

# The RESOURCE CONNECTION

Volume 4, Number 3

## Navigating Change in Nonprofit Technology

By Carlos A. Pedraza, Training & Technical Assistance Officer, Corporation for National Service

Can you imagine trying to do business without a telephone? So much of what we do depends on the ability to communicate instantly with one another. The further need to be able to transmit documents propelled the use of fax machines and overnight delivery services—both costly but often necessary alternatives to the relatively inexpensive U.S. Postal Service. In the past few years, however, new technology has enabled people to exchange information and conduct transactions instantaneously and cheaply.

That technology is best represented by the advent of the Internet in the 1990s. The Internet has completely redefined the way that most business is conducted in the United States, and that includes nonprofit organizations. Unfortunately, many of those organizations are reluctant to change the way they do business.

A recent study by the National Strategy for Nonprofit Technology concluded that “most nonprofits are hesitant to use technology and are ill-informed

about the impact it could have on their work,” that “fundors are reluctant to invest in efforts that seem unrelated to program delivery,” and that “technology assistance providers are ill-equipped to provide the kind and scale of support necessary to transform the nonprofit sector’s use of technology.”

According to the study, *A Blueprint for Infusing Technology into the Nonprofit Sector*, [www.nten.org/nsnt.htm](http://www.nten.org/nsnt.htm), nonprofit organizations face the imminent danger of becoming marginalized in an economy that increasingly relies on the value of instant exchange of information.

“Many nonprofits don’t yet know how powerful an impact technology can have in their work,” the study asserts. “They don’t know how to weave technology into their overall organizational plan and budget. They lack the resources to acquire the needed hardware and software, and for the training and support to put it to good use.”

See *Navigating Change*, page 2

### Theme: Technology in National Service Programs—Editor’s Box

This issue of *The Resource Connection* provides a brief glimpse into how the power of technology can positively impact national service programs. The goal is to expose you to examples of how programs are using technology and give you insight into the thinking of some national service leaders. Telling their stories and pointing out resources might enable you to explore new ways that technology can expand your programs.

The lead article outlines some key thoughts and principles about how your program can benefit by developing a technology blueprint and suggests the ways that such a plan can benefit your program. The closing article overviews a web-based reporting system that illustrates these principles.

The bulk of this issue is drawn from experiences in the use of technology drawn from diverse agencies from across the national service spectrum. In these case studies there are principles for applying technology in Senior Corps, Service-Learning, AmeriCorps, and AmeriCorps\*VISTA programs.

Also included is information about several national service electronic communication tools, commonly referred to as listservs. The newsletter lists resources on technology available from the NSRC lending library, and there are addresses for several relevant technology-related websites. ■

CORPORATION  
FOR NATIONAL  
SERVICE

The newsletter of the

National Service  
Resource Center



A project of ETR  
(Education Training  
Research) Associates  
funded by the Corporation  
for National Service under  
Cooperative Agreement  
No. 98CA-CA0011

### In this issue:

- Senior Initiatives Using Technology ..... Page 3
- Service-Learning & Technology ..... Page 4
- Reporting for Multiple-Site Programs ..... Page 5
- National Service Community & Listservs ..... Page 6
- Team TECH: Getting Things Done—High-Tech Style ..... Page 8
- Listserv N’etiquette ..... Page 9
- Library Spotlight: Technology .. Page 10
- Web-Based Reporting System ..... Page 11
- Websites for Nonprofits ..... Page 12

# Navigating Change

(continued from page 1)

Luckily, the Corporation for National Service's recent needs assessment for training and technical assistance in the national service network demonstrates that many managers of national service programs are aware of their need to improve their use of technology in order to better serve their communities.

The new Web-Based Reporting System (WBRS) now allows AmeriCorps programs to enroll their members and submit reports to the Corporation using the Internet. WBRS also gives users data they can use to better manage their programs.

More important, however, programs that have made the investment in Internet access to use WBRS have opened a door to a wide variety of tools and resources available online.

Internet access is but an important first step toward the restructuring nonprofits will need to successfully survive in the new economy. What are the elements of this new technological structure? An online self-assessment tool, *Technology Literacy Benchmarks for Nonprofit Organizations*, [www.sustain.org/nsnt/](http://www.sustain.org/nsnt/), helps you measure how your nonprofit stacks up in these areas:

- Strategic technology planning
- Technology use by staff
- Use of technology in business systems
- Technology use for internal communication

- Use of technology for external communication, particularly with current and potential funders and donors
- Sustainability of technology

The *Blueprint for Infusing Technology into the Nonprofit Sector* foresees a happy future for nonprofits that take advantage of technology: "Technology is a powerful enabler. It can leverage skill, insight, creativity, wisdom, and experience, letting people and organizations more fully achieve their greatest aspirations. No less than the profit-seeking business, the not-for-profit [organization] can reap immense benefit from technology's resourceful use."

