit network structure		Many local direct service providers
	Membership organizations with network component		Sierra Club NARAL Pro-Choice America
	Nonprofits with explicit network strategy and structure		Habitat for Humanity Egypt Saddleback Church
DECENTRALIZED ▼	Coalition or alliance		GAVI Alliance Save Darfur
	Networks of networks		WiserEarth MoveOn.org
	Ad hoc networks		Flash mobs Facebook causes

to develop a clearer perspective on how funders and activists can embrace network approaches in their work (even as the specific tools and strategies continue to evolve at a rapid pace). Although working wikily isn't always easy—especially at the outset—there is emerging evidence to suggest that it can often lead to greater social impact. In this article we'll show how, and also share some of the early lessons we've gleaned from our own experimentation.

### WHAT NETWORKS ARE GOOD FOR

There are many different reasons why people use a network approach to achieve social change. We have identified five principal ones: weaving community, accessing diverse perspectives, building and sharing knowledge, mobilizing people, and coordinating resources and action. These benefits are not mutually exclusive or collectively exhaustive, but they do demonstrate the range of benefits that working wikily can provide.

**Weaving Community** | Building community and strengthening social capital have long been at the core of neighborhood revitalization and organizing efforts. But new approaches are now allowing community organizers to view their work through a network lens, and to better understand the ties and complex connections between individuals in order to foster healthier communities. Organizers are

deliberately acting as “network weavers”—a term coined by network expert June Holley to describe the act of deliberately connecting others in an effort to strengthen ties. Weavers link previously disconnected individuals and groups, surface untapped opportunities for community members to produce better outcomes, and encourage new relationships and collaborations. In some ways, it's what community organizers have always done—only the new approaches emphasize a lack of hierarchy or traditional power structures, focusing instead on connectivity and social capital.

Seasoned community organizer Bill Traynor applies a network lens to his work in Lawrence, Mass., one of the 25 poorest cities in the country. When he joined Lawrence CommunityWorks (LCW), the organization had a staff of two and an operating deficit. Today, LCW has more than 5,000 members who themselves are the lifeblood of the organization. They have attracted more than \$50 million in new community investment and are projecting total investments to grow to \$90 million by 2011. And these numbers are only a proxy for the strengthened community ties, increased trust, and new sense of opportunity that are motivating local residents to get engaged. Traynor credits the success of LCW, in part, to network-centric structures that promote self-organization, rather than more traditional program-based approaches.

For example, LCW supports Neighborhood Circles, where residents come to dinners hosted by trained facilitators who encourage people to share their personal stories. The aim is to have good conversations, connect, and follow the energy that emerges from the group. Results have included campaigns for budget reform and garbage cleanup—outcomes similar to what you would hope for from traditional community organizing. But LCW isn't creating structured institutions; instead, they're weaving networks and encouraging residents to work on what they care about. "There is a network of relationships now that serves as an infrastructure for the facilitation and creation of real value for real people in real life," says Traynor. "Our challenge is to keep that network growing and to make sure that it continues to have a creative edge."<sup>5</sup>

**Accessing Diverse Perspectives** | Social media tools and the accompanying network mind-set are expanding our ability to access new perspectives by tapping into the ideas and expertise of many individuals, rather than relying only on an elite few—a practice that has come to be called "crowdsourcing."

One example is Ashoka's Changemakers initiative, which runs social innovation competitions to create solutions to social problems. The Changemakers competitions solicit online entries of innovative ideas from around the globe and post these applications on a Web site as a way to elicit feedback, collaboration, and revision by the larger community. Ashoka then uses expert judges to select a group of finalists that are then narrowed down to a final set of winners by the online community. Ashoka has run numerous competitions, including a partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to find disruptive innovations in health care, a collaboration with the National Geographic Society to identify exemplary geotourism leaders, and an effort with Exxon Mobil Corp. to find technological innovations that improve the lives of women in the developing world. By combining the bottom-up power of crowdsourcing with the top-down knowledge of experts, Changemakers helps generate innovative ideas more quickly and select the ideas that have the best chance of succeeding.

