

LINCT COALITION* Concept Paper – August 2000

Prepared for: Web-Based Education Commission, United States Congress

By: P. Kenneth Komoski, President, EPIE Institute, Managing Partner LINCT Coalition

Introduction

The concepts and activities described in this paper are the result of the shared vision of three nonprofit organizations that formed LINCT Coalition in 1994. LINCT is now a nationwide network of partners (national nonprofit organizations, local community groups, and local/national businesses) working together to help communities and families use information technology to increase learning, earning, cooperation and caring among community members.

LINCT's partners mentor communities in ways that enable those who lack access to information technology and training, to 'learn and earn' donated business computers, turning them into tools that increase employability, at-home learning, family earning, and community service. LINCT partners are currently mentoring community groups in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Austin, St. Louis, Chicago, Phoenix, Denver, Los Angeles, Oakland, plus rural communities.

Co-Production, Community Service, and Web-capable Computers

Co-production is the guiding concept of LINCT's community mentoring process. The concept is articulated fully by Edgar S. Cahn, Founder of Time Dollar Institute and LINCT Coalition co-founder, in his book, *No More Throw-away People: The Co-Production Imperative*, funded by the Ford Foundation. Simply put, co-production is the cooperative production of services by people in a community who need, want, and use those services. It applies equally to traditional communities of place and virtual communities of interest.

Co-production differs from traditional community service, in that those who co-produce needed services earn Time Dollars: one Time Dollar for each hour. With everyone's hours being equal. Once earned, Time Dollars function as a tax-exempt currency exchangeable for services ranging from transportation to daycare, and to counseling, legal help, household help, etc.— plus a variety of goods, including co-produced Web-capable computers.

In an after school program on Chicago's Southside, 1,000 students recently worked 100 hours a piece doing cross-age peer tutoring. By engaging in this co-production of learning, they each earned 100 Time Dollars, exchangeable for web-capable home computers. Other students in Chicago, in Watts, and on Long Island, working in both schools and in Boys and Girls Clubs are refurbishing and making donated business computers Web ready. For their co-production work they earn home computers, while supplying computers to be earned by other students and adults. These co-produced, web-capable home computers are bridges across the digital divide. Computer donations are not a problem: one corporation is currently donating 55,000 computers for use in LINCT-affiliated communities across the country. By taking the LINCT strategy to scale in a

* LINCT (Learning and Information Networking for Community via Technology) Coalition
Founding Partners: EPIE (Educational Products Information Exchange) Institute, Long Island, NY
Time Dollar Institute, Washington, D.C.
The Center for Information, Technology, and Society, Melrose, MA
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nation that discards 30 million computers annually, every low-income and working-poor family could learn and earn a Web-capable home computer, years before they'll be able to purchase one

Web-Facilitated Exchange of Co-Produced Services, Goods, and Time Dollars

To facilitate the exchange of co-produced services, goods, and Time Dollars, two LINCT partners, with funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, recently completed a Web-based Community Service Exchange/Time Dollar Banking system, www.linct.org (click on "Time Dollars"). This system will soon be being linked with a new Web-based, *Time Dollar Store*, being developed by LINCT Coalition partner, www.iverb.org. This will greatly facilitate exchange of Time Dollars, services and goods in LINCT-affiliated communities.

Community-Facilitated Co-Production of Learning

Learning is far more than the "L" in the LINCT acronym; it's central to the Coalition's strategy for networking and strengthening communities and families via technology. Adults, who lack the technology, skills, and confidence to move from welfare to work, get all three by participating in the co-production of learning – *improving basic literacy, as they become computer literate*.

This is accomplished in locally managed cooperative learning programs, held in community-donated spaces, with the help of local LINCT-mentored learning facilitators, and LINCT's unique 'virtual mentoring' software. They spend 12-to-24 weeks co-producing a learning/earning environment, with the cooperative goal of having all participants become demonstrably proficient at keyboarding, word-processing, spreadsheets, graphics, databases, e-mail, web-searching, and website design. By accomplishing this co-produced goal, each participant earns the computer they've learned on. Once the computer goes home, LINCT focuses on it as a family's link with the co-production of Web-based learning and earning, and its bridge across the digital divide.