The *Blueprint* also warns of what might happen to those who don't invest in technology:

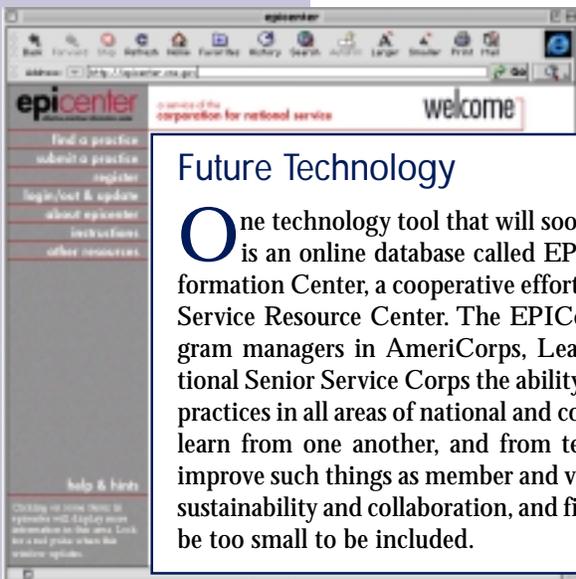
- Inability to meet potential increases in demand for service.
- Loss of funding because you're not able to show program outcomes. National service programs face increasingly rigorous standards of accountability because of the Government Performance and Results Act.
- Inability to compete with private businesses. More for-profit companies are entering domains once considered the province of nonprofits.
- Ineffective communication with their constituencies. If you can't use the Internet as business and government will be, the study warns, you risk losing your voice.

Fortunately, the cost of avoiding this fate is going down every month as computers, modems, and software get cheaper and cheaper—sometimes, even free. Also, the Corporation makes technical assistance available through the National Service Resource Center, [www.etr.org/NSRC](http://www.etr.org/NSRC), to programs needing assistance. The websites listed on page 12 provide valuable information and resources for learning what you'll need to know. ■

## Future Technology

One technology tool that will soon be available to all streams of service is an online database called EPICenter – the Effective Practices Information Center, a cooperative effort by the Corporation and the National Service Resource Center. The EPICenter search engine will provide program managers in AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the National Senior Service Corps the ability to contribute and search for effective practices in all areas of national and community service. They will be able to learn from one another, and from technical assistance providers, how to improve such things as member and volunteer recruitment and supervision, sustainability and collaboration, and financial management. No practice will be too small to be included.

See Websites for Nonprofits  
on page 12



# Senior Initiatives Using Technology

By Tom Endres, Director, National Senior Service Corps

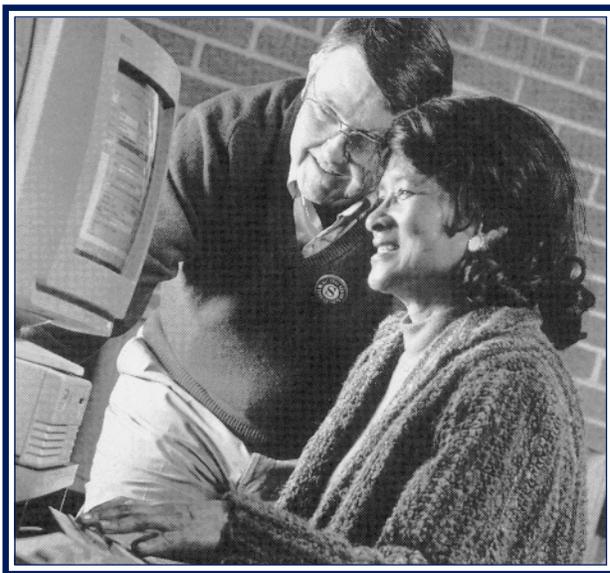
Technology serves as an increasingly important vehicle for the three programs of the National Senior Service Corps: Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companions, and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). The nearly 1,300 local Senior Corps projects rely more and more on technology to manage many aspects of their projects, such as reporting, tracking volunteer statistics, and capturing outcome data.

In addition, several programs have technology as a focus in meeting the needs of their communities and improving the experience of their volunteers. The following are examples of Senior Corps projects involved with various areas of technology:

- The New Castle County RSVP project in Delaware collaborates with Suburban Cable to promote the Family and Community Critical Viewing Project, a partnership between the National PTA, National Cable Television Association, and Cable in the Classroom. The project teaches parents critical viewing skills so that they can control the impact of TV and movie violence on their children. RSVP volunteers will be trained to present workshops to parents titled "Taking Charge of Your TV." Anticipated outcomes include an increase in the amount of time parents and children watch TV together and more family discussion regarding program content.
- In Indiana, RSVP participates in the Connect to Reconnect pilot program, designed to use technology to reconnect isolated seniors with their families and friends. RSVP received funds for computers and telephone access to e-mail and the Internet. A team of six RSVP volunteers train senior residents at Yellow Wood Terrace, a complex that houses 247 seniors,

many with no local family or transportation. Partners are the Council on Aging and Yellow Wood Terrace management.