**Building and Sharing Knowledge** | The network mind-set and tools are changing the way individuals and organizations develop and share knowledge and best practices. Nonprofits that use a federated or affiliate model have long known the benefits of sharing best practices across their networks. Now people not part of the same organizational structure are learning to do the same through communities of practice and other collective mechanisms. Funder affinity groups like Grantmakers for Effective Organizations and the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities have coalesced around the premise that many foundations have common goals, and all can benefit from sharing learning openly with one another.

The Full Frame Initiative, for example, is creating a national

## When to Use a Networked Approach

### Consider a networked approach when the effort calls for:

Multiple perspectives or group participation

Mobilization and engagement

A shared and dispersed leadership style

Open and public information

### Use a more traditional approach when the effort calls for:

Specialized expertise or verifiable accuracy

Efficiency and speed of execution

A command-and-control leadership style

Private and proprietary information

learning network to share best practices among grassroots social service agencies that are supporting marginalized people. A central part of the initiative's network is an online space where agencies from around the country can connect, support one another, share their challenges, and build collective knowledge.<sup>6</sup> The hope is that this group learning will increase the effectiveness of each individual participant while also producing benefits for their shared field of practice. These social innovators are pioneering the practice of co-creating knowledge, as they grapple with challenges like building trust (in some cases, among people who have

never met in person) and keeping people engaged in spite of information overload.

**Mobilizing People** | Network approaches are useful for motivating people to act and thereby mobilizing collective action. The new social tools are easy to use, lower the cost of coordination, and help catalyze public action on a large scale because activity can be viral and doesn't have to be routed through a central authority. One of the best-known examples of this is the Iranian election protests in 2009 and other so-called "Twitter Revolutions."

In addition to ad hoc political organizing, network approaches are also being used by nonprofits to engage volunteers and mobilize support for a cause. For example, KaBOOM!, a nonprofit founded to build playgrounds in low-income neighborhoods, has been mobilizing local communities to build their own playgrounds. They have put their "playground build" toolkit online and invited residents to access the information, free of charge, and self-organize around building local playgrounds. By doing so, KaBOOM! has been able to scale more quickly, and at a much lower cost, than it might have through a centrally controlled, site-by-site expansion approach, and at the same time it has begun to mobilize people to create safe spaces for children to play.

**Coordinating Resources and Action** | Social media tools and network approaches are making it easier for activists to coordinate their resources and action. The peer-to-peer giving site DonorsChoose, for instance, is matching people who want to donate money to education with targeted requests from needy schools around the country. Since its inception in 2000 as a modest project to serve New York City schools, more than \$25 million has been given through the site, with almost half of that total contributed between mid-2007 and mid-2008.<sup>7</sup>

In another effort, the Boston Green & Healthy Building Network is coordinating action between two sets of groups that advocate changes in building codes. For several years, the Boston-based Barr Foundation had been funding public health organizations that saw unhealthy buildings as a cause of illness, and environmental groups that were focused on the ecological impact of buildings. In 2005, a senior program officer at the foundation suspected that although the causes of the two groups were different, the groups shared a

common policy goal, and they often approached the same government officials, though they rarely worked together. The foundation brought together the various parties to explore whether they could coordinate their efforts, share information, and develop a more unified message for policymakers.

Using information collected at the gathering, the Barr Foundation developed a social network map of the people in the room. The map clearly showed two principal clusters of dots, one representing people in health organizations and the other people in environmental organizations; it also showed that the groups were not well connected. The simple act of seeing the map of their fragmented network moved the groups to action. They formed the Boston Green & Healthy Building Network, which has subsequently increased collaboration among the different groups, improved access to many influential policymakers in the city, and resulted in city of Boston projects that integrate green and healthy building objectives.

### THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING WIKILY

Even as networks and social media tools are opening up a range of new and creative options for social change leaders, it is important to recognize that working wikily is not always the answer—and it isn't always easy to do.

