2014 REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the Edge of the Future: The Arts and Technology in the 21st Century

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A Message from the Co-Conveners

The two of us devised the idea of this program to maintain a bridge between our respective organizations and represent our joint commitment to advancing the role of the arts and artists in society. In 2015, we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the National Arts Policy Roundtable—and of our conviction to the arts as central tools with which to face the challenges of the day. Sundance Institute was built for gatherings like this: to convene great minds, using nature as a background, and to take ideas generated here to position art at the forefront of culture and society.

This is always a spectacular learning experience, and this year’s topic is integral: assessing the current threshold of arts in technology and how to bring our best learning about each to bear on the other. We benefit this year, as always, by a diverse and enriched group of leaders and innovators from a variety of sectors, including career artists as well as new voices, who discussed ways to leverage technology in support of the arts—and vice versa.

The goal is to generate specific, actionable policy recommendations and solutions that communities can readily implement on a local scale, but also to spur partnerships with foundations, business, and government entities at all levels. We publish this report as part of the essential continuity between those innovative conversations in September and concrete decisions leaders can make in both the public and private sectors.

We are indebted to all thirty-eight of this year’s Roundtable participants. We extend our most sincere thanks to those whose leadership made it possible for us to realize this program, including National Arts Policy Roundtable Founding Chair Marian Godfrey, Chair of the 2014 National Arts Policy Roundtable Floyd Green, and Executive Director of Sundance Institute Keri Putnam. We are equally indebted to Americans for the Arts staff members Nora Halpern, Vice President of Leadership Alliances; and Christine Meehan, Manager of Leadership Alliances; and to David Grant, who served as our facilitator.

This weekend explores creativity as freedom in a broad sense; it’s a way to step out of our daily responsibilities and draw instead upon our experience and insight, to ask questions about how to break boundaries and move past constraints normally put upon us. Good ideas tend to sit, sometimes float, and even evaporate, but the relaxed, reflective, and inspiring atmosphere of the National Arts Policy Roundtable supports our movement forward from ideas to action—at a leadership level. The weekend builds on past contributions to provide a foundation of support that our wider community will need to take the arts into even more innovative new places and spaces.

Robert Redford
President and Founder
Sundance Institute

Robert L. Lynch
President and CEO
Americans for the Arts
“It is our charge, as leaders, to address any impediment to the arts.”
—Robert Lynch

**Background**

The National Arts Policy Roundtable convenes each year to empower leaders and policymakers with findings from the most progressive work and dialogue related to the arts. This year’s Roundtable focused on the role technology can play, in the context of questions that continue to be central to advocacy and change:

- how we talk about the arts
- how to better tell stories about the impact of the arts
- how storytelling can lead to more resources for the arts and artists

The world’s top universities have long been immersed in highly innovative projects that distort the lines between creativity and technology. For nearly three decades MIT’s Media Lab as well as other universities have engaged in a deliberately “antidisciplinary culture.” This has spawned a number of similarly minded programs at universities and institutions around the world, and more recently policymakers and K–12 education advocates have begun to embrace the increasing crossover in art and technology.

In 2011, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) broadened their definition of “media arts” to include technology. This was more than a change in language; it was the NEA transforming the kinds of projects funded, from just the “Arts on Radio and Television” to the “Arts in Media”—including content created for the Internet, mobile technologies, digital games, and other interactive platforms. This is emblematic of a global shift in narrative about what constitutes the arts. The NEA supports combined “Art/Science” programs to “promote greater understanding of humanity and cultural legacy” and perceives cultural institutions as “cultural laboratories and hubs.”

The weekend included performances and presentations by National Arts Policy Fellows, alumni of the National YoungArts Foundation that took place throughout the weekend:

- **Alicia Lai** performed selections of her poetry. Alicia is a 2014 National Arts Policy Roundtable Fellow, a National YoungArts Foundation winner in writing, a Scholastic Alliance for Young Artists & Writers winner, and 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts.
- **Eden Girma** sang both original and standard works. Eden is a 2014 National Arts Policy Roundtable fellow, a 2014 National YoungArts Foundation winner in voice, and a 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts.
- **Cameron Covell** shared his short film, *The Most Beautiful Thing*. Cameron is a 2014 National Arts Policy Roundtable Fellow, a 2013 National YoungArts Foundation winner in Cinematic Arts, and a 2013 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts.

At the end of the convening, Alicia and Eden composed and performed a spoken word and song piece which fully encapsulated the ideas, impressions and emotions of the roundtable.
The surge of technology use in the classroom engages students in new forms of art making and arts learning, building skills that they in turn can apply to the broader curriculum as well. The Chicago-based Digital Youth Network (DYN) claims that “digital literacy is the new literacy.” Learning in the digital age makes accessible aspects of the creative process that used to be prohibitive due to cost or geography.

This intersection of arts and technology has a direct economic impact in the U.S., where CEOs demand a “creative workforce” and President Obama charges the nation to “out-innovate” our competitors. A 2007 study showed that 99 percent of superintendents and 97 percent of employers surveyed believed that creativity was “of increasing importance in the workplace.” Employers ranked creativity as among the top five applied skills sought in new hires, regarding it as the basis for skills like “problem identification” and “pattern recognition.”

In terms of educational policy, this has meant expanding the essential paradigm of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to include the arts (STEAM). In 2013, Americans for the Arts helped to create the bipartisan Congressional STEAM Caucus, co-chaired by Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Congressman Aaron Schock (R-IL). This body of 72 congressional members seeks to integrate the arts into a K–12 curriculum—proven to be one of the most effective ways to ensure that our future workforce remains cutting edge, creative, and competitive.

