

Fostering a Community of Innovation at the Intersection of Art and Technology in the Pacific Northwest



Shelly D. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Third Place Technologies
(formerly Microsoft Research)

Jeff Brice
Chair, Design Department
Cornish College of the Arts

Genevieve Tremblay
Resident Research Fellow
& Assistant Professor
Cornish College of the Arts

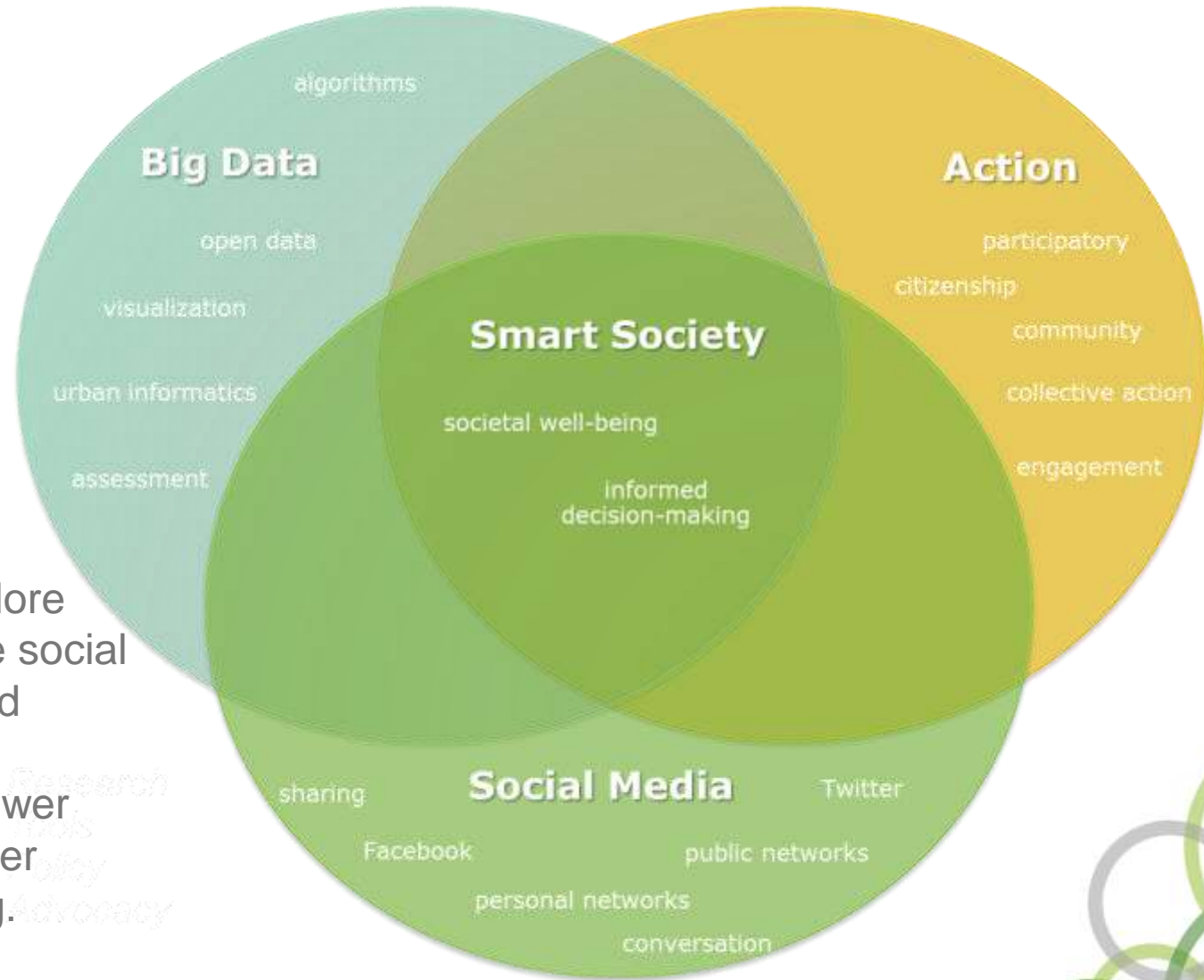
Ana Pinto da Silva
Principal UX Designer
Amazon
(formerly Microsoft Research)