***eLearningspace*: Web-Facilitated Co-production of Learning Across Communities**

In order to facilitate this at-home connection with co-produced learning via the Web, LINCT Coalition partners, with initial funding from the U.S. Department of Education and the Hearst Foundations, are developing a unique Web learning portal: www.eLearningspace.org -- "*the democracy of learning*." Within *eLearningspace*, learners, teachers, and other adults are able to contribute to the co-production of free, democratically accessible web-facilitated learning. Emphasis is on co-production of high-quality learning experiences, using learning resources for K-12 learners that align with state/national academic standards, and resources that align with workforce standards developed by the National Skills Board for adult learners.

Co-Production by School-age Learners

School-age learners who register to use *eLearningspace* (by state, home address, and school district) do co-production and earn Time Dollars in a number of ways. First, they earn Time Dollars for every out-of-school hour spent learning, and helping to co-produce evaluations of each of the learning resources they use while in *eLearningspace*. By enabling these learners to earn Time Dollars (exchangeable for products at the on-line Time Dollar Store, or for tuition credits at cooperating colleges), we intend to turn a portion of children's 5.7 hours-per-day of TV watching into productive learning time. Learners evaluate the time spent interacting with learning resources via *eLearningspace's* "*Rating Game*." The game is designed to elicit a learner's perceptions of each resource's ability to (a) engage and sustain their learning, (b) help them meet one or more state learning standard they are seeking to meet, (c) enable them to demonstrate what learning they've achieved by using the resource in question. Ongoing study of the Rating Game's internal and external validity, as well as its reliability across many learner-evaluators is integral to *eLearningspace's* ongoing research and development.

The second way learners are able to contribute to the co-production of learning within *eLearningspace* is by engaging in on-line cross-age peer tutoring; an at-home, version of the successful LINCT-mentored after-school Time Dollar Peer Tutoring Program in Chicago.

Learners may also earn Time Dollars working with adult mentors on the co-production of web-based, standards-aligned learning resources. They do this by working with one of two LINCT partners: Mikesike Institute, developer of *Student Factory* (a recent international award winner, as a component of *eLearningspace*), or *American Youth Works*, a pioneer in training at-risk youth to co-produce community-relevant environmental learning resources, utilizing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data from the EPA and NASA.

As with all learning resources accessible via *eLearningspace*, those developed by learners are evaluated by peers via *The Rating Game*. By using this built-in, evaluative learner feedback, we hope to see *eLearningspace* having a continuous effect in improving all web-accessible resources.

Co-Production by Teachers

K-12 teachers, too, can contribute to *elearningspace* and earn Time Dollars, by using *eLearningspace's* on-line teacher-tools to select, evaluate appropriate websites, software, etc., within stands-aligned student learning plans. Peer reviewers, who approve or return the plan for revision and resubmission, review each learning plan on-line. Once approved for use in one state, the plan and its recommended resources can be aligned for use by students in other states by means of newly developed inter-state-alignment software, licensed by *eLearningspace* from Achieve, Inc. of Cambridge, MA. The Time Dollars earned by teachers and peer reviewers may be used to acquire computers and other products for classroom use through the Time Dollar Store.

Co-production by other adults

Adults who volunteer to mentor either school age or adult learners using *eLearningspace's* on-line mentoring tools also earn Time Dollars for helping others to learn, and for participating in on-line training from expert on-line mentors.

LINCT Coalition's Progress and On-Going Development

Much of LINCT's development, and *Learningspace's* development in particular, is a direct result of a 1996, MacArthur Foundation funded project, *Creating Learning Communities: The Networking of Schools, Homes, and Communities*, conducted by two LINCT Coalition founding partners: EPIE Institute and the Center for Information, Technology, and Society. That project, in turn, drew upon 15 years of earlier work by these partners, focused on evaluating the effect of learning technologies on school, home, and community learning. The Bowne Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, Dodge Foundation, Ford Foundation, Kettering Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education funded various aspects of that work.

Given this support over the years, resulting in LINCT's creation and progress to date, we are hopeful that LINCT's innovative approach to integrating learning, earning, and the co-production of services will attract support needed to fulfill its ongoing mission. To this end, we are planning to launch a beta-test version of *elearningspace* to be used in LINCT-affiliated communities throughout the U.S. on November 1, 2000, to provide potential funding agencies with evidence of the full capabilities of LINCT's community and family focused learning and earning strategies.