The NEA, universities, and other institutions will continue to use interdisciplinary research to spark dialogue. The 2014 National Arts Policy Roundtable sought to leverage the latest thinking to build bridges that will affect positive change in the classroom, across communities, and in the workplace.

**Overview**

Collaborations between art and technology can not only build bridges but also provide overwhelming possibilities and realize unforeseen potential. Even the simplest early advancements in technology correlated directly to development in the arts. From cave drawings and printing presses to radio waves and television, these innovations provide vital communication that is often inextricable from storytelling and the new forms of creative expression they have made possible.

The converse is also true; creative thought engenders technological innovation becoming a reality. Some of the world’s most revolutionary technological inventions sprung from the musings of writers and scholars, and even today many towering figures in contemporary art test—and even

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outpace—the boundaries of new technologies. These advancements engage ever-wider audiences in participatory experiences.

**Place making and community**
Many projects capitalize on these new forms of engagement to spur innovation and devise creative solutions to how we define place, home, and art. The Interpretative Media Laboratory at the University of California, Los Angeles, for example, focuses on collective creativity and participatory design “as a way to bridge communities with a public design process for their own neighborhoods.”

Several of this year’s Roundtable panelists directly addressed the issue of community:

- **Director of Cultural Affairs for the city of San Jose** Kerry Adams Hapner talked about San Jose’s “creative place-making strategies” and how they arose from uniting nearby Silicon Valley’s groundbreaking technologies with local artists and arts organizations.
- **Principal of Media and Digital Strategies at Bloomberg Associates** Katherine Oliver addressed Mayor Bloomberg’s role in marketing and advancing the arts and technology on various levels in New York City, including politics, education, and the economy.

**The communities online**
More than half the adults in the U.S. participate in the arts through electronic and digital media, many of them building and restructuring a wide range of communities around these intersecting spheres of influence. New technologies have democratized how individuals make and access art, translating some creative communities into online commercial ventures. Social media makes possible art activism on a scale and at a speed that used to be unimaginable.

Roundtable panelists provided a number of salient examples:

- **Musician Ben Folds** spoke about leveraging his extensive social media following to make a direct appeal that ultimately saved an historic music studio in Nashville.
- **MIT researcher Sasha Constanza-Chock**, who specializes in how online social movements, media, and communications affect local and global communities, shared his work on VozMob, a mobile media project created for and by immigrant and low-wage workers in the Los Angeles area.
- **Etsy Vice President of Values and Impact Matt Stinchcomb** discussed how the founders integrated technology into their business model to help translate the Maker Movement into a vast online marketplace.

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Technology as art/in art

Many of the most progressive visual artists now use technology to shape and enhance their work, reach broader audiences, and bring people together.

- Media artist Scott Snibbe spoke about his creation of online apps to make accessible creative tools related to music and video, and put the means of production directly into the hands of millions.
- Visual artist Doug Aitken discussed how he devised Song One—a piece of “liquid architecture” at the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC—as a “cultural campfire” that would engage a broad cross-section of the community.

The intersection of art and technology has created a “new normal”—a society that thrives on the untested potential of innovation and risk taking. This ongoing integration continues to break ground for new audiences, new art forms, new artistic discourse, and ultimately new conceptions of art itself.

Summary of Outcomes and Recommendations

Based on the discussions that took place over the three days of the Roundtable, the group devised recommendations in three areas as a means to integrate technology into advocacy for the arts:

Brand and market the change:

1. Create a “Creativity Quotient” (or “CQ”) campaign to effect potent messaging, awareness, and education of the arts
   - Devise new language
   - Create a Twitter hashtag
   - Disseminate using video and other tech platforms

2. Design a graphic symbol of “a Creativity Pyramid” for the arts
   - Incorporate a tag line
   - Inspire research studies
   - Develop a dedicated team of real-time “game runners”

Establish community-building strategies through technology in the public sector:

3. Build a network of libraries as community labs: AFTA and The Institute of Museum and Library Services can collaborate

4. Source tech groups to build an app that will find communities and compile the resources they need

Connect with funding opportunities leading private investment:

5. Create a fund for artists to support entrepreneurial ideas within one year.
   - Yield a dozen projects that offer access to a dynamic community, whose world-changing ideas need the reach and the scale to be realized
• Applicants should make slide presentations and demonstrations in lieu of grant applications.

6. Create a team to flesh out the criteria for the fund and provide support for mentorship and resources.

Roundtable Panels and Presentations

Three panel presentations and one case study provided a 360-degree perspective on the interface of technology and the arts, from our earliest innovations as a species to the most cutting-edge apps, art installations, community interventions, and media labs.

These observations also built upon discussions held at the 2014 Americans for the Arts Leadership Roundtable, held in June with the Sun Valley arts community. The subject of that gathering was “The Arts + Technology: A Transformative Interface.”

Panel: Technology as a Medium

Moderator:
Kerry Brougher, Founding Director, Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

Panelists:
• Doug Aitken, Visual Artist
• Bob Ezrin, Producer, Stillwater Music
• Chris Milk, Artist, Director and Photographer
• Scott Snibbe, Media Artist and CEO, Eyegroove

Panel highlights:
• Cinema’s charting a path with technology
• The use of “liquid architecture” by Doug Aiken
• How technology evolved in step with music
• Apps as art
• Should the “back end” be disguised?

Introduction: The lens of cinema

“The categories we used to talk about don’t hold as well now. Things have come together like never before.”