- The Senior Companion Program in Las Vegas, Nevada, is now hooked up with "Service Link," a community-wide computer program sponsored and maintained by United Way. Users are able to access information and services provided by numerous social service agencies and public agencies. Additionally, Service Link allows users to solicit help from other users and organizations regarding a specific need.
- With the help of RSVP of Greater Cleveland, Ohio, two unique programs are providing a boost to people when it's needed the most. Job readiness is the goal of a computer-learning program for youth and adults at Carl B. Stokes Social Services Mall, in a collaborative program with the Urban League of Greater Cleveland. In addition, an RSVP volunteer works one-on-one with participants who need help with GEDs, SATs, and computer awareness. Since 1995, the program has served more than 1,900 residents.



Volunteers in RSVP, working together.

- Volunteers from Bucks County RSVP in Pennsylvania are part of the "SeniorNet" project, a national nonprofit organization that sets up educational programs to teach computer skills to seniors. Trained RSVP volunteers are helping to coordinate the SeniorNet sites in the community. The program attracts more men and younger seniors than many other RSVP assignments.

For more information about Senior Corps programs and technology, contact Bryson Coles, National Senior Service Corps, at 202-606-5000, ext. 254, e-mail: [bcoles@cns.gov](mailto:bcoles@cns.gov) ■

# Service-Learning and Technology

By Angie Phillips, Teacher, Elkins Mountain School, Elkins, West Virginia

**E**lkins Mountain School (EMS) is a West Virginia residential treatment facility for adjudicated and neglected adolescent males. The school population includes students ages 12 to 18 in grades 7 through 12 and GED.

The mission of the education department at EMS is “to create responsible and positive citizens.” What better way to accomplish this than with service-learning, which the school has been involved in since 1994. Service-learning involves all teachers and all students through projects that are cross-curricular. This sharing of personnel and resources has created a collegial environment for staff, and it has shown students the relevance of service-learning, not only to curriculum, but also to their everyday lives. Teachers model care, concern, and compassion, which are reflected in the students as they complete projects with seniors, younger children, and animals.

Several of the service-learning projects facilitated by EMS students have directly involved the use of technology.



Potomac Highlands Support Services acts as an umbrella organization for AmeriCorps and VISTA, America’s Promise, and Foster Grandparents. EMS students have been working with this organization for several years. The students of the computer literacy class recently held a one-day seminar for all of the Foster Grandparents. The Grandparents received instruction in basic keyboarding skills, and were directed on how to develop Power Point presentations. The highlight of the seminar was teaching the Foster Grandparents how to access and utilize the Internet. The students worked well in the multigenerational environment—they provided the knowledge while the Grandparents provided the curiosity, and together they found new worlds online.



During a recently completed summer term, a group of EMS students traveled to Tucker County each day to provide tutoring and mentoring services to K-5 students participating in an America Reads program. Tucker Valley Elementary Middle School purchased a computer-based program called

Accelerated Reader. Each elementary student was assessed to determine reading level and then assigned books that were read with EMS students. When the elementary students finished a book, they had to master work and tests on the computer before moving on to the next book. EMS students worked individually worked with the younger students to assist them with reading comprehension, word recognition, and basic computer skills.



Many of the students who attend Elkins Mountain School read below grade level and/or experience difficulty with reading comprehension, word recognition, and spelling. For this reason, the school uses the Kurzweil Reader, a computer program that brings pages onto the computer screen and

allows the reader to choose to have the entire selection or certain portions read aloud. While this is useful to all students, it didn’t address reading deficiencies that affected student understanding of

textbook information. Students involved in this service-learning project typed textbook pages into the Kurzweil Reader so that other student could access the material and perhaps gain a better understanding of classroom instruction. This has been a successful example of how students can help students. The project is currently being expanded to include the community, where the school will offer this service to non-readers, participants in adult basic education programs, and the blind.

Through the technology-based service-learning projects, students of Elkins Mountain School have become computer literate and knowledgeable, have experienced the rewards of sharing their knowledge, and are discovering the importance of being responsible and positive citizens.

For more information on technology-based projects in service-learning, contact the Learn and Serve National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at 800-808-7378, e-mail: [serve@tc.umn.edu](mailto:serve@tc.umn.edu), website: [www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu](http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu), or Brad Lewis, Community-Based Coordinator, Learn and Serve America at 202-606-5000, ext. 113, e-mail: [blewis@cns.gov](mailto:blewis@cns.gov) ■

---

# Leading the Way in AmeriCorps Progress Reporting for Multiple-Site Programs

By Debbie Schuffenhauer, Deputy Director, Washington Service Corps

---

## Background

The Washington State Service Corps (WSC) administers one of the largest AmeriCorps programs in the country. Nearly 800 AmeriCorps and VISTA members are enrolled in team-based and individual placement project sites across Washington State. As you can imagine, aggregating data to demonstrate the impact of national service can be a challenge when working with multiple sites that are addressing all four priority areas and variety of service activities. After a successful three-year partnership with Project STAR, the WSC sought their expertise to develop an efficient system to aggregate impact data from multiple sites.