Carey Christie
Director of Development
Genius Foundation



THIRD PLACE TECHNOLOGIES

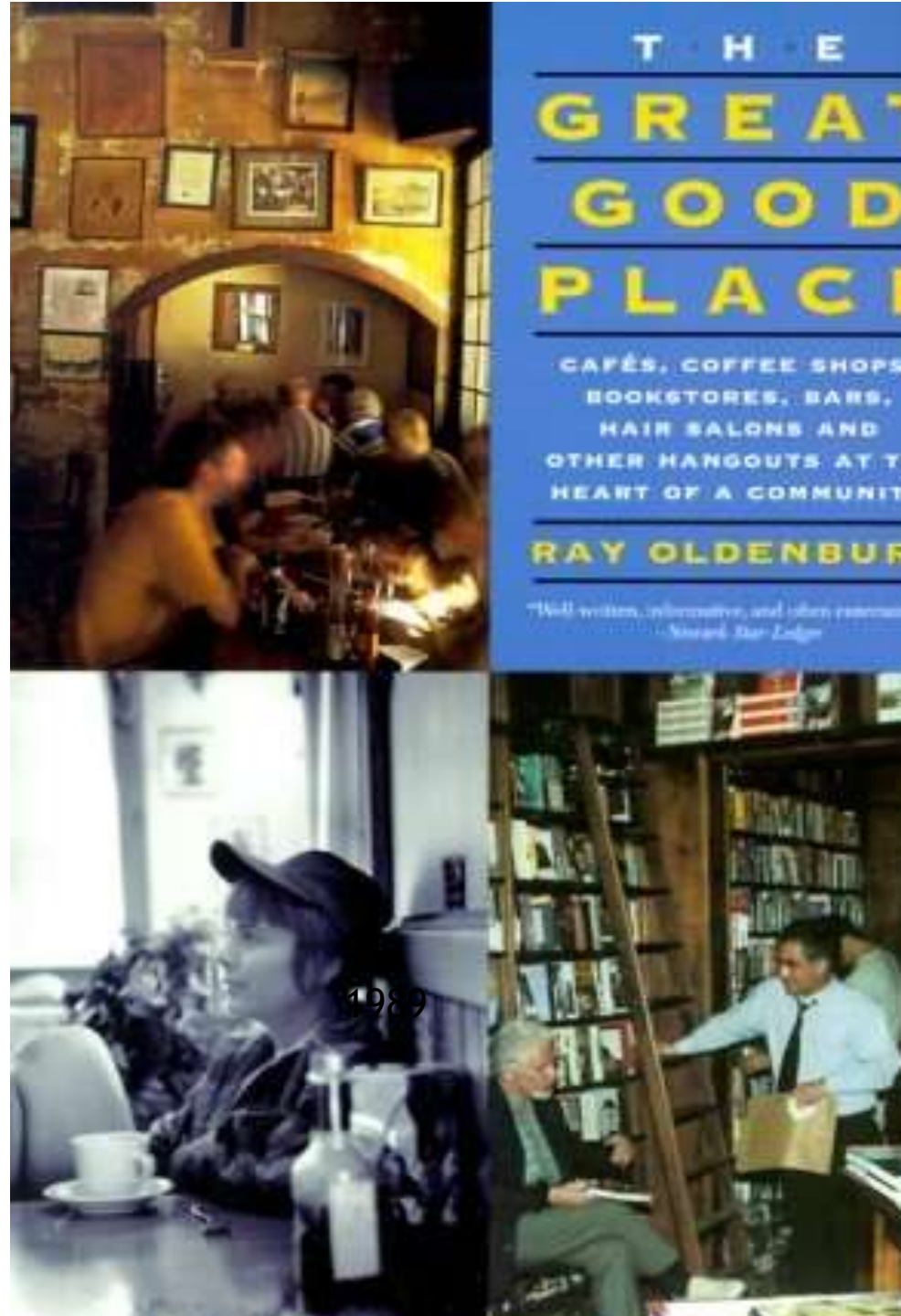
New non-profit startup focusing on community tech research & development



Our mission is to explore new ways to leverage social media, open data, and collective action technologies to empower communities and foster community well-being.

THIRD PLACES

- ▶ Public places away from home and work
- ▶ Gathering places for conversation
- ▶ Essential for the emergence of communities and collective action
- ▶ At Third Place Technologies, exploring how to foster innovation communities of practice situated in place through online and offline interventions



MY BACKGROUND: INDUSTRY RESEARCH

Social Psych

Academic
Scientist

Social Tech

Industry
Researcher

Community/
Civic Tech

Startup
Founder

- ▶ Specialize in social technologies
 - ▶ Social networks, community, identity, mobile social, social media, social data
- ▶ Early stage innovation
 - ▶ Extremely rapid R&D cycle
 - ▶ study, brainstorm, design, prototype, deploy, evaluate (repeat)
- ▶ Career
 - ▶ B.A. in Art and Psychology
 - ▶ PhD in Social Psychology from UW
 - ▶ 7 years Microsoft Research
 - Virtual Worlds, Social Computing, Community Technologies
 - ▶ 4 years startup
 - ▶ Waggle Labs (consulting), Pathable
 - ▶ 2 Years Yahoo!
 - ▶ 4 years FUSE Labs, Microsoft Research
 - ▶ < year Third Place Technologies



MY BACKGROUND: ART & TECH



Technologies

- ▶ B.A., Art and Psychology
- ▶ Dorkbot “Overlord”
- ▶ Creative director, large scale, collaborative Burning Man installations
- ▶ Arts/tech curation/producer
 - ▶ People Doing Strange Things with Electricity
 - ▶ Winter Lights
 - ▶ Oscillate
- ▶ Interactive tech art installations
 - ▶ Sculptural installations, controllable lighting, social media
- ▶ Arts/tech Initiative
 - ▶ Art and Tech Workshop
 - ▶ Electric Sky