—Moderator Kerry Brougher

Brougher formerly served as chief curator, deputy director and interim director of the Smithsonian Institution’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; director of the Museum of Modern Art Oxford, UK; and curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

By way of introducing the four artists on the panel, Brougher opened the Roundtable’s first session with an overview of technology’s influence on film as well as its broader impact on art, including how it drives the process of creation. He observed that the breakdown between art forms through technology began back in the 19th century, and continued into the 20th, when “in cinema we have seen the faster lens, faster film stocks, better sound and color, and later the wide screen, Cinerama, and 3D.”. Brougher noted that film has now expanded into all realms and environments. “Many of our panelists have brought art out of the theater and out into the world,” he said, “onto computers, iPhones, and giant LED screens.”

Creating art to be interactive
Doug Aitken does film sound and installations and photography, using digital technology against buildings. He received a 2013 Smithsonian American Ingenuity Award.

Aitken spoke about three of his installation projects:

- **Song 1** (2012; dougaitkensong1.com) is a 360-degree projection onto the Hirshhorn Museum building in Washington, DC. “I was interested in moving off the screen,” Aitken said. “I tried to break down distance between the viewer and the content. We took an exhibition and turned it inside out. In continually remaking the song ‘I Only Have Eyes for You,’ it is following the connectivity of a society.”

- **Mirror** (2013; viewable on YouTube) is a permanent art installation for the façade of the Seattle Art Museum. “This takes the moving image and pours it into living space, he says. “I wanted to allow the viewer to manipulate the work itself. The building ‘senses’ a viewer walking by at midnight and is constantly changing.”

- **Station to Station** (2014; stationtostation.com) is a series of happenings by an evolving group of artists, musicians, and performers, created over 24 days traveling 4,000 miles by train from the Atlantic to the Pacific. (Also the subject of a feature film that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2015.) “In response to restlessness with communication and culture, we wanted to see things cross-pollinate,” Aitken said. “Station to Station presents a proactive, nomadic platform for change that does not require an institution.”

A brief history of music technology

Bob Ezrin is one of the top producers of music and film, with a career spanning four decades. In addition to co-producing the concept albums of Pink Floyd, among many others, he founded Enigma Digital, an innovative digital radio provider.
Ezrin shared his unique perspective on how the development of music followed step by step from our technological evolution as a species. “First was our own vocal chords,” he began. “Then we found something on the ground and made percussion. We cut sticks and made holes, placed blades of grass between lips. We created regulated pitch, and learned if we strung the sticks, it made another pitch.”

With the breakthroughs of the pianoforte and then the pipe organ, Ezrin said, “one human could play with the power of an entire orchestra.” Electricity, he noted, represented another breakthrough—making it possible to continue to hear music after the performance had concluded. Ezrin spoke to how mixing gave birth to “a whole new way of making music,” given that one person could use the technology to make all the sounds himself. “Later it became possible for one person to build an entire album,” he said. “And now the basic studio is a laptop with little mixers and one microphone. We can create musical landscapes on the fly.”

**Making apps that make art**

An interactive media artist, Scott Snibbe makes work that is designed to create interactive opportunities. Founder/CEO of the social music video startup Eyegroove, he also helped create the digital special effects and editing software After Effects, which was subsequently acquired by Adobe. *Biophilia*, his collaboration with musician Bjork, was the first computer application to enter the collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

Snibbe describes that his “whole life has been devoted to technology,” and he opened by touching on two pieces of technology: sheet music and the LP—which he described as a “transmedia format that used all of your senses.” “Originally you were ‘stuck’ listening to an album on the floor in your living room,” Snibbe proposed. “It was like a first date—an experience we don’t have anymore. What we lost with the album was the falling in love with it. Now we just kind of hook up with it.”

Snibbe said Apple’s App Store changed his life, because it made it possible to distribute the programs he developed and provided him with the exposure that led to several more interesting collaborations:

- **Gravilux** (2010), an interactive software art that integrates elements of gaming and science ([snibbestudio.com/gravilux](http://snibbestudio.com/gravilux)).
- **Bubble Harp** (2010), draws bubbles around your fingertips on a screen, records and replays your movements, and creates music based on the animation ([snibbestudio.com/bubbleharp](http://snibbestudio.com/bubbleharp)).

“Music is about the translation within our soul to something that transcends the technology we used to make it.”

—Bob Ezrin
• **Bjork’s *Biophilia* (2011),** the world’s first album released as an app—a multimedia exploration of music, nature, and technology. ([snibbestudio.com/category/biophilia](http://snibbestudio.com/category/biophilia)). “We built on Bjork’s feeling that technology could bring you closer to nature,” Snibbe said. “She knew early that the algorithms change the kind of music you can make. The album is a galaxy and the songs are a constellation.”

• **Rework (2012),** an app album of Phillip Glass remixes produced by Glass and Beck ([snibbestudio.com/rework](http://snibbestudio.com/rework)). “The project is based on the idea that every song has an abstract visualization,” observed Snibbe. “You can sit back and watch the album, or you can lean forward and take part.”

• **Eyegroove (2014),** an app that allows users to create their own 19-second music videos with easy-to-use tools ([www.eyegroove.com](http://www.eyegroove.com)).

Snibbe concluded with reflections on how he has leveraged technology to transform the user’s experience of music. “Twitter took the sentence and made it amazing,” he said. “I’ve tried to create project-based experiences that people can be a part of and share easily.” He noted that, still, even with the advances we have made, the investment and time and expertise for his apps remains high. “Each one of these projects is hellishly difficult to produce,” Snibbe said. “A musician working in his studio is simple, but building one of these interactive experiences is hard.”