In some cases, it isn't clear whether networks actually produce better results than more centralized and closed approaches. Yelp, which hosts reviews of restaurants written by ordinary people, gives voice to many otherwise silent foodies, but the jury is still out on whether the user-generated reviews actually produce advice as good as that of expert food critics at publications like *The New York Times*. Similarly, while newspapers and network television are going the way of dinosaurs, it's not clear that user-generated news will be as high quality or serve the same civic purpose as professional reporting. The appropriate roles of the citizen and the expert in this new world of crowdsourcing have yet to be determined.

Sometimes, centralized organizations and experts may still be the way to achieve the best results. This is particularly true when the organization needs to maintain firm control of a product or process, or when responsibility needs to be clearly assigned—you wouldn't want nonexperts counseling abused children or managing an organization's accounting and payroll, for example.

The challenge for social change leaders is to understand when it is best to maintain tight control and rely on the skills of experts, and when it is best to let go and rely on networks to yield the best results. (See "When to Use a Networked Approach" on page 34.) There will always be a place for organizations, independent action, individual experts, and hierarchical structures. In fact, most of those working wikily in the coming years will likely do so within an organization that is learning to work in more networked ways. But as people continue to embrace the potential of networks, traditional organizational models will increasingly become just one

approach, among many, for organizing our work and accomplishing social change.

And even for those organizations convinced of the potential benefits of working wikily, doing so is still much easier said than done. In part, that's because it flies in the face of many of the ways in which people are used to working. The emergent, bottom-up creativity and decentralized decision making of networked approaches often seem incongruous with the traditional command-and-control structures of many nonprofits and funders. Networks emerge through the self-organized actions of participants; they are dynamic and resist being held to a static set of goals designated by any single stakeholder. Once networks are set in motion, they can't necessarily be stopped or redirected like a centrally controlled organization.

This has important implications for many of the social sector's traditional approaches. For example, nonprofits are typically taught to take credit for their work, thereby building the organizational brand in order to attract funding. But maintaining strict brand control may no longer be the best way to advance a cause, and network pioneers are now rethinking how messages can be crafted, communicated, and managed in a more collaborative environment. Some of the most interesting experiments with public engagement involve letting users co-create the brand and share the message, elevating trust and empowerment above control.

Barack Obama's presidential campaign recognized this, empowering its network of supporters by providing tools like MyBa-

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rackObama and acting on the creativity and energy bubbling up from the grassroots—seen famously in the campaign's embrace of street artist Shepard Fairey's rendition of Obama, which became the campaign's most enduring image. Similarly, organizations like the Humane Society of the United States and the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy are inviting their supporters to help frame their message by online photo caption and video contests.

Working wikily will also force people to develop strategies for managing the overwhelming streams of information that come with opening up the boundaries of the organization. Organizations will need to balance the pluses of openness and transparency with the security and privacy risks of broadly sharing information—learning to determine what is proprietary and worth guarding, and what should be made widely available in service of the larger cause.

Last, "digital immigrants"—people who grew up with personal computers but not with online social networks—will have to increase their comfort with the tools and tap the savvy of younger

“digital natives.” Foundation leaders and others seeking social impact metrics will need to pioneer creative approaches to assessing network impact that account for long time horizons, causality that is difficult to assign, and the unique nature of networks as both a means and an end. And, network leaders will need to create the best practices for working in and through networks—something we are just beginning to understand.

## HOW TO WORK WIKILY

A great deal has been learned over the last few years about how to work with a network mind-set and how and when to use—or not use—social networking tools. Here are five lessons we have learned based on our experiences and conversations with pioneers in this area.

**Design projects around a problem to solve, not around the tools** | Although hands-on experimentation with tools like Twitter, Facebook, and social network mapping is critical, it’s important to remember that the tools are simply a means to an end. Begin by first defining the problem that needs solving, and then identify the tools that can help solve it, not the other way around. Is the effort aimed at sharing information? Mobilizing and engaging people? Getting to scale? Once the goals are clear, then focus on how to accomplish them. What kind of network approach will best support the end goal? What tools should be used? The best design may be made up of the simplest tools: pen and paper for mapping the social network, an e-mail listserv for brainstorming, or an in-person meeting to get people working together and build trust.