## Challenge

Each ensuing year, the results of focusing on improving evaluation efforts became more and more apparent. Sites now had solid data that could be used to improve services, optimize results, and demonstrate the impact national service had in their community. The challenge now facing the Washington Service Corps was developing an efficient system to aggregate data from multiple sites that were measuring different objectives based on locally defined community needs. It was important for the new system to use technology accessible to the sites, and reduce the burden of reporting for both project sites and program staff.

## Solution

In March 1998, Kenneth Terao, Project STAR coordinator, discussed alternative methods that the Washington Service Corps could use to total evaluation results for reports it submits to the Washington State Commission for National and Community Service and the Corporation for National Service. He mentioned that Aguirre International was field-testing a web-based reporting system known as WBRS, which allows programs to send information to their commission via the Internet. He suggested that a similar system could be an effective tool for managing and reporting data from multiple sites. WSC contracted with Aguirre to develop Reports: On-Line Evaluation System (ROLES), and began using the system in November 1998. Project STAR and Aguirre staff have worked diligently with WSC to fine-tune the

system, provide training to project sites and program staff, and troubleshoot system errors. The program-wide approach to evaluation and the implementation of ROLES have resulted in the following accomplishments:

- All sites have adopted two common community strengthening and member development objectives.
- Project STAR assisted in the development of evaluation instruments and provided training to project sites and program staff to ensure all sites reported data uniformly.
- Site-level objectives and evaluation plans are entered into the shared ROLES system at the beginning of the program year and updated on a quarterly basis.
- Site-level progress reporting is automated and linked to evaluation data from the ROLES system.
- The staff time needed to aggregate data from multiple sites has been drastically reduced.

## Progress

During the upcoming program year, the Washington Service Corps will continue to work with Project STAR and Aguirre. In September, additional training was provided to update program staff on new features added since the last reporting period. Project STAR will continue to assist programs in aligning instruments and objectives, planning evaluation strategies and determining how to collect, analyze, and report data.

---

For more information on multi-site progress reporting, contact Debbie Schuffenhauer at 360-438-4145, e-mail: [dschuffenhauer@esd.wa.gov](mailto:dschuffenhauer@esd.wa.gov), or Valerie Abinales at 360-438-3130, e-mail: [vabinales@esd.wa.gov](mailto:vabinales@esd.wa.gov) ■

# Bringing the National Service Community Together through Listservs

Compiled by Alexa Keihl, Publications Coordinator, National Service Resource Center

**D**o you sometimes wish you had the collective wisdom of your peers at your fingertips? Are there times you just need to brainstorm ideas and share effective practices? Is there an event or training you want to find out about, along with contact information? Join a listserv. Listservs are also called discussion groups or mailing lists, and they use e-mail to distribute messages to groups of people who are known as subscribers. Subscribers to listservs usually share similar work goals or interests, and the number of subscribers per list ranges from a few dozen to several hundred. Several listservs have been created especially for the national service community.

How does a listserv operate? Think of a telephone conference call. The difference is that e-mail is the mode of communication instead of the phone. When one person sends a message to the e-mail address of the listserv, the message is sent out to all subscribers' e-mail addresses. This is called "posting" a message.

Other subscribers can respond either to the entire list or to the individual who posted the message.

Using listservs is a very inexpensive way to get information, ask questions, share ideas, and discuss issues with people you might otherwise never contact. Here are a few reasons for participating in a national service listserv:

## Obtain Training and Technical Assistance

Most of the national T/TA providers and the T/TA staff at the Corporation subscribe to national service-related listservs. They receive messages and can respond with ideas, offer suggestions, or even initiate more in-depth T/TA.

## Gain Access to Peers

Most challenges and issues that you face are probably not unique. Your peers are a valuable resource, and they can share ways in which they tackled situations similar to yours.

## Participate in Discussion Topics

You can bring up a subject you would like to see addressed by the group. It is an excellent forum for raising issues relevant to national service.

## Find Out about Events

Listservs are a fast way to learn about T/TA workshops, trainings, and other events for national service programs. New events or changes in dates can be posted quickly and easily.

## Recruit Staff and Members

Descriptions of positions, the number of openings available, and job qualifications can be listed on the listserv. It's a way to get the word out to recruit applicants nationally.

## National Service Listservs Available

There are quite a few listservs you can subscribe to, but the primary ones include AmeriCorps (Aclist), the National Senior Service Corps (NSSCtalk), VISTA (VISTAnet), America Reads (americareads), and two related to service-learning: K-12 (nsck-12) and Higher Education (service-learning).

You may subscribe to as many as you wish.

## How to Sign Up

To participate in a listserv, all you need is the capability to send and receive e-mail. Some lists have a web interface, so it is helpful to have web access, but this is not required. The following page provides instruction for joining the primary national service listservs. ■



## To Join:

### **AmeriCorps, America Reads, and/or Senior Corps** listservs:

Go to the NSRC website page on listservs at [www.etr.org/NSRC/listserv.html](http://www.etr.org/NSRC/listserv.html) and sign up by clicking on the e-mail address you wish to join.