**Concluding reflections: Exposing technology**

The group discussed how art has evolved, given the impact of these profound technological advances. Brougher observed that, traditionally, when watching a movie, the projector was behind us; “we knew it was back there, but not really how it was operating,” he said. “An ‘artwork’ used to be something you didn’t touch. There was a space between you and it, and now that space is dropping away.”

“As a purist, when it comes to film, I think the technology should be in the background,” noted Robert Redford. “I don’t want to look into a projector—I’m just happy with what it does. Rather than talk about how we [as filmmakers] created the work, it’s simply there for the audience to experience it.” He admitted that this perspective was old-fashioned, but he expressed concern that “technology may take us further and further away from the more humanistic experience.”

Brougher expanded upon this idea, asking whether there is a point where the magic ceases if the technology is revealed too much. “This raises the whole idea of process in art making,” he said. “How deep do you go in unmasking the technology that underlies the art? Is that interaction part of the work?”

“**We can have a sense of gain and loss that comes with technology. What do we give up when we move forward? Or are all the forms fading away and then coming together as some other art form?”**

—Kerry Brougher

“**This is the time of great disruption, but also of great opportunity.”**

- Robert Redford
Panel: Art and Technology as a Strategic Approach to Community Building and Education

**Moderator:**
*Bill O’Brien,* Senior Advisor for Program Innovation, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

**Panelists**
*Kerry Adams Hapner,* Director of Cultural Affairs, City of San Jose
*Sasha Costanza-Chock,* Assistant Professor of Civic Media, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
*Katherine Oliver,* Principal, Media and Digital Strategies, Bloomberg Associates

**Panel highlights:**
- Technology-rich NEA partnerships and initiatives
- Using technology to rebrand San Jose
- Open-source platforms give voice to L.A.’s immigrant communities
- Lessons from New York City’s Bloomberg Administration

**Introductory remarks: Action at the federal level**

Bill O’Brien opened the session with the observation that we have allowed public schools to be drained of funding devoted to innovation and creativity—which has been such a critical aspect of our country’s success. Simultaneously, he said, we face the challenge of integrating STEM effectively into the curriculum.

“So we must ask,” said O’Brien, “how does this integration of art and technology look? And more broadly, how do we help industry to [recognize the importance of putting] creativity back into [how we train] the American worker?” He emphasized the need to be “players in the conversation, even at the federal level, about the need to harness these opportunities [to foster] creativity and imagination.”

O’Brien further observed that, in focusing on the search for “the next Steve Jobs,” the media covers how businesses invest to stimulate innovation and competitiveness, such as in small business and bringing design into product development.

O’Brien touched on NEA-led conversations happening at the national level on the integration of the arts and technology:
The NEA Chair Jane Chu recently emphasized the themes of connection and community—to showcase how the arts and creativity intersect with people’s daily lives—and the potential to reach people where they are and devise strategies [for how to bring our resources] to them.”

—Bill O’Brien, NEA

NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership Initiative, a collaboration with the Department of Defense, investigates the impact of creative arts therapies as a formal medical protocol in the healing process for veterans with PTSD at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. Participants report that these “art interventions” help to accelerate the healing process, said O’Brien. “The catharsis has a marked outcome in bringing intellectual clarity to emotional chaos.”

Supporting smart design to rebuild after Hurricane Sandy, the NEA has partnered with the President’s Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force to devise REBUILD BY DESIGN, a regional competition to develop innovative projects that will protect and enhance communities impacted by the hurricane. CNN called this effort one of the “top 10 stories of 2013.”

NEA collaborations with the Santa Fe Institute to convene scientists and artists to consider the essential component of creativity in context of mapping the complex systems of the brain.

San Jose’s Interactive Public Art
Director of Cultural Affairs Kerry Adams Hapner introduced how the city of San Jose—the social center of Silicon Valley—is using art and technology to bring people together, as the downtown area transforms from suburban to urban. San Jose has undertaken a wealth of cultural initiatives and community engagement projects, including an art and technology festival that flooded the local economy with some $20 million in revenue “How do we celebrate the authenticity of Silicon Valley?” she said, “[given that] it’s not on a map—it’s more of a state of mind. One strategy is to utilize the arts to reflect on Silicon Valley’s unique aspirations.”

Hapner described several works of public art that provide opportunities for Interaction:

- **The Idea Tree** (2013), a permanent and participatory work at the convention center, crowd-sources by collecting the spoken ideas of citizens and then remixing and sharing them to create an evolving soundscape.
- **eCLOUD** (2010) uses weather data from around the world to drive the appearance of a cascading chandelier by changing the opacity of the glass.
- **Space Observer** (2010) is a 26-foot robot that welcomes visitors at the airport.
- **Zero1**—a Silicon Valley nonprofit that explores the intersection of art, technology, and digital culture—opened up the “Zero1 garage” space in downtown San Jose, where it hosts the ZERO1 Biennial exhibition.
- In 2013 Zero1 commissioned **ANTIVJ** to create an interactive, pedestrian-oriented wayfinding system as part of San Jose Public Art’s “Illuminating Downtown Project.” Users can use their mobile platforms to change the displays, which project light to create map installations.
- Drivers can interact with a mural called **Sensing You**. As you walk beneath the overpass, LED lighting elements change colors in response to the volume of pedestrian traffic.

“There is an expectation in San Jose that people can curate and change their own experiences [of public art].”