In early 2007, the Monitor Institute created a wiki with the Packard Foundation to solicit input from the public on the foundation’s strategy for a potential new grantmaking program. We worked hard to get participants to come and edit the wiki; in the end, however, the richest ideas were generated in the threaded discussions, not the wiki itself. We had designed the process around the tool that was novel at the time—a wiki—when in fact we may have been as well or even better served by focusing our efforts on the simpler discussion board. Because the wiki was the Packard Foundation’s first experiment of its kind, the project took nearly as much time and resources as an in-person convening of experts. Nevertheless, the wiki had the added benefit of increasing engagement and attracting input from people who normally wouldn’t have been tapped. As organizations get more comfortable with the tools—and when to use which approach—our experience suggests that these efforts will become more cost effective and can be better integrated with more traditional approaches.

**Combine top-down and bottom-up approaches** | Collaboration usually requires compromise. When one is part of a network, it’s no longer possible to always be in control. To gain the benefits of working wikily, a new type of leadership is required. According to *Wired*’s founding executive editor Kevin Kelly, what is needed is

a balance between top-down and bottom-up logic. Citing the presence of high-level editors who help to identify and control persistent vandalism within the bottom-up network that built Wikipedia, Kelly explains, “The exhilarating frontier today is the myriad ways in which we can mix out-of-control creation with various levels of top-down control.”<sup>8</sup> The challenge is to find ways to tap the generative nature of the network, while still maintaining oversight, checks, and balances to ensure appropriate direction.

The Case Foundation, for example, launched the Make It Your Own Awards to test a citizen-centered approach to philanthropy: It gives people an opportunity to submit ideas for improving their communities, serve as reviewers, and then vote on the best ideas for the foundation to fund. It was a largely unprecedented step for a private foundation, as people could easily end up submitting and selecting grant ideas that didn’t match the foundation’s goals. But the foundation also built in some control. Although an open group of public judges selected the top 100 ideas, a set of advisors selected by the foundation culled the list down to 20 grant recipients (that met Case’s criteria), from which the public then selected four grantees to

Working wikily isn’t all or nothing. Hold on to control where it is necessary, but also look for small, strategic opportunities to let go.

receive larger grants. This mid-level culling allowed the foundation to balance the creativity and emergent decision making of the group with the professional advice of experts in order to choose ultimate winners aligned with the foundation’s goals.

**The rules of relationships still apply** | At their core, social networks are about relationships and are built on trust. Networks will succeed only if they allow time for individuals to build authentic working relationships. Now more than ever, human elements like trust and fun matter. As youth activist James Toney explains, “People aren’t just coldly linking to you online, they’re ‘friending’ you.”<sup>9</sup> Networks are a social activity. And as with any social activity, people join groups to be rewarded, and they need to enjoy what they are doing. To strengthen networks, it is important to prioritize network weaving—connecting people who will benefit from knowing one another, building bridges between people with different perspectives, and encouraging network participants to do small projects together to strengthen their relationships.

For example, the Monitor Institute has been facilitating a “network of network funders”—connecting foundations that are intentionally supporting and working through networks. It is a diverse group that includes grantmakers from private foundations, community foundations, and donor intermediaries. Over the past year, participants have shared their experiences with network-centric grantmaking and developed new knowledge. Our role has been to

weave the network—to reach out to individual grantmakers doing this work, to bridge their different entry points and theories of change, and, most important, to create and hold the space—in person and online—for the network participants to connect, build trusting relationships, and produce new insights together.

**Understand your position within networks** | It's easy for funders and nonprofits to think of themselves as outsiders to a network. It's also easy to focus exclusively on the target network being woven and to forget the many networks one already operates within. But with the growing accessibility of network mapping and visualization tools, it is much easier to see the networks that a funder or nonprofit is already a part of. By becoming aware of one's position within networks and by gaining a better understanding of the network's dynamics, it is easier to identify opportunities for impact and act on that knowledge.

For example, the Monitor Institute helped the Community Foundation for Monterey County map the network of youth development providers in the city of Salinas, Calif.—following the example of the Barr Foundation in Boston. The resulting maps were used by the foundation to understand and promote relationships between government agencies, nonprofits, schools, and funders. The foundation found that making the network visible helped people see themselves in a new way—as part of a larger community dedicated to a common goal of helping youth. As a result, a number of local officials and community leaders have begun meeting regularly to coordinate activities and share information in order to improve outcomes for young people in Salinas.