Should the Commission members have questions, suggestions, or an interest in knowing more about LINCT Coalition's work, we will be pleased to be invited to meet with the Commission.

Building Sustainable “Learn and Earn” Technology Programs

Since 1994, LINCT Coalition’s “Learn-and-Earn-Technology” strategy has been empowering people in some of the nation’s poorest communities to bridge the Digital Divide with this message: ***“When you learn this PC, you’ve earned this PC. It’s your bridge across the “divide”!***

The LINCT *strategy* includes mentoring communities to:

- (1) Ensure a flow of donated, used business computers;
- (2) Establish community-based computer refurbishing;
- (3) Manage locally-run Learn-&-Earn training programs that increase employability;
- (4) Establish a sustainable infrastructure of staffing, Internet access and funding.

LINCT community mentoring provides tested procedures, and a curriculum that integrates computer skills with literacy and job readiness.

LINCT-mentored Learn-and-Earn programs typically conducted in donated training spaces in local churches, schools, and community centers (12 weeks, 5 days per week for daytime training, and 20 + weeks for evening classes, 2-3 nights a week).

Computers donated by businesses are refurbished in after school programs where students learn computer trouble-shooting, repair, plus environmental recycling of unusable equipment – guaranteeing that LINCT-donated PCs are “green PCs” that are kept out of landfills. As they learn refurbishing, students earn their own computers, by supplying computers to be learned and earned by other students and adults. The students gain both self-esteem and respect, as the providers of technology that is helping people in their community.

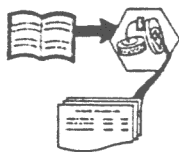
All LINCT Green PCs are earned on the basis of Time Dollars, a community currency of caring: one dollar for each hour spent learning or doing other types of community service. Any student and adult may earn a home computer and upgrades by learning to use one, by working in after-school programs, or by doing a variety of services for neighbors, such as child or adult daycare, household help, transportation, etc.

LINCT mentors community-wide use of a Web-based Community Service Exchange/Time Dollar Banking System. This free, community resource was developed by LINCT Coalition members, EPIE Institute, the Center for Information, Technology and Society, and Time Dollar Institute -- with funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

LINCT also mentors local organizations how to ensure sustainability of their learn-and-earn community programs. LINCT’s Learn-and-Earn Training has a 5-year approval record from local, state, and national sources of training funds. LINCT Coalition membership can help local community Learn and Earn programs gain approval from potential income sources as Workforce Investment Act boards, Adult Literacy boards, and funding sources of technology-training-for-the-disabled. Once approved by such sources, LINCT adult Learn and Earn computer training programs can produce training income for the local LINCT member CTC or other NGO. This income is based on each approved adult who learns and earns a home PC and a LINCT Computer/Web Literacy Certificate.

inventories of everything from clothing to major appliances. We believe that these two Web-linked exchanges will greatly encourage the co-production in communities.

EPIE Institute, LINCT Coalition's managing partner, has primary responsibility for the development of web-based tools for facilitating the co-production and networking of learning within and across communities. In 1996, with Mac Arthur Foundation funding, EPIE produced *Creating Learning Communities: Guide to the Networking of Schools, Homes, and Communities*. This work, available on-line at www.cosn.org, was done with perspective gained from evaluating every aspect of educational technology from the advent of computers in schools. During the 1980s, much of that work was supported by significant grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Dodge Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Mac Arthur Foundation.



Helping People
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August 18, 2001

Charles Battle
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Vox 323-779-3056

REASON: The "Mobilization of CalTek.Net's Omni-community CHARTER SCHOOL - CAMPUS OF DISTANCE LEARNERS Sites with Redlands Community College (RCC) distance learning post secondary course programs and Individual Development Accounts (IDA) Infrastructures is our mission. The IDA infrastructure is to be implemented as Individual Development Account Trust Agreements (IDATA'sSM) that are customized to the situation and needs of each program student client, through the People Empowerment Credit Union", with you as the Community Alliance Leader.