—Kerry Adams Hapner
The temporary installation *Particle Falls* (2010) advanced environmental stewardship by using laser lights on the side of a building to help viewers visualize particles of air pollution. The work changed colors in real time depending on data about fluctuating pollution levels.

**Bridging the Digital Divide**

In the media studies department at MIT, Sasha Costanza-Chock works with the community to develop what he called “new tools for civil action.” He spoke about his experience in Los Angeles working with immigrant rights organizations.

1. **The challenge: Helping immigrants take charge of their narrative**

Costanza-Chock shared that, because new communities of low-wage immigrants have limited access to technology (Internet, broadband, or smart phones) than any other communities in the U.S., they are marginalized and excluded from the exciting possibilities for self-narration. People who are unfamiliar with these communities were shaping any broader narrative about them, he said, rather than the new immigrants being empowered to tell their own stories.

2. **The solution: The Mobile Voices (VozMob) platform**

Individuals in these immigrant communities did have inexpensive mobile phones, Costanza-Chock learned, which they could use for SMS and voicemail. “This meant they could also take pictures,” he said, “but they weren’t.” Between 2008 and 2010, a team of day laborers, immigrants, researchers, developers, and volunteers collaborated to build Mobile Voices (VozMob) through an ongoing, collaborative design process. This platform, using open-source software, enables VozMob users to create an account through voicemail and call in stories or send picture messages.

3. **The impact: Dissemination and wider applications**

VozMob has become a powerful program containing thousands of stories from members of these Los Angeles communities, which the Spanish-speaking press now covers routinely. As the project become more widely recognized—even earning the 2010 United Nations-sponsored World Summit Award for innovative mobile applications in the "m-Inclusion & Empowerment" category—“Other organizations then came to us and asked if they could use the service,” Costanza-Chock said. A team at MIT’s Center for Civic Media put together VOJO, a mobile blogging platform, to let other groups share their stories. VOJO has since been used to create:

- **Sandy Storyline**: a collaborative documentary of stories and relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.
- **Erase the Border**: a web campaign and voice petition platform for immigration reform using the story of the Tohono O’odham people.
- **21 Days of Questions, 365 Days of Action**: part of the Cambridge Campaign Against Domestic Violence, which expanded the community dialogue by inviting questions via calls or texts, using the VOJO technology.
Costanza-Chock has written a book, *Out of the Shadows, into the Streets!: Transmedia Organizing and the Immigrant Rights Movement* (2014) about using these technologies to bring these and other voices out into the open.

**Bloomberg’s Initiatives in New York City**

Katherine Oliver, who leads the media and digital strategies team at Bloomberg Associates (BA), and was formerly Commissioner of the Mayor’s office of Media and Entertainment, described the philanthropic consulting firm as a startup, where technology runs across the organization. “Externally,” she said, “we’re looking where the jobs economy and the startup community intersect.”

Oliver’s goal as Commissioner of New York City’s Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment (2002–13) was to attract and retain jobs, and they started looking into educational programs. “With film and technology, the population was very white and male,” Oliver said, “which was mostly a question of people not being able to find inroads into technology and media.” The office addressed that by partnering with academic institutions and technology industries.

**Marketing “Made in NY”**

Oliver spoke to the concept of branding. “When we started, nobody was making movies in New York City [anymore],” she said. “But there was so much local pride, and people asked what the mayor was going to do to bring the film [industry] back. We needed to reward all of the production efforts.” In response, the City came up with a marketing strategy to put the city-based initiatives back on the map.

The “Made in NY” logo was designed to look like a manhole cover. “It really did strike a chord of finding the right words and messaging,” Oliver said. “It got guerilla-style product placement and went viral.” The tech community started to use it, and it got additional exposure at the South by Southwest (SXSW) music festival.

The film industry’s embracing the logo as a grass roots initiative led to several other initiatives:

- The nonprofit **“Made in NY” Production Assistant Training Program** offers training and placed more than 500 people as production assistants in the film industry, creating a pipeline to help film crews hire PAs for their productions.
- The **Made in NY Media Center** is a 20,000-square-foot multi-disciplinary space in Brooklyn, built to connect professionals from digital media and independent film with the tech community and other industries. **Independent Filmmaker Project** (IFP) runs and programs this initiative as an incubator, collaborative workspace, and exhibition venue.

“Over 50% of the population is living in cities, and mayors don’t have the resources for media and technology. Bloomberg Associates wants to help cities adapt by providing mayors with grants and advice on how to improve services and transparency.”

-Katherine Oliver
**Educational Initiatives**

“Education has been a critical part of the effort in New York—It goes hand and hand with our work with partners in the community and in the tech industry.”
—Katherine Oliver

To attract world-class engineering, which in turn sparks expansion of the New York’s engineering industry, the City strived to help ensure that students are college-ready, Oliver said. One means to achieve this is to train teachers. A program in the Office of Postsecondary Readiness within the New York City Department of Education called Digital Ready focuses on professional development to help teachers develop their knowledge and ability to teach these topics effectively.

Although there were 30 high schools with film and television programs, Oliver noted that they were difficult to roll out because they did not have state certification. The City gained more traction with after school programs; the cultural organizations that ran the programs would then try to partner with the schools. For example:

- Ghetto Film School (GFS) teaches kids to make films by partnering them with Hollywood experts.
- GFS partners with The Cinema School, which focuses on media and technology, to help creative young people share their art. Initiated in Brooklyn, GFS later expanded to Los Angeles (GFSLA).