If you don't have access to the website, send an e-mail message to:

[join-aclist@lists.etr.org](mailto:join-aclist@lists.etr.org) (for AmeriCorps)

[join-americanreads@lists.etr.org](mailto:join-americanreads@lists.etr.org) (for America Reads)

[join-nssctalk@lists.etr.org](mailto:join-nssctalk@lists.etr.org) (for Senior Corps)

You don't need to add anything to the subject or body of the e-mail. Just click on Send, and you will soon receive a response.

For questions, contact Zac Mutruv [zmutruv@etr.org](mailto:zmutruv@etr.org), or call 800-860-2684, ext. 130.

### **VISTA** listserv:

Go to the Vistanet website at <http://maelstrom.stjohns.edu/archives.vistanet.html>, and at the top of the page is a link that reads, *Join or leave the list*.

If you don't have access to the website, send an e-mail message to [listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu](mailto:listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu), and in the body of the message, type:

subscribe vistanet Jane Doe

(substituting your first and last name for Jane Doe)

For questions, contact John Zelson, e-mail: [zelson@libertynet.org](mailto:zelson@libertynet.org)

### **K-12 Service-Learning** listserv:

Send an e-mail message to [listserv@tc.umn.edu](mailto:listserv@tc.umn.edu), and in the body of the message, type:

subscribe nsck-12 Jane Doe

(substituting your first and last name for Jane Doe)

For questions, contact the Learn & Serve Clearinghouse at 800-808-SERV.

### **Higher Education Service-Learning** listserv:

Send an e-mail message to [listproc@csf.colorado.edu](mailto:listproc@csf.colorado.edu), and in the body of the message, type:

subscribe service-learning Jane Doe

(substituting your first and last name for Jane Doe)

For questions, contact Robin Crews, e-mail: [crews@csf.colorado.edu](mailto:crews@csf.colorado.edu)

See Listserv N'etiquette on page 9 for tips on using listservs.

## ~ Hot Off the Press ~

### PowerUP: Bridging the Digital Divide

The Corporation for National Service has joined more than a dozen nonprofit organizations that are partnering with major corporations and federal agencies in launching a major new initiative called PowerUP to help ensure that America's underserved young people acquire the skills, experiences, and resources they need to succeed in the digital age.

PowerUP brings together a diverse group of organizations to address the need for a comprehensive solution for the digital divide aimed at positive youth development. PowerUP Chairman Steve

Case, Chairman and CEO of America Online said, "PowerUP has drawn inspiration from America's Promise to deliver positive youth development opportunities to the nation's young people. Its goal is not only to provide young people with access to computers and the Internet, but also to leverage technology's power and the potential of the online medium to help young people develop character and experience."

For more information about the initiative, including partners and how to become involved, visit the PowerUP website at [www.powerup.org/](http://www.powerup.org/) ■

## What They're Saying about PowerUP

"PowerUP is a breakthrough initiative that our nation urgently needs. As I've traveled throughout the country, it has become clear to me that our future success as a nation will depend on how prepared our young are for the challenges of the 21st century. PowerUP will bring to the nation's underserved youth the skills and experiences they need to build a successful future."

*General Colin L. Powell  
(Ret.), Chairman of  
America's Promise*

"AmeriCorps is proud to add people power to PowerUP. We know from experience that just putting computer hardware and an Internet connection in the schools is not enough. To unleash the full potential of young people—and of the computer—kids need to know more than just how to surf the net. They need to learn how to use computers to succeed in a digital world. AmeriCorps members will give students access to advanced technology and compelling programming, in a safe environment with a caring adult. Together, that's what all of us in PowerUP will do."

*Harris Wofford, CEO of  
the Corporation for  
National Service*

# Team TECH: Getting Things Done— High-Tech Style

By Dan McDougall, Supervisor, Detroit Team TECH, United Way Community Services

What do you get when you combine the power of IBM, the breadth of the national United Way system, and the zeal of AmeriCorps\*VISTA members? Computerized magic, that's what.

Team TECH—which has just recently changed its name to “Teaming for Technology”—is a national initiative born out of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future. IBM, in considering how to answer Colin Powell's call to corporations to improve the lives of young people throughout the country, sought out a partnership that would help non-profit organizations use technology to more effectively improve the lives of young people—and others—throughout the nation. “TT” for short, the project is classic AmeriCorps\* VISTA capacity building, brought into the twentieth century.

Typically, nonprofit organizations fall well behind in the use of technology. Often told by funders that dollars cannot be used for “capital” expenses such as computers, social service organizations are usually forced to make do with cast-away technology from the corporate world. Add to that the lack of formalized training and technical support pervasive throughout the nonprofit sector, and the problem becomes even worse. Many nonprofit organizations, lacking technology planning, resources, and support, are left out of the information age.