Painting

Artist

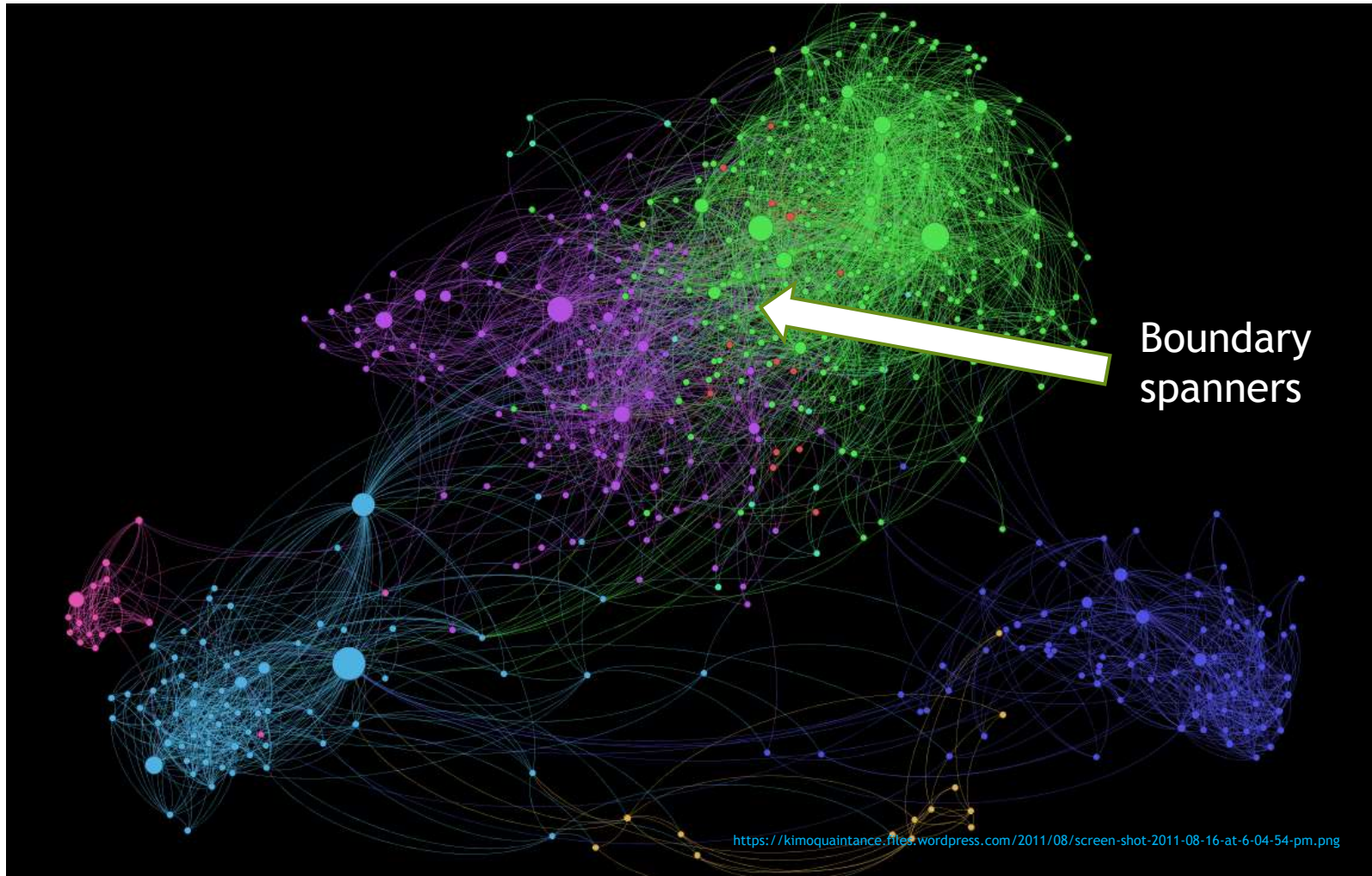
Large Scale Collaborations

Creative Director

Interactive art & tech

Community Organizer

CROSSING BOUNDARIES = INNOVATION



Brokerage, **boundary spanning**, and leadership in open **innovation** communities

Fleming, L., Waguespack, DM. *Organization Science*. 2007

Science-industry interaction in the process of innovation: the importance of boundary-crossing between systems, Kaufmann, A., Todtling, F. 2001. *Research Policy* 30:5.

ART AND TECH: A GROWING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

with unique characteristics, and special needs

► Technology-mediated

*digital media, big data, sensors, social media,
computer generated, programmed, physical
computing, robotics, information*

► Interactive, participatory

► Collaborative, interdisciplinary

Interactive Techno
Interactive Art
Internet Art
Interactive Media
New Media Art
Electronic Art
Electronic Media
Cyber Art
E.A.T.: Experiment
Arts and Technolog
Digital Art
Interactive Media
Media Arts
Creative Technolo
Art+Technology
Generative Art
Emergent Technol
Intermedia
Digital Media
Experimental Art
Technology Creati

THE NORTHWEST

- ▶ Top region in the U.S. for “the creative class”
- ▶ Former mayor McGuinn, We Are the City of the Future

<http://www.geekwire.com/2012/mayor-mike-mcguinn-ignite-talk/>

- ▶ In 2012, Seattle rated #1 city for tech jobs by Forbes, including Microsoft, Amazon, Adobe, Xbox

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/joelkotkin/2012/05/17/the-best-cities-for-tech-jobs>

- ▶ Creative tech large % of population, e.g., ranked #1 for Interactive Media:

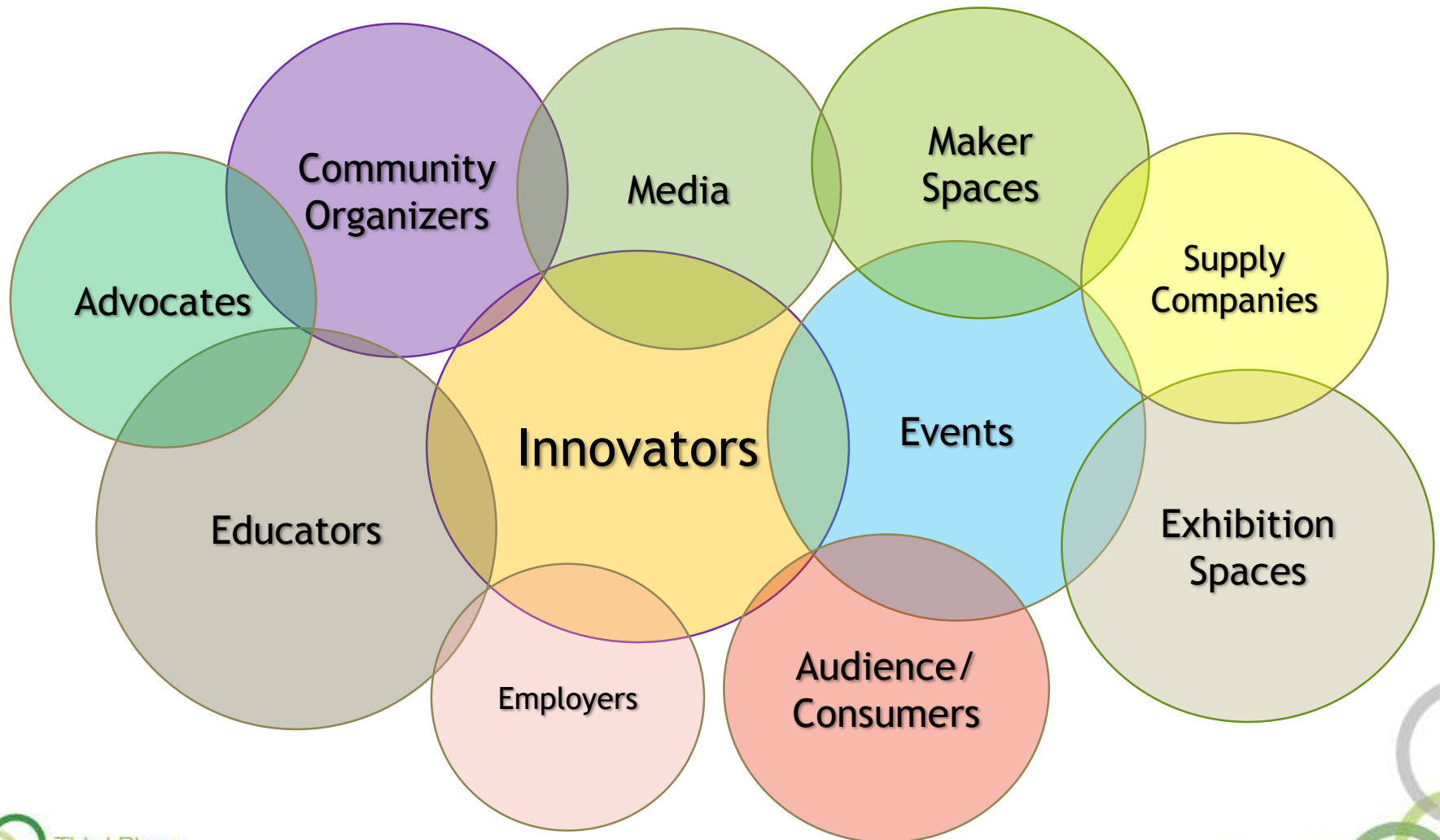
“The Interactive Media industry is a high tech industry that blends art and technology for both entertainment and more serious or practical applications. The core of the industry is the development of digital content, driven by talented individuals with expertise in software and artistic development, including computer game enthusiasts.”

[http://www.seakingwdc.org/pdf/other-reports/IMCompetivnessStudyJan2010_Final%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.seakingwdc.org/pdf/other-reports/IMCompetivnessStudyJan2010_Final%20(2).pdf)



NORTHWEST ARTS/TECH COMMUNITY

many “stakeholders”, without a unified voice



FEATURES OF A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Communities of practice:

- ▶ Members know each other and regularly interact
- ▶ Members can articulate their common goals
- ▶ Members have a feeling of belonging
- ▶ Community has a shared understanding of best practices and repositories of shared artefacts



FEATURES OF A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Innovation community:

- ▶ Culture of openness to new ideas
- ▶ Collaboration across organizations and disciplines
- ▶ Diversity *and* inclusiveness



Fuse Labs Creative Week



SUMMER 2014 ART & TECH WORKSHOP

- ▶ Overall goal:
 - ▶ Foster community of innovators; increasing awareness, collaboration, and collective efficacy toward common goals
- ▶ Workshop goals:
 - ▶ Map out the space in the NW
 - ▶ Articulate collective agenda
 - ▶ Take first concrete steps toward community building
- ▶ Workshop structured as four hour focus group:
 - ▶ Brief questionnaire
 - ▶ Introductions
 - ▶ Breakout brainstorming around emergent themes
 - ▶ Discussion of next steps



SUMMER 2014 ART & TECH WORKSHOP



Workshop was optimized for conversation.



PARTICIPANTS

- ▶ 41 participants, 23 female and 18 male, representing a diversity of roles and organizations
- ▶ Many wore multiple hats, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the community



