

Request for Workshop Proposals

Organizer's Collaborative is soliciting proposals for workshops to be presented at the sixth annual "Grassroots Use of Technology" conference, co-hosted by the Center for Reflective Community Practice at MIT. The conference date is April 16, 2005 – with a free "community day" (spaces must be reserved) on the afternoon of April 15, 2005.

The conference brings together nonprofit organizations and individuals to discover how they can best use technology to effect social change. This year we expect 250 participants.

We are pleased to announce that the Keynote Speaker this year is Micah Sifry.

In May 2004, Micah L. Sifry helped co-found Personal Democracy Forum (PDF), and now serves as Executive Editor. Since 1997, he has been a senior analyst with Public Campaign, a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, DC with works on comprehensive campaign finance reform. He is also a freelance writer whose work frequently appears in *The Nation*, *The American Prospect*, *Tikkun* magazine and on the web at TomPaine.com and Salon.com. In 1998-99, he was an Independent Project Fellow of the Open Society Institute, and was invited to write the epilogue of *The Encyclopedia of Third Parties in America* (M.E. Sharpe, 2000). He has appeared on CBS "This Morning," MSBNC, C-SPAN, MTV News, National Public Radio, Air America, and is frequently consulted as a leading source on third-party politics by many reporters.

He is a graduate of Princeton University (B.A. in Politics, 1983) and New York University (M.A. in Politics, 1989). He is an adjunct professor at the Political Science Department of the City University of New York/Graduate Center, and a founding member of its Independent Politics Group.

The theme of the 2005 conference is "Building Bridges" with three featured tracks:

- 1) Making technology relevant to communities
- 2) Online politics post-2004
- 3) Uniting movements for social justice.

As with our past conferences, we expect a diverse mix of nonprofit staff, as well as technology professionals working for nonprofits. We aim to have a range of workshops that address the themes at a basic and theoretically advanced level.

Suggested Topics

Please use these suggestions as guidelines for each track, but feel free to create a new topic.

Making technology relevant to communities – Bridging the Gap that small nonprofits face with technology
Building bridges between organizations and their constituents

Making web sites more accessible - w3c compliance, bilingual, etc.

Options for donor databases

Technology for low income/urban communities

How to run a low-cost email advocacy campaign

What are database backed web sites – content management systems?

Getting started in blogging

Usability in Open Source Software

Using GIS to target communities

Using free Internet resources

Online politics post-2004 – Bringing the message to the masses, keeping people active

How can campaigns keep the momentum?

How all sides used technology in '04 elections

Cyber campaigns – what works, what doesn't
Legal Landscape – Using the Internet for Political Activities
Tools to mobilize at the local level
Introduction to online organizing

Uniting movements for social justice – Building coalitions, strengthening ties, and building bridges between organizations

Raising funding for technology
Online tools for coalitions
Using RSS to share information among organizations
Future of online directory sites
"infrastructure"

Conference Agenda & Logistics

FRIDAY APRIL 15 - Community Day – Building E25

1:00-2:00pm Panel Discussion –
Making Technology Useful for Small Organizations & Community Groups
2:30-3:30 Introductory Sessions

- Online efforts – Webtools to share resources (RSS and others)
- For Local Organizations – Organizing Technology for Low-income/Urban groups
- For Software Developers & Consultants – Usability in OSS: What is available now

3:30-3:45 Break
3:45-5:30 Next Steps

- Online efforts – Resource sharing online – opportunities for collaboration
- For Local Organizations – ODI-style discussion
- For Software Developers & Consultants – Priorities for OSS development to serve the needs of nonprofits

6:00pm - Out to dinner (meet in the lobby)

SATURDAY APRIL 16 – Tang Center

8:00-9:00am Breakfast and Registration
9:00-10:15 Opening Remarks and Keynote Speaker: Micah Sifry
10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-12:00 Workshops: Session I*
12:00-1:15pm Lunch
1:30-3:00 Workshops: Session II *
3:00-3:15 Break
3:15-4:45 Workshops: Session III*
4:45-5:30 Refreshments, Wrapup
5:30-6:30 Annual Meeting of OC
7:00pm- Post-Conference Dinner

* Six concurrent workshops take place during each Saturday session.

The workshop classrooms at the Tang center are all lecture style rooms with U-shaped seating. They are all equipped with built-in LCD projectors that may be hooked up to a laptop.

What the proposal should contain:

- 1) Catchy Title
- 2) 50 word description that would appear in the program
- 3) Short 100 word bio of presenter(s)

- 4) Primary group or organization affiliation
- 5) Outline of topics covered
- 6) Format (interactive discussion, lecture, hands-on activities, panel, roundtable, etc.)
- 7) Audience (indicate who your workshop is designed for: Nonprofit Staff including non-technical folks and accidental techies, or Technology Consultants working at Nonprofits)
- 8) Track (please indicate which of the 3 tracks listed above best fit your workshop)
- 9) Contact Information (for the committee to contact you with any questions, and our decision)
- 10) AV needs

Criteria for Selection:

The committee is looking for a diverse range of workshop styles – from lecture to roundtable discussions and interactive, hands-on formats.

Workshops will be selected to create balance in addressing different audiences and levels of technical expertise.

Finally, the committee will select proposals that best fit the theme of the conference, and meet the needs of grassroots nonprofits.

If the selection committee deems a topic to be of broad interest, we may consider offering a presentation at multiple sessions.

All proposals should be sent to: oc2005@organizenow.net and must be received NO LATER THAN 3/15/05.

The selection committee will inform all applicants of their final decision.

While we are unable to provide an honorarium, presenters will have an opportunity to network with about 250 non-profits and technical consultants. This is a also great chance to share your knowledge on a subject you are passionate about.

Thank you for your interest,

Rich, Liat, Judy, and all of us at Organizers' Collaborative