Enter TT. In sixteen communities throughout the nation, AmeriCorps VISTA members work in teams to help nonprofits better use technology (see insert at left for a complete list).

From large metropolitan areas to small communities, TT VISTA members provide general technological services, while tailoring the project to the area's local needs and resources.

In Detroit, Michigan, TT became part of an existing technology initiative at United Way Community Services (UWCS). UWCS established an



Joshua Moore, Detroit Team TECH VISTA, introduces a young Detroit to computer technology at the computer lab Detroit TT created at “Resurrection of a Child's Mind.”

information center designed to help nonprofits harness information, which included training local nonprofits in the use of online technology through its Michigan Comnet project (<http://comnet.org>). TT answered a critical need in Detroit—getting nonprofits up to date on technology fundamentals, so they can take advantage of online advancements.

The result? Aside from overall improvement in the way nonprofits use technology on a daily basis, even the smallest of nonprofits are finding ways to make online technology work for them. The National Bone Marrow Transplant Link (NBMT), an information and referral center providing services related to bone marrow transplants for people with cancer, is a prime example. With less than five staff members, the NBMT Link was overwhelmed with information requests from all over

## National TT Sites

Atlanta, GA  
Austin, TX  
Boston, MA  
Burlington, VT  
Chicago, IL  
Denver, CO  
Detroit, MI  
Endicott, NY  
Fort Worth, TX  
Los Angeles, CA  
New York, NY  
Research Triangle Park, NC  
Rochester, MI  
San Francisco, CA  
Tampa, FL  
Washington, DC

the country. TT helped put all their information on the web (<http://comnet.org/nbmtlink/>), allowing the organization to provide services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. They regularly receive heartfelt thanks as a result of their online efforts, including e-mails from patients typing on laptop computers from their hospital beds.

Computer labs, websites, software and other trainings, and hardware distribution are possible because of the strong collaboration among Team TECH's national partners. The United Way of America provides overall project management and direction, while local United Way organizations (and, in some cases, local nonprofits chosen by

the United Way) provide local project supervision. IBM provides nearly \$800,000 in financial and in-kind support annually, including \$45,000 in computer equipment per project site. Of course, what really makes the project tick is the energy of AmeriCorps\*VISTA members. Each site has between four and six VISTA members, who think nationally and act locally to get incredible things done.

---

For more information about Detroit Team TECH, call Dan McDougall at 313-226-9272. To learn about the national TT project, contact Jim Beal at United Way of America at 800-892-2757, e-mail: uwacnsta@aol.com ■



Create short appropriate subject lines when you e-mail a discussion group.

Some people get lots of e-mail and sort things out by subject line.

Quote sparingly.

Depending on how you access e-mail, you will be able to reply to messages by simply hitting a button. The text of the message being answered is often included in your new message. Delete most of the old message and just leave a sentence or two that summarizes the point.

Double check the addresses before sending e-mail.

Using the "reply" function can sometimes be hazardous—a response meant for an individual on a listserv could be accidentally sent to the entire group.

Save directions to a listserv.

When you subscribe to a listserv, you are automatically e-mailed directions on how to par-

ticipate. These directions include important information about unsubscribing from the listserv. Save this welcome message—you will need these instructions down the road.

Listen before posting.

You are part of a conversation. If you are just signing onto a listserv, it's important to respectfully listen before posting.

Don't respond to "flaming."

Making negative and personal comments to a listserv is called flaming. Avoid wasting valuable time (yours and the other subscribers) responding to flames. Also, be aware that some folks, called "hackers," can forge e-mail addresses and say inappropriate things simply for a reaction.

Be nice to "newbies."

You may see postings from folks new to the listserv who inadvertently violate these rules or bring up topics that have already been discussed. Find considerate ways to help them. ■

## Library Spotlight: Technology



### **Best Practices in Cyber-Serve: Integrating Technology with Service- Learning Instruction**

James-Deramo, Michele, ed.  
M0910, 120 pages  
Virginia Tech Service-Learning Center,  
Blacksburg, VA, 1999

Collection of essays that explore how computer technology can be used to improve instruction in service-learning courses. Discusses issues such as using websites to link tutoring programs, extending food and nutrition outreach by technology, and furthering multicultural literacy through the web.

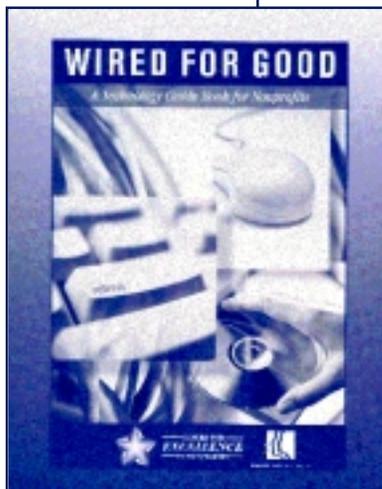
### **Getting America's Students Ready for the 21st Century: Meeting the Technology Literacy Challenge**

U.S. Department of Education, Washington,  
DC, 1996  
M0813, 70 pages

Report on the national, long-range technology plan to prepare students to be technologically literate. Discusses the roles of the federal and state governments as well as the roles of local communities, higher education, and private sectors.