During the discussion, the National Association for Makers of Music's Mary Luehrsen inquired about any related political issues related to the interaction between Bloomberg’s initiatives and public schools. “Mr. Bloomberg was a proponent for the arts, which helped our cause a lot, and he had a degree of control in the City’s public education system,” Oliver said. “There is more of a disconnect in cities where the mayor does not have the same degree of control.”

**Learning from experience**

BA has done work in five cities, including with London Mayor Boris Johnson to establish apprenticeships with the Centre for Creative and Social Technology (CAST). From each initiative BA strives to identify the most effecting teaching practices. “The best way to bring the community together,” Oliver said, “is to use media and technology to bring about programs in a cost-efficient way.” She noted that the Mayor’s office partnered with Tribeca and J.P. Morgan Chase to create these programs, and concluded by addressing the real-world budgetary concerns of implementation.

“Private-public partnerships are so important, because the public sector can’t do it alone. This does not necessarily mean writing a check; it can be creating programs or writing curriculum.”
—Katherine Oliver

**Concluding insights: Translating lessons into action**

Bill O’Brien noted the opportunity to focus on K–12 education, as well as develop a research network in arts education, to build bigger projects and better inform policy. He cited the U.S. Department of Education, the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), and the National Science Foundation NSF as interested parties.
There was a conversation about how terminology impacts this kind of advocacy work. “Is the word ‘art’ politically charged?” asked Google’s Robert Wong. “Is it [perceived as] not a pressing matter? Should we separate art from the notion of ‘creative readiness’ [for the workplace]?”

Panelist Kerry Adams Hapner observed, “We need to do better talking about how the arts allow kids to [succeed] in later parts of their lives. In a political environment [like San Jose], where there are a lot of competing interests, loaded [issues arise] when the unions see a candidate for mayor talking about ‘art’.”

Jennifer Cole, executive director of the Metro Nashville Arts, 4 addressed the issue of dissemination. “In more rural areas, the goal is to [fix] the log jam with funding,” she said. “One issue is the lack of funding from the state arts commission for new media. As coalitions form, there is an opportunity to figure out where funding can [be directed].”

Case Study: Save Studio A—How the Fate of One Historic Studio Galvanized an Entire Global Community

Presenters:
Ben Folds, Singer, songwriter, and philanthropist
Sharon Corbitt-House, Co-Manager, Ben Folds; Co-Owner, HouseKopp Management, LLC
Mike Kopp, Co-Manager, Ben Folds; Partner, MMA Creative; Co-Owner, HouseKopp Management, LLC

Case study highlights:
• A space steeped in history
• Leveraging a million followers
• Going viral leads to victory
• Social media campaign best practices

One issue at the forefront of how to advocate for the arts effectively is swiftly building a community of support. As advocates and policymakers implement the use of technology into their efforts, it is essential to learn from successful grass roots campaigns that went viral. Ben Folds took the time to describe his recent success using social media to leverage support and ultimately engage the mainstream press—all sparked by a personal appeal made directly to his fans.

Overview: An historic landmark
In 2002 Ben Folds came across the RCA Victor Studio in Nashville, which he described as a “legendary space that many didn’t know about—one of the best studios in the world, with a lot of history.” Built in 1965, the studio boasts an impressive history of recording artists, including Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley and The Beach Boys, and its builder was among the first to record African American artists. When Folds took over the lease more than a decade ago, the space was not highly valued, and more recently a developer purchased the building with the intention to demolish it.

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4 Cole participated in the discussion as part of the concurrent Executive Leadership Forum, which convened in concert with the National Arts Policy Roundtable.
Some have called Studio A “the Abbey Road of Tennessee,” while another responded that it was more than ‘Abbey Road is the Studio A of London.’ Five years ago Folds wanted to let other people experience the space. They began to document the history of the space and rewire things for full orchestra sessions. “Studio A gives musicians hope that they are standing on the shoulders of greater people,” said Sharon Corbitt-House. “It lifts them up creatively.” Mike Kopp emphasized that the campaign was about more than nostalgia. “Ben has done recordings in the studio with an 81-piece orchestra,” Kopp said. “That many artists working in and around this space has a significant economic impact.”

**A heartfelt online appeal**

What started with Folds posting a heartfelt letter to his followers exploded into a 13-week online campaign to save the studio. After more than a decade of using social media to build a dedicated base of nearly 1.5 million fans and followers, Folds made a simple appeal to his online community. (In early 2015 he had 618K “likes” on Facebook and 840K followers on Twitter, with a prolific 5,600 tweets since 2009.)

The groundswell built from a few simple measures—most of which Folds handled on his phone while on tour in Europe:

- A long [letter outlining the predicament](#), including a list of the more than 150 musicians, filmmakers, and other artists who had worked or recorded there.
- A direct, [first-hand approach](#) that Folds knew did not feel corporate to his fans and followers. “It all started by me saying, ‘There’s no middle man. Let’s have a transparent conversation.’” He added, “I don’t need to speak for an organization I’m free just to say what’s important to me.”
- A dedicated Facebook page for Studio A, featuring posts every time there was an event.
- A combination of [tweets and Facebook posts](#), with a message Folds’s fans quickly retweeted, leveraging their networks to disseminate it to a much larger pool.
- Creating the Twitter [hashtag](#) #SaveStudioA (later changed to #SaveMusicRow), to help build and track the online conversation and creating a dialogue.
- [Traction from other “connectors”](#)—Keith Urban (who penned an op ed in support), Dave Grohl, and even Paul McCartney—as well as the Rock and Roll Hall of fame and artists who had worked in Studio A. They retweeted Folds’s plea, and also tweeted and posted their own feelings to friends and followers.
- A [rally promoted exclusively on social media](#), in lieu of invitations or press releases. (It took place on June 30, 2014.)
- A [clean campaign](#). Despite correspondence from the developer that Kopp described as “snarky,” Folds was insistent that in response they resist the urge to say anything negative, instead staying on message about their objective: to preserve a piece of history.