Dear Charles:

Per our last conversation, on moving the program forward working with Ken Wyrick enclosed herein is an update on the Next Steps in the start-up of the Community Rebirth Organization Plan (CROPSM) - Action Team Program and Apprenticeship Program Setup in your community. Enclosed is the **Ken Wyrick FAX ACTION MESSAGE: document, Instructions for Apprenticeship Program Application Completion**, Program information on the two page Data Spectrum, Inc. - (DSI) Services Menu **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SERVICE OPERATION** Menu, a five page program component summary document, plus diagrams describing the operations of the CROPSM - Action Team Programs. These items are to be used as tools to complete the follow-up steps to our mission. Please contact Ken Wyrick upon receipt of the package and begin the follow-up steps.

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FOLLOW-UP

1. Completion of negotiations for closure agenda funding (see enclosed agenda documents)
2. Completion of program individual service plan participant census based on the two page Data Spectrum, Inc. - (DSI) Services Menu **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SERVICE OPERATION** Menu items list. Complete the Census working with CalTek.Net and Charles Battles Community Coalition Organization Contacts.
3. Implementation of the AGENDA FOR: the "Mobilization of CalTek.Net's Omni-community CHARTER SCHOOL - CAMPUS OF DISTANCE LEARNERS Sites with Redlands Community College (RCC) distance learning post secondary course programs and Individual Development Accounts (IDA) Infrastructures is our mission. The IDA infrastructure is to be implemented as Individual Development Account Trust Agreements (IDATA'sSM) that are customized to the situation and needs of each program student client, through the People Empowerment Credit Union".

Please don't hesitate to call me if I can be helpful to you in any way. I look forward to discussing any aspects of our activities of particular interest to you, as well as any other issue in which I may be of assistance.

Thanking you in advance, for your friendship, interest and support. If there are any issues, call me at 215-769-8610, or 215-471-2207 E-Mail dataspectrum@netscape.net, our Offices are located in the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone at 2206 Cecil B. Moore Avenue, Suite 1B, Philadelphia, PA 19121 and at 4601 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19139.

Kindest regards,


Jasper Jones

COMMUNITY PARTNERS®

PROJECT PARTNER MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This memorandum is made between **Kenneth M. Wyrick** and **Vivian Candy Tanamachi** for **CalTek.Net** and Community Partners, effective **February 13, 2001**.

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify all arrangements and operating guidelines applicable to a Project of Community Partners.

The Board of Directors of Community Partners has reviewed and approved **CalTek.Net** as a project of Community Partners. It is agreed that the project's prospects will be enhanced by Community Partners' technical assistance and administrative expertise, and Community Partners has accepted management and control of the project because its activities will further the charitable and educational goals of Community Partners.

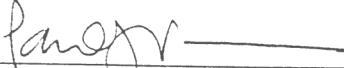
All parties recognize the responsibility of Community Partners to exercise full managerial control over the project, including the process of spinning off into a nonprofit entity. **CalTek.Net** has received and reviewed a copy of Community Partners Project Handbook and New Project Orientation Guidelines, and hereby agree to all terms and conditions detailed therein which include:

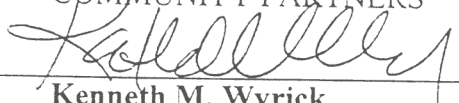
- working with your advisory council to develop and achieve project goals, objectives, and action plans;
- fulfilling the steps outlined in the Project Recommendation Report developed in conjunction with program staff at Community Partners;
- communicating routinely regarding project progress in writing through the Project Recommendation Report and verbally through periodic meetings with Community Partners' staff;
- complying with all financial and administrative practices and procedures;
- remaining a project of Community Partners for at least one year from date of sponsorship.

The program, personnel and finances of **CalTek.Net** are managed, supervised and controlled by the Board of Directors of Community Partners through its President. The President is responsible for the day-to-day operations of all projects as elaborated in the Community Partners Project Handbook and New Project Orientation Guidelines and Personnel Policies and Procedures, as amended from time to time by the Board of Directors in its sole discretion.

In signing this Memorandum of Understanding, the Project Partners agree to abide by all project operating policies and procedures and personnel policies and procedures of Community Partners.

IN WITNESS THEREOF and without reservation the parties execute this Memorandum of Understanding.

Dated: 3-12-01 
Paul J. Vandeventer, President
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Dated: 3/14/01 
Kenneth M. Wyrick
Project Partner

Dated: 3/14/01 
Vivian Candy Tanamachi
Project Partner