Figure 3. Participants Represented a Diversity of Roles

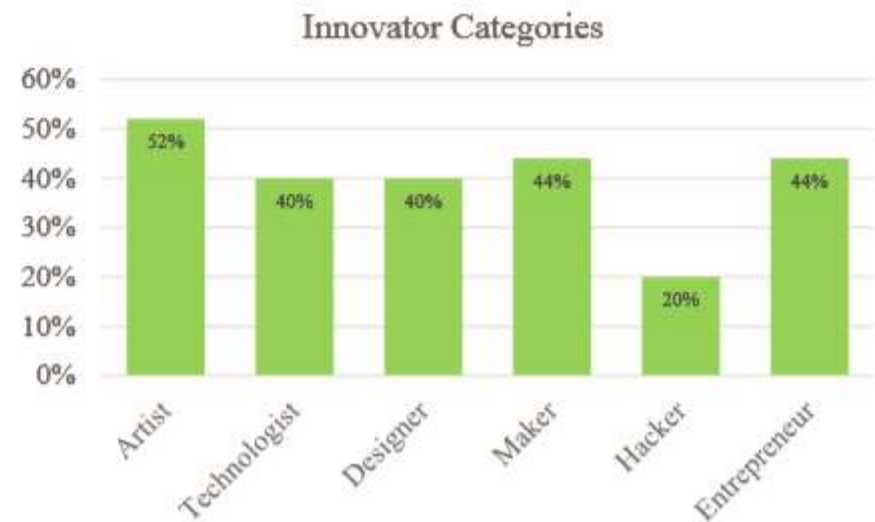
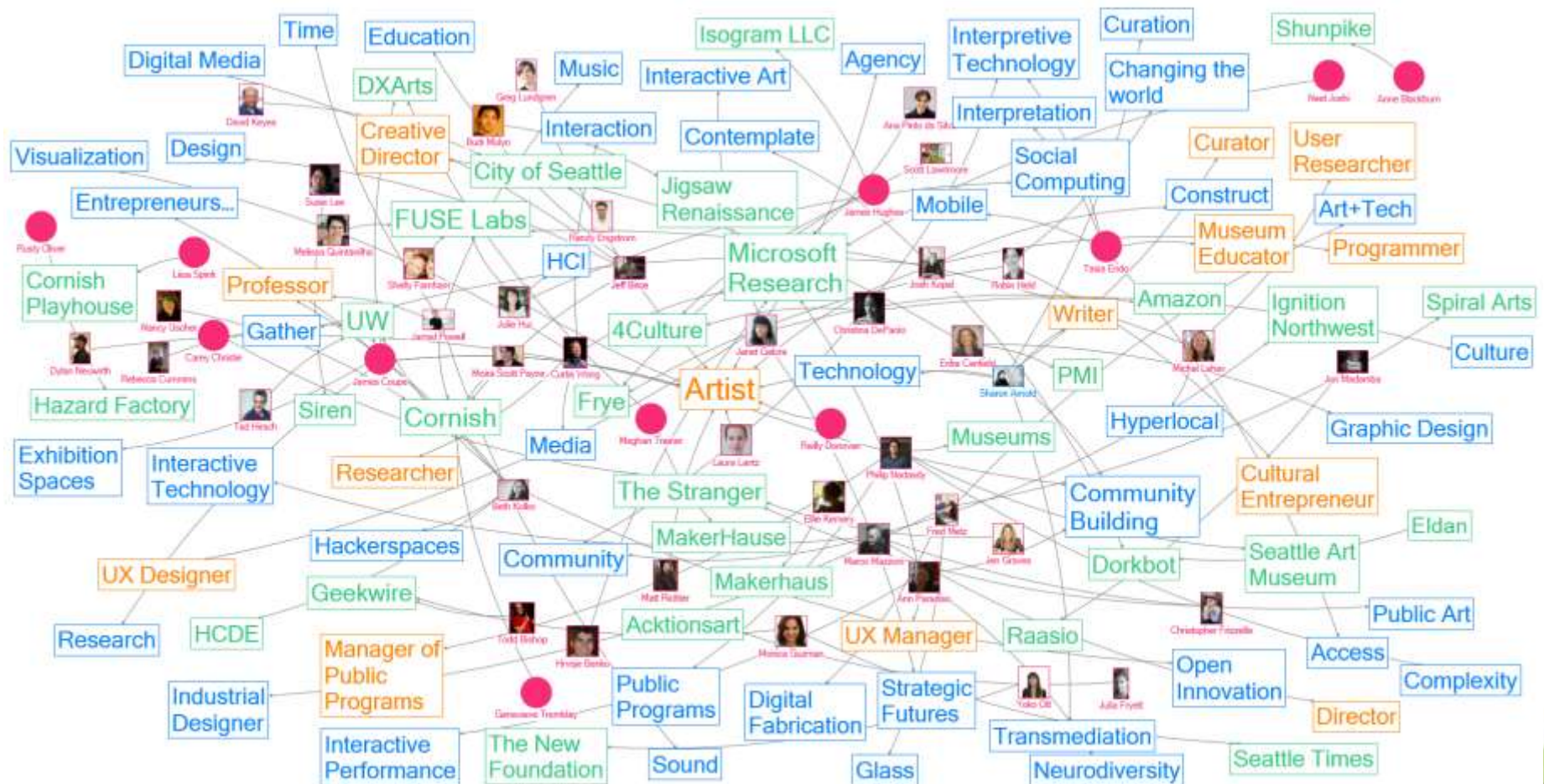


Figure 4. Attendees Included Many Types of Innovators

MAPPING THE COMMUNITY



Created with NodeXL. (<http://nodexl.codeplex.com>)

Network Map of Workshop Invitees (Pink), with their Roles (Orange), Interests (Blue), and Organizations (Green)

MAPPING THE COMMUNITY

- A lot of overlapping community organizations and events, but few devoted specifically to arts/tech.
- People active in the space relied largely on email, mailing lists, and social media to keep up to date.