“It’s about figuring out how to rally people who are already on fire about saving arts and finding funding. If we had tried to script it and push it, then it would not have happened. Rather than asking [them] come to the website and give money, it’s about [tapping into] one thing [your community is] passionate about.”

—Ben Folds
A campaign goes viral
Kopp, who has a background in politics, shared that within a day or two the media was playing catch-up—first the national and then the local media, circling back to the grass roots campaign. “Once the national TV networks media picked up on the change of the conversation, the media hit on all the points you’d want for an arts advocacy campaign,” he said.

In a matter of a few days, the developer requested that they stop the social media campaign; he had received 3,000 emails, including a death threat. (At the time of the Roundtable, the outcome was unclear, but the campaign ultimately succeeded. Three preservationists completed the $5.6 million purchase of the historic property in December 2014.)

A sustained impact

“The dialogue online began to be about—beyond one building—what else in the culture should be saved or enhanced.”
—Mike Kopp

Kopp spoke to the impact of the campaign on the music scene in Nashville. “Over the years in Nashville the community has been relocated or dispersed,” he said. “But now—all of the sudden—there was so much buzz about it in Nashville, people in the community were talking to each other again.” People began to tweet their stories on what Studio A means to them.

Kopp reported that this has now taken on a life of its own, independent of Folds. The timing meant that Nashville was about to enter an election cycle, and this campaign influenced a group of political individuals who embrace this dialogue and are eager to have an impact.

The initiative also crosses traditional boundaries. Since the Nashville music community has become reengaged, a coalition has developed around the music industry. “Working class professionals want to be a part of a group that will talk to city planners and government officials about ways to save the arts culture in Nashville,” says Kopp. “This was not a part of the original plan.”

Folds said the public now knows him as much for his preservation efforts as for his music. “A Korean immigrant who was delivering room service at my hotel thanked me for ‘saving studios,’ he said. “[I’m fascinated by] how he even knew about this initiative.”

Concluding insights: Emerging “best practices” of an effective social media campaign

As a follow-up to the case study presentation, Roundtable facilitator David Grant focused the group on the tasks of helping “our host organizations” with what should happen next in terms of technology. “Let’s focus on where we’re headed [and] things that are action oriented,” he said.

“While the ‘Technology as Medium’ panel (see page XX) showcased the promise of technology,” said Robert Lynch, “this panel shows us the community application and talks about using technology for action to get things done.” Participants expanded upon these ideas in depth, as well as during Saturday’s breakout sessions (see page XX.)
Harnessing star power

“Groups can generate [energy] around a subject, but it takes trust and belief in somebody like Ben Folds to [create the] spark,” musician Kenna observed. “We always need a champion. One would say Trayvon Martin [became] the celebrity [for social justice].”

Matt Jacobson cited the example of the ice bucket challenge to raise awareness of ALS—another good case study of a grassroots initiative that became a huge success. “Celebrities followed [in that campaign],” he said. Robert Lynch noted what he called a” sub-base of activists within the tech world.” “We can aim towards people who will take action,” he said.

Keri Putnam of Sundance Institute asked how organizations that don’t have a celebrity to represent them can develop that “authentic voice” that Ben Folds provided. Kenna reiterated the importance of that authenticity. “You [should] be sincere, but also specific and intentional.”

Google’s Robert Wong added, “You don’t have to be a celebrity; [simply giving voice to a passion] can bring people out. Companies tend to be so watered down [in their messaging], but the most powerful voices are the individuals who serve as ambassadors.”

Social media as community connector

“Having a passionate individual is important, but having a strong community around the person is just as important—maybe even more so. It’s a group of people responding to micro-aggressions. Facebook [and other forms of social media] allow communities to talk to one another.”

—Eden Girma, 2014 Roundtable Fellow

MIT’s Sasha Costanza-Chock noted that a lot of movements are effective without a celebrity—and often are spearheaded by local individuals. “Everyday people go out there and put themselves on the line,” she said. Bill O’Brien added, “You need a target that people care about and to build a narrative that is focused on that target,” as opposed to a narrative that is overtly part of an “arts agenda.”

Crafting the narrative and changing paradigms

“How do you raise your voice slightly above all the noise and the other voices [in the culture]? For your voice to be heard, you need to be clear in the story you want to tell and use a symbol you [have chosen]. In terms of storytelling, what is the symbol that will make people [take notice] and ask ‘What is that?’”

—Robert Redford
The challenge we have is to change the conversation—and the current paradigm—about creativity. The term ‘creativity’ had been worn out. People perceive themselves as either creative or not.

—Marty Albertson

Choosing language carefully:
- Kenna noted that the presentation changed how he thinks about the words we’re using. “Too often we communicate with people on the subject of art, without expanding our definition of the word ‘art’.”
- In developing a compelling narrative for advocacy, Aetna’s Floyd Green advised language that promotes a sense of unity. “We must find words that [will bring] us together rather than separate us,” he said, “[just as] we must be mindful to use technology in a way that binds us.”
- Touching on the power of technology and online communications to shape and even transform our experience of the world, Green cited the examples of the viral stardom of singer Susan Boyle on YouTube and the role of social media in sparking and organizing the 2011 protests in Egypt.