**Share what you're doing and learning** | The new social tools invite making information available to more people, which allows users to build on the ideas and work of others. Blogs, for example, are rooted in the practice of openly sharing perspectives, ideas, and experiences, and they often borrow from, link to, and build on one another. Another example is online “mashups,” where data are combined from more than one source into a single integrated tool (e.g., satellite topographic data have been combined with Google maps to show how coastlines might look if sea levels change). Using these tools successfully requires a mind-set and approach toward getting things done that value openness, transparency, and co-creation—and may be antithetical to more controlling models of management and communications.

At the same time, the ease of sharing information via social media has also raised new questions about what impact the openness of the networked world will have on privacy. The online medical site PatientsLikeMe, for example, asks people to share confidential data about medical dosages, treatments, and outcomes so that people with similar conditions can understand what is working or not working for other patients. Users of the site agree to share very personal—sometimes potentially embarrassing—details about their symptoms,<sup>10</sup> although there are no limitations on who can register and see that information. Social media tools like this are redefining expectations for privacy, as users participate and exchange information without always fully considering the consequences of public exposure. As social technologies continue to spread, people will need to think carefully about the trade-offs between the benefits of openness and the risks of broadly sharing their information.

## GETTING STARTED

Because of the complexity of today's social and environmental problems, no one individual or organization—not even the largest of governments, nonprofits, corporations, or foundations—will be able to move the needle on many of these issues alone. Achieving meaningful change will require working across traditional boundaries with a network mind-set.

To understand why a network approach is necessary, try to imagine a social change leader who deliberately spurns network approaches and who continues to operate in a command-and-control style. She would work in isolation, tightly holding on to the knowledge she has accumulated. She would have little connection to the new ideas and work happening around her. And her desire for control would weaken any possibilities for increasing impact through collaborative approaches.

We probably all know leaders who still exhibit these traits. And although the portrait is an exaggeration, the point is that embracing the principles of openness, transparency, and decentralization is not especially radical anymore. The difficult part is integrating network approaches more deeply into one's work.

Doing this doesn't have to be difficult. Working wikily isn't an all-or-nothing proposition. Hold on to control where it is necessary, but also look for small, strategic opportunities to let go. Find an excuse to try tapping the knowledge of a few people outside the usual circles. Share information that wouldn't normally be shared, at least with a handful of trusted partners. Weave a network by closing a triangle—introducing two people who don't yet know each other, but should. Create connections by starting with small, simple partnerships that build trust and can later become the basis for larger collaborations.

Working wikily doesn't have to start with anything fancy. There doesn't need to be a wiki or a blog or a tweet (although those are all interesting things to try). That's because it's not really about the technology—it's about trying to increase leverage and effectiveness by thinking and working in new ways. It's about reimagining social change with a network mind-set. It's about working wikily. ■

### Notes

- 1 Information about the Environmental Defense Fund is from conversations and e-mail exchanges between the authors and EDF (August 2009 and January 2010) and Beth Kanter's blog post, “The Internal Is the New External: EDF Business Innovation Exchange,” *Beth's Blog: How Nonprofit Organizations Can Use Social Media to Power Social Networks for Change*, <http://beth.typepad.com>.
- 2 Monte Lutz, “The Social Pulpit: Barack Obama's Social Media Toolkit,” *Edelman—Digital Public Affairs*, 2009.
- 3 <http://www.oceanconservancy.org>.
- 4 Eric Schonfeld, “Four Years After Founding, Kiva Hits \$100 Million in Microloans,” *TechCrunch*, November 1, 2009.
- 5 Information about Lawrence CommunityWorks is taken from e-mail exchanges between the authors and Bill Traynor and a webinar done by Traynor (“Bill Traynor on Network-Centric Organizing”) for Grassroots Grantmakers on September 29, 2009, archived at <http://www.grassrootsgrantmakers.org>.
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- 7 Tom Watson, *CauseWired: Plugging In, Getting Involved, Changing the World*, Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.
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