A (By No Means Comprehensive) List Of Organizations Actively Engaged At The Intersection Of Art And Technology In The Pacific Northwest

Educational Institutions: Cornish College of the Arts • IETI at Cornish College of the Arts • DXARTs at University of Washington • Department of Design at UW • Pratt • FCS Steam Labs • School of Art, Art History & Design, UW • Digital Futures Lab, UW Bothell • School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, UW Bothell • iSchool, UW • Simpson Center (Digital Humanities), UW

Art Exhibit Spaces: The Henry • Frye Museum • Seattle Art Museum (SAM) • Vermillion • LxWxH; Length/Width/Height Gallery • Interstitial theater

Arts/Tech Non-profit or Social Organizations: Shunpike • Ignition Northwest • Dorkbot • Spiral Arts Robot Club (SPARC) • Canoe Social Club • Reel Grrls • Interstitial theatre • AktionsArt • Artist Trust (new media category) • Creative Code Sea • Seattle Robotics Society • SPIN: Stem Paths Innovation Network

Local Arts/tech Engaged News Media: The Stranger • The Stranger A&P • Geekwire • City Arts

Design / Technology / Startups: Microsoft Research -- Studio 99 • Adobe • Electronic Arts • Xbox • Seattle Chamber of Commerce • PBSJ • Hornall Anderson • Digital Kitchen • Olson Kundig • Siren • Art Sumo • Scribaroo • Galleries HQ • 1000 Museums • Make Fashion • Sideguide • Zooppa • Knok Studio • Mister Kite Entertainment • BRcade • Feral Motion • Houseogames • Third & Loom • Bombsheller

Local Government: City of Seattle, Arts & Cultural Affairs • King County 4Culture • City of Redmond

Maker/Co-working Spaces: Makerhaus • SoDo MakerSpace • Jigsaw Renaissance • DXArts warehouse • Metrix Create Space • ALTspace • Impact HUB Seattle • Inscape Arts (Center)

Related Events: Pecha Kucha • Lo-fi Fest • Seattle Tech Meet-ups • Arts Incubation Series • Artstech Meetup • Ignite • NWFF • SIFF • Critical NW • Decibal Festival • Mini Makerfaire • Hackathons • Dorkbot meetings • Seattle Interactive • Seattle Design Festival • Design in Public • MakerHaus Community Events

Related Arts/tech exhibitions: On/Off • People Doing Strange Things with Electricity • Oscillate & Winter Lights at Vermillion • MSR/Studio 99 visiting artists

COLLABORATIONS

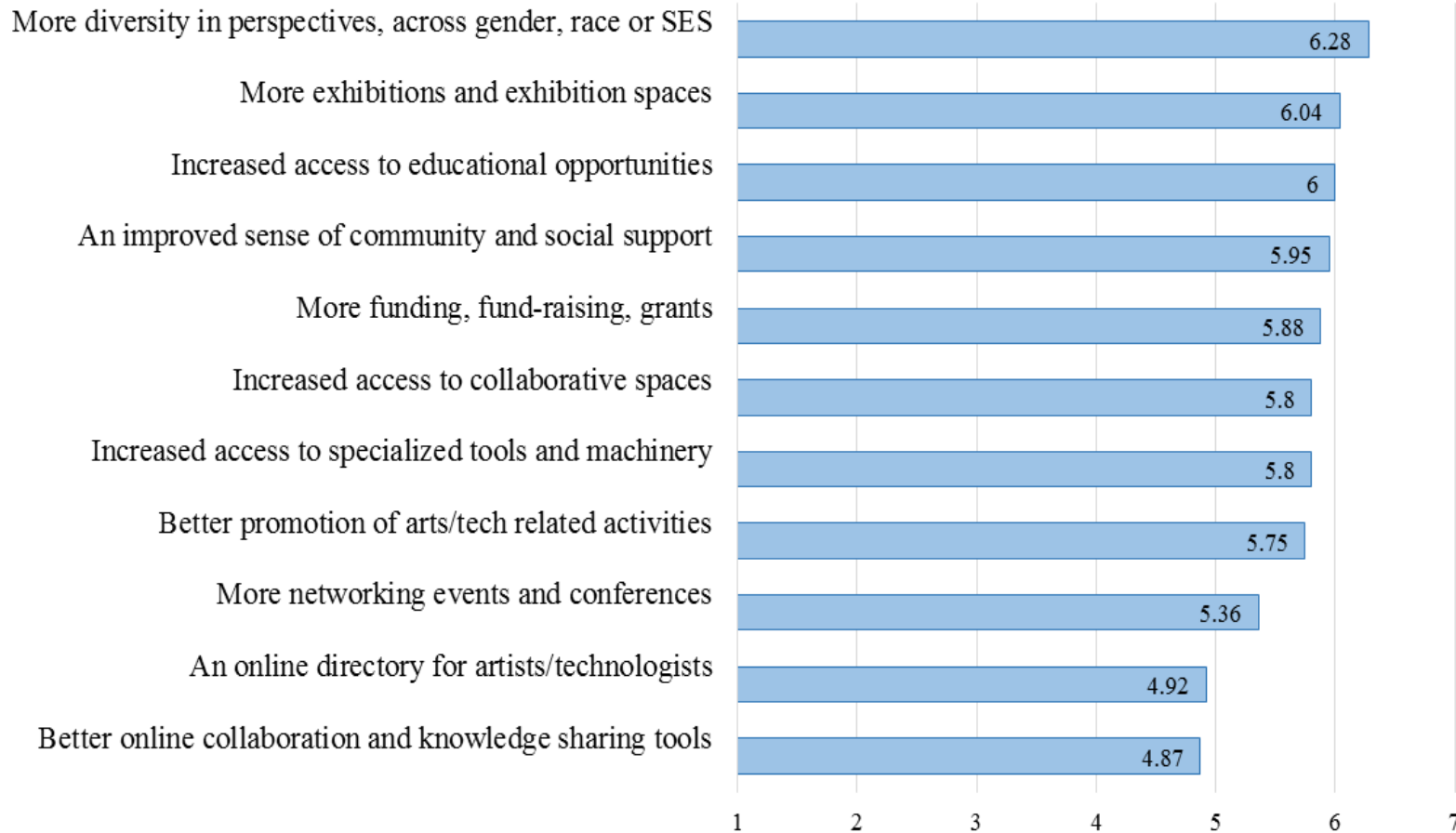
- ▶ *56% reported all projects were collaborative, 38% had mix of solitary and collaborative, median size of 3-5 people*
- ▶ *People seek out diversity of skills in their collaborators, often combining traditional artistic skills (dance, painting) with technological skills*