### **Grown-Up's Guide to Computing**

Furlong, Mary, and  
Stefan B. Lipson  
Microsoft Press, 1999  
R1080, 400 pages  
Designed for older adults who wish to use computers. Provides information on using computers and the Internet for correspondence, financial management, searching archives, and shopping online.



### **Internet Guide to National Service Networking**

Corporation for National Service, Washington,  
DC  
R0684, 47 pages

Basic information about the Internet designed especially for national service programs. Includes how to get online, useful resources for service programs, common problems, and general advice to managers and participants.

### **Using the Internet & Media Awareness: AmeriCorps Training Workshop**

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory,  
Portland, OR, 1995  
V0020

Video includes a brief introduction to the Internet and its potential value to projects and information on conducting a public relations campaign. Explains differences between advertising and marketing concepts in developing an organizational key message. Details working with the media, accessing experts, evaluating PR campaigns, and maintaining crisis control.

### **Wired for Good: A Technology Guide for Nonprofits**

Center for Excellence in Nonprofits  
Smart Valley, Inc., San Jose, CA,  
1999  
W1035, 114 pages

Developed as a primer and general planning guide for nonprofits in issues related to technology. Helps to determine the potential benefits of various technologies so that organizations can make informed decisions about their technological needs. ■

**C**orporation for  
National Service  
programs may check out  
these and other  
items from our Library  
Catalog by contacting  
Jennifer Ryan:

**Phone:**  
800-860-2684, ext. 260

**TDD:**  
831-461-0205

**Fax:**  
831-430-9471

**Address:**  
NSRC/ETR Associates  
P.O. Box 1830  
Santa Cruz, CA  
95061-1830

# The Web-Based Reporting System (WBRS): Efficiency and Time Savings in Reporting

By Margaret-Ann Harvison, Contract Specialist, Washington State Commission

In a world of database management and electronic tax filing and reporting, it is a natural progression for federal grantees to build good financial management and program compliance systems by utilizing today's technology. The Web-Based Reporting System (WBRS) is an Internet-based data tracking and reporting arrangement developed by Project TASC at Aguirre International. It is a time saving, efficiency promoting, user-friendly, managerial tool that state commissions and AmeriCorps program directors can utilize for reporting fiscal and programmatic data. The advantages to state commissions and their programs in using WBRS are as follows:

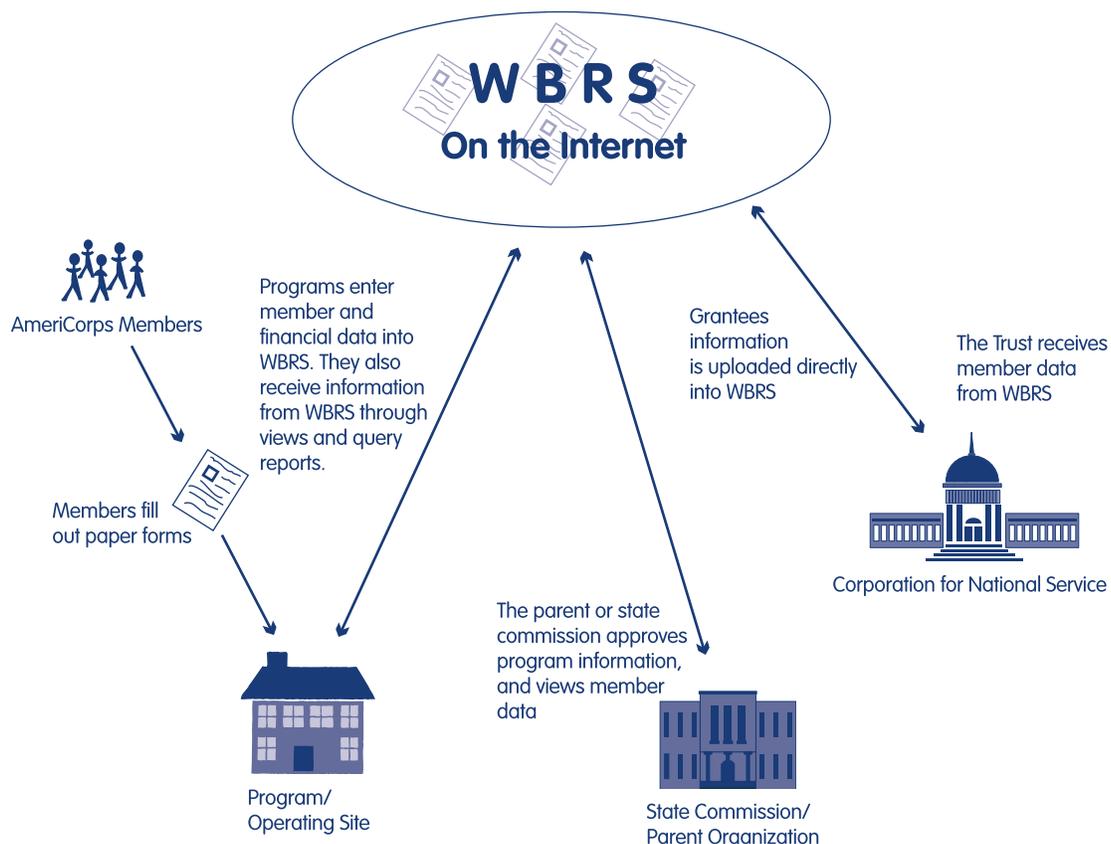
- **Easy Access to the System:** Because it is web-based, the system is easily accessible anywhere, at anytime by authorized users, once they have the required hardware and software (it works

