

## Empowering Rural America with Emerging Community Technology

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2

## New Electronic Tools for Social Change in Rural Communities

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3

## Times are Tough in Rural America

- Demographic Changes: Dying Communities, immigration and Aging Populations
- Globalization and the Information Economy
- Rural Poverty
- Education and Health Care Deficits
- Urban Focus in Social & Economic Policy
- Broadband and Digital Divides
- Local & County Government Limitations
- Rural Creative Class

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4

Many of these Issues Must Be  
Addressed at Multiple Levels because  
the causes are at multiple levels

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## Technology has long been a part of Rural Development

- Community Computer Networks and Community Technology Centers
- Online Organization
- Distance Education
- Telemedicine
- Technology & Economic Development
- E-Extension

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6

### Three Emerging Developments

- Civic Technology
- Data4Good
- Self Organizing, Leaderless Social Movements

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### What they have in Common

- Collaboration, Crowdsourcing and Coproduction Through Technology
- Combination of Online and Offline Work
- Sharing of Expertise and Knowledge
- New Forms of Data
- Public Interest Technology

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### Civic Technology

*Civic technology is the use of digital technologies and social media for service provision, civic engagement, and data analysis – has the potential to transform cities and the lives of their low income residents. (Living Cities. 2012, 3).*

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### The Civic Technology Approach

Involves Citizens, Government, Business and Nonprofits in Recreating and Improving what Government Does

Blurring of Sector Boundaries  
Major Players-Code for America, Knight Foundation, Sunlight Foundation

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### Open Civic Data

- Transparency and Openness
- Data that is available in usable format
- The Fuel Behind Civic Technology-Open Civic Data Makes the Practices Work and the applications possible

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### Technology

- Technology provides the means to connect the aspects of civic technology
- Technology also changes the nature of civic interaction and alters our way of organizing

Examples

- Web 3.0 The Semantic Web
- Web 2.0/Social Media
- Application/Service Provision
- Application/Citizen Participation
- Crowdsourcing
- Neighborhood Forum
- Crowdfunding
- Open or Civic Mapping

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### Practices

- Civic Competition
- Hackathons
- Code for America Fellowship
- Peer to Peer Group/Brigade

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### Data4Good

- Growing Practice Applying Data Science Skills to Problems around the world
- Volunteer Data Science Practitioners
- Data Collaboratives and Data Philanthropy

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### The Data4Good Ecosystem

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### The Data4Good Ecosystem

Organizations	Employers & Volunteers	Placement Agencies	Data Providers	Domain Agencies
Tasks	Employers Employees as Volunteers Universities	Broker Requests Place Volunteers Support Volunteers	Domain Provider Open Civic Data Data Collaboratives Data Philanthropy Citizen Science	Organizations dealing with problems on the ground Nonprofit/NGOs Government

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### Data For Good Examples

Tracking Disease with Data & AI	Human Rights Abuses	Human Trafficking & Slavery	Homelessness
Pandemics and Epidemics Disease Reconnaissance Mental Health Monitoring	Genocides and mass murder Rights abuses Harassment of journalists	Missing Persons Modern Day Slavery Kidnapping	Residential patterns Homelessness Slums
Corruption & Voter Fraud	Immigration & Refugees	Water	Violence, War & Hate
Voting Irregularities Registration issues Voter suppression	Refugees and migrants Patterns of relocation Abuse of Migrants	Water Availability Clean Water	Mass Violence Gun Violence Hate crimes War and Terrorism

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### Leaderless and Self Organizing

- Recent Movements Using a Nontraditional Format
- Role of Technology in changing Structure and Leadership
- Compared with Existing Transnational NGOs
- Distributed Leadership
- Social Media

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## Organizing without organizations

- Technology improves coordination
- Technology reduces transaction costs while eliminating the need for hierarchy
- Democratizes organizing

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19

## Recent Cases



Tea Party



Occupy Wall Street



Arab Spring

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20

## What Technology Brings to the Table

- + Democratizing social change
- + Effectiveness
- + Costs and Reach
- + A wider range of opportunities

21

## What Does This Mean for Rural America?

- New interventions that promise greater reach and participation
- New organizational forms coupled with new technologies
- Making the best of what is available
- Building Real and Powerful Communities

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22

- + Now is the time
- + Here is the place
- + We are the people
- + Let us begin

23

## Thank You!

Now go out and do something!

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24