USES OF TECHNOLOGY AS A CREATIVE MEDIUM

Programming (10), Microcontrollers/Arduino(3), electronics(3), graphic design(3), fabrication (2), dance(2), Kinect(1), computer science (1), 3D imaging, digital mapping (1), response technology (1), math(1), logic(1), code(1), sensors(1), cameras(1), rapid prototyping tools(1), film(2), choreography(1) lighting(1), sound/music (1), Photo/video editing(1), metal work(1), word working(1), processing(1), openFrameworks(1), social media(1), CAD digital fabrication(1), visualization(1), web/app(1), Robotics(1)

ARTICULATING COLLECTIVE GOALS

Community Goals, Ordered by Importance



Importance of Community Goals, where 1 = Not at All, and 7 = Extremely So

COLLECTIVE GOALS: BRIDGING COMMUNITIES



COLLECTIVE GOALS:

MORE
DIVERSITY



COLLECTIVE GOALS: ACCESS TO LIFE-LONG EDUCATION



COLLECTIVE GOALS: SOCIAL IMPACT



COLLECTIVE GOALS: A GLOBAL SCALE





COLLECTIVE
GOALS:
FINANCING
TECHNOLOGY-
BASED ART



COLLECTIVE GOALS: PHILOSOPHICAL SUBSTRATE AND CRITICAL VOICE



CHALLENGES TO CROSSING THE DIVIDE

Artist

Scarce resources,
in competitive
environment

Concern for
legitimization
and the dissolution
of their brand as fine
artists

All

Lack of awareness
of existing work,
language, or best
practices in each
others' fields

No/little direct career
benefit to successful
collaboration

Distrust/fear of low
respect for each others'
disciplines

Technologist

Collaboration
occurring outside of
work, so scarce time

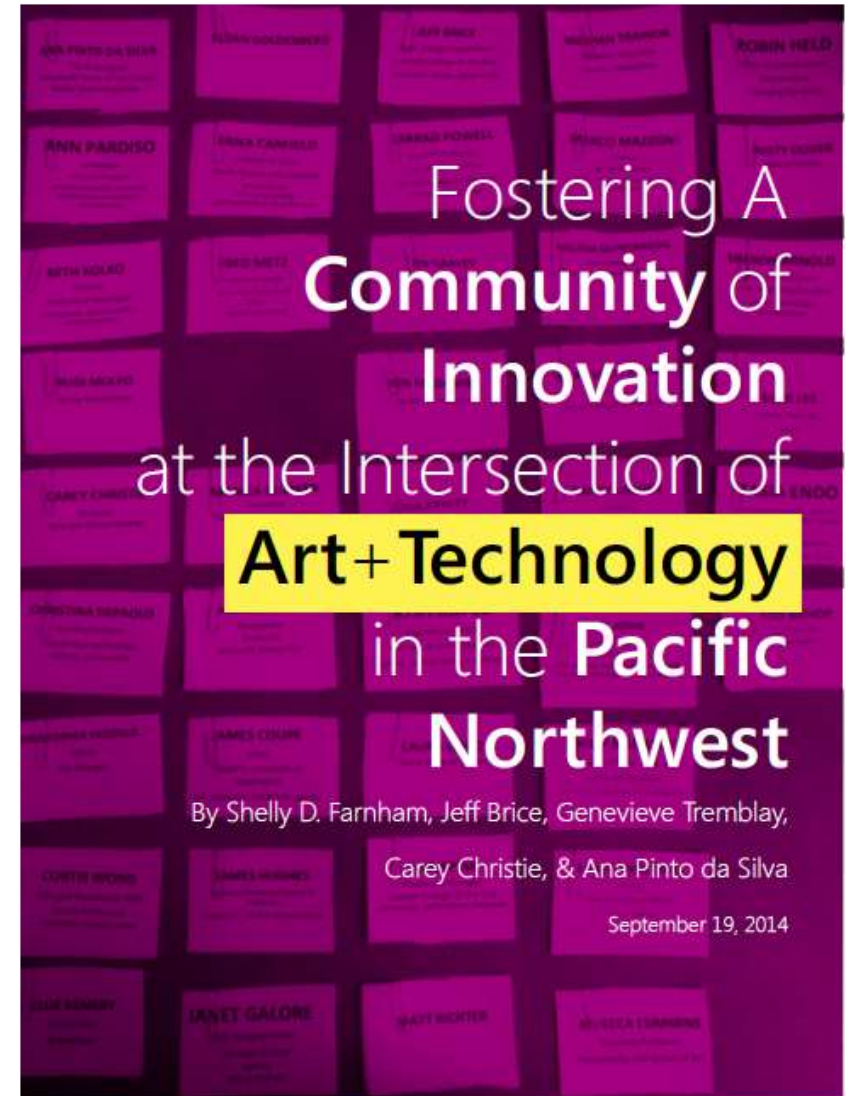
Often in
environments with
IP/non-compete
constraints