on Windows, Mac, and Unix platforms). This allows state commission staff and program directors a level of flexibility to monitor and edit data not available before.

- **Security and Dependability:** Authorized users have different access levels, allowing them to view, input, edit, and/or approve only the data relevant to the program in which they are assigned. This protects data integrity, promotes accuracy, and validates important data like social security numbers. The system was recently audited and received full approval from the accounting firm of Ernst and Young.
- **Saves Time and Money:** Surveys of electronic tax filing systems indicate that they save between 50 and 75 percent in the time it takes to complete preprinted forms and returns. WBRS,

*See WBRS, page 12*

## How WBRS Makes Data Tracking and Reporting Easier





ETR Associates

P.O. Box 1830  
Santa Cruz, CA  
95061-1830

Shipping:  
4 Carbonero Way  
Scotts Valley, CA  
95066

Phone: (800) 860-2684

TDD: (831) 461-0205

Fax: (831) 430-9471

E-mail:  
nsrc@etr-associates.org

Website:  
www.etr.org/NSRC

#### CNS Adviser

Margaret Legowski  
Senior Training  
Officer, T/TA

#### NSRC Staff:

Mark Fulop  
Program Director  
ext. 214

Susan Hillyard  
Program  
Coordinator  
ext. 105

Zac Mutrux  
Information Specialist  
ext. 130

Alexa Keihl  
Publications  
Coordinator/Editor  
ext. 143

Jennifer Ryan  
Resource Center  
Assistant  
ext. 260

Jennifer Lee  
Materials Distribution  
Assistant  
ext. 142

## WBRS

(continued from page 11)

by reducing time and dollars spent on calculations of member hours, spending, available slots, and the compiling and postage of progress report data and Financial Status Reports (FSR), is anticipated to be as effective as, if not more effective than, the average electronic filing system. WBRS also reduces the number of errors in reports by preserving data integrity since only one data set exists in a central location in the system.

- **Promotes Program Compliance and Efficiency:** One can quickly view reports and make queries on WBRS to analyze enrollment and financial information. It has built-in controls that signal the user when questionable situations arise. For example, WBRS assists state commissions in monitoring the spending patterns of funds to programs by indicating on the electronic Periodic Expense Report forms, the percentage of CNS funds and percentage of match being utilized in any given month.

The Web-Based Reporting System is the anticipated method of efficiently collecting and sharing AmeriCorps grant information. It is an excellent managerial tool that facilitates and supports more thorough fiscal and programmatic monitoring in compliance with the AmeriCorps provisions and federal guidelines while simultaneously reducing the reporting burden on programs. Already, because of WBRS, there is no need for the annual Accomplishment Review of the commission's next program year. As it continues to develop and expand, the Web-Based Reporting System will supply researchers and statisticians with an invaluable database to accurately evaluate, support, and develop new and more innovative programs and solutions to address the critical societal concerns about education, the environment, and public safety.

For more information about WBRS, contact Carlos Pedraza at 202-505-6000, ext. 421, e-mail: cpedraza@cns.gov ■

## Websites for Nonprofits

### National Service Resource Center

[www.etr.org/NSRC](http://www.etr.org/NSRC)

### Information Technology Resource Center

[www.npo.net/itrc/home.html](http://www.npo.net/itrc/home.html)

### Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network (NTEN)

[www.nten.org](http://www.nten.org)

You can download a copy of NTEN's *A Blueprint for Infusing Technology into the Nonprofit Sector* from this site.

### Benton's Best Practices Toolkit

Tools and resources to help nonprofits use communications technology effectively

[www.benton.org/Practice/Toolkit/](http://www.benton.org/Practice/Toolkit/)

### Telecommunications and Networking in Indian Country

[www.benton.org/Library/Native](http://www.benton.org/Library/Native)

### Philanthropy News Network

(part of Philanthropy Journal Online)

[www.pj.org](http://www.pj.org)

### Handsnet

[www.handsnet.org](http://www.handsnet.org)

### Assessment Tool (beta version)

### Technology Literacy Benchmarks

[www.sustain.org/nsnt/](http://www.sustain.org/nsnt/)

(registration and login required) ■