Scientist

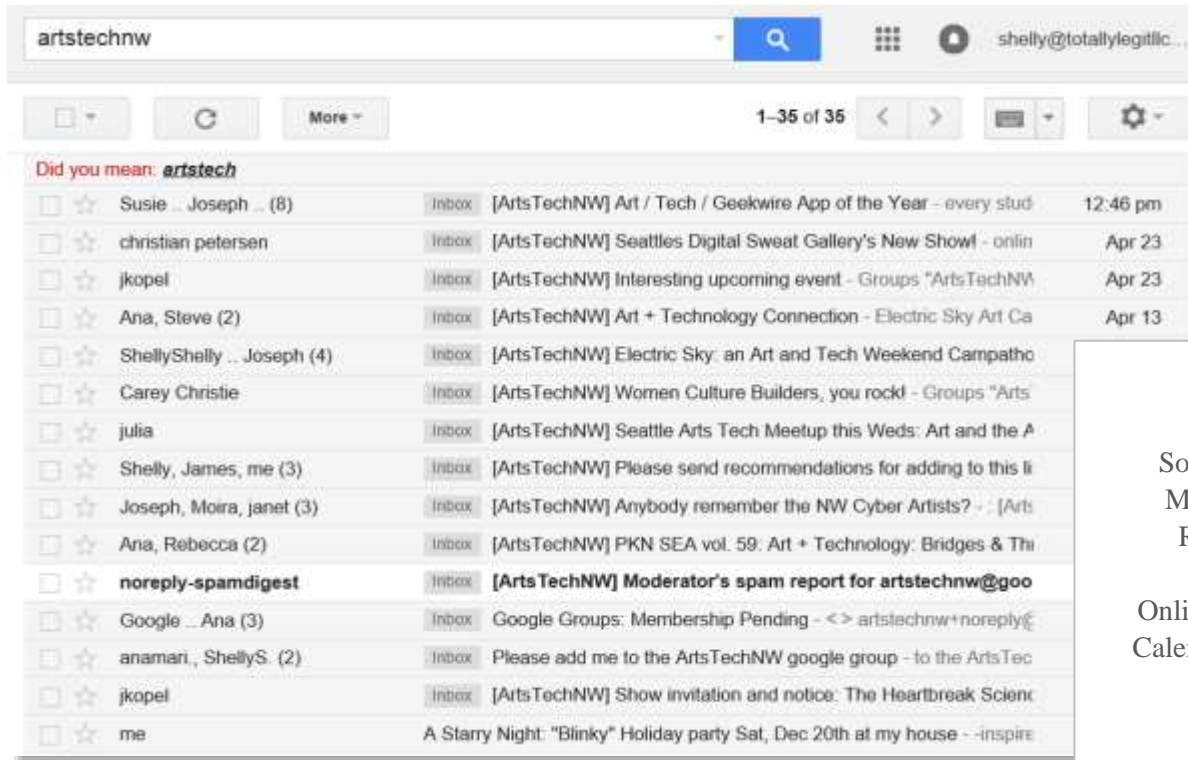
Demands for
disciplinary rigor
inhibits
play/exploration

COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Documentation
 - ▶ Write up report
 - ▶ Design study, how to increase diversity in creative communities
- ▶ Communication and collaboration channels
 - ▶ Mailing list
 - ▶ Developing an online, searchable community directory of who's who
- ▶ Community building events
 - ▶ Arts/tech Seattle meetups
 - ▶ Arts/tech focused Pecha Kucha
 - ▶ Electric Sky
 - ▶ An art & tech hackathon in June
 - ▶ 9Evenings E.A.T. 50 years later 2016



THE MAILING LIST

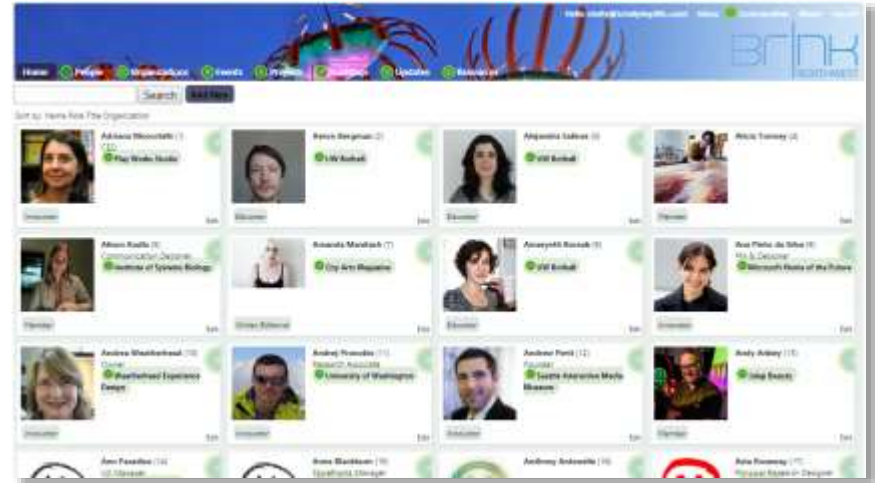


Survey says, still most important for “communication and sharing with community”



EXPERIMENTS IN SOCIAL NETWORKS (Spokin/BRINK NW)

- ▶ Crowd-sourced community network of people, organizations, events projects
- ▶ Optimized for interdisciplinary, cross-organizational collaboration
- ▶ Content is based on community-sourced collaborative editing
- ▶ Integrated updates from blogs, Twitter, calendars, etc.



ELECTRIC SKY ART & TECH CAMPATHON



You are invited!

Please join us at Electric Sky, an art and tech weekend campathon June 26-28 bringing together artists, technologists, and other interested parties to collaboratively engage with the environment in new and exciting ways. This event is a cross between an artist retreat and a hackathon, with the goal of fostering interdisciplinary creativity and collaboration in an inspiring environment. It is being organized in conjunction with the [Sky Art Week](#), including workshops, including this campathon, an art exhibit in the nearby town of Skykomish, and a wrap-up party. The registration fee is \$25 for adults, and \$15 for children.