- Mary Luehrsen of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) emphasized the importance of being “relentlessly positive”—which she said has resonated with the NAMM coalition—despite the fact that “We don’t always hear about it.”
- “We want to make sure to use language of abundance rather than that of scarcity,” offered Costanza-Chock. “You fail when you do [the latter]. And it is precisely those communities without access to [these resources/this technology] that are often the most brilliant.”

Albertson continued, “The skill set of improvisation provides a continuity between the arts and technology, and that skill set comes naturally to a lot of people here.” He noted that Ben Folds improvised how he used technology to solve a problem and in the process created something different. “One approach to reaching those who don’t perceive themselves as creative is to ask, ‘Do you have the skills to improvise?’” Matt Stinchcomb weighed in based on his experience of leading the paradigm changes at Etsy.

Robert Lynch concluded the discussion by placing the Save Studio A campaign in a broader context (which Sunday’s breakout sessions would address directly; see page XX.) “Using technology [within a community to disseminate] information is one way to take action and get things done,” said Lynch. “Public sector action is another, and taking action in the private sector is still another.”
Panels: The Dynamics of Creative Culture in the Digital Age

Moderator: Matt Jacobson, Head of Market Development, Facebook

Panelists: Tracy Fullerton, experimental game designer for clients including Microsoft, MTV, and Sony; professor, Electronic Arts Endowed Chair in Interactive Entertainment, and Director of the Game Innovation Lab (housed within the Interactive Media & Games Division, School of Cinematic Arts), University of Southern California (USC).

Kenna, creative, producer, musician, and tech & social innovator

Matt Stinchcomb, Vice President, Values and Impact, Etsy

Robert Wong, Chief Creative Officer, Google Creative Lab, Google

Panel highlights:

- Facebook’s drives forward
- Aggregating in-person and online campaigns
- Creativity is king at Google
- Etsy’s progressive view of online business

Introduction: Technology as platform

Matt Jacobson opened the session by describing technology as an enabling distribution platform, including:

- Instagram for photography
- SoundCloud for audio content
- YouTube for video (and Google’s promotion of YouTube celebrities)

He shared that at Facebook they are working with Oculus Rift headsets, which were designed by Chris Milk, as a virtual reality platform for people to work from. “How we do things comes down to an ideology that we just care more about this [idea] than anyone else.” He continued, “People need to look at art as very aspirational,” using the oft-cited example of the iPhone: “a commodity [for communication] that is also [features] beautiful [design].”

Jacobson invited the panelists to engage in a though experiment that he does routinely, in the form of letters he writes to himself in the future. “I try to answer the question: “On December 31 in the year 20XX, what are your goals? How will you achieve those goals?”

Kenna’s climb to aggregate support

In response to Jacobson’s question, Kenna said, “By 2015, I hope . . . to have climbed Kilimanjaro for the 4th time. Hopefully . . . with a campaign to get a number of my peers [involved].” He added that everything he’s worked towards—even outside the music industry—was to serve something creative.

“Mark Zuckerberg never thought that he would [be the one to] build this [social media platform]—it’s just that nobody else built it. These things become a force of nature when you have a pure vision, and technology [is essential] to spread the message.”

—Matt Jacobson
To engage this change, Kenna built an online, interactive social gaming platform called “Summit Seeker,” to support the Summit on the Summit initiative/campaign. “It’s about thinking differently,” he says. “I treated the project like an album,” Kenna said. Production and promotion included:

- **using social media** to create opportunities, especially Facebook and twitter. “Using the language that I used to speak to friends [gave me] this audience,” Kenna said. “It’s the Archimedes principle: Give me a platform large enough and a lever big enough, and I can move the world.”
- **seeking support from brands and partners** that he felt are “the Medicis” in terms of acting as patrons/investors. (For his second climb he garnered financial support from Target.)
- **looking for distribution**, including having MTV agree to fund a documentary about the project.

“Many in the creative middle class are in their own world, and the only way they will hear you is to engage the things they like using the technology of social media. It’s campaigning—we have to find a way to run for the president of the United States of Arts. For me a lot of advocacy has come together in utilizing aggregation to make daisy cutters—until there is detonation. I was able to [leverage] my friendships, but the future is really in aggregating your efforts.

—Kenna

Reverse-engineering creativity at Google

Robert Wong began with a story of “building a road [at Google] with an engineer, a businessman, and artists.” He noted that, although as a company Google is driven by engineering, the new CEO had called for a change and decided that the next main focus would be **beauty**—which required that Google re-brand itself. “People use Google everyday, and they take it for granted,” Wong said. “So we tried to remind people while they love Google—that it’s not about the quality of the search, but about improving the quality of life.”

**Leveraging the artist’s skill set**

Google has begun not only to actively hire artists, but also to invite its teams to focus on their creativity in their process of developing a product. “The higher up the managers are at Google, the more they make decisions in a way that integrates and reinforces that creativity,” Wong said, “telling their teams, ‘Just create what you want.’”
“Innovations don’t really happen a whole [lot],” Wong continued. “Any complex institution needs to understand what users will experience with their senses, and then to make it come to life—to try that future on for size. It will rally people together, [and] the ability to create those artifacts is powerful; people react to it viscerally.”

Telling stories as part of R&D
Wong talked about The Fiction of the Science, a video Wong’s team created for the Future of Storytelling summit (October 2013) that illustrates a kind of technology-enabled storytelling on your desktop. With regards to the creation of Google Glass,

Wong said:
• “We made a video [about what the technology could do]—just pretended [we had something that worked just the way] the engineers would want it [to work]. [When we showed them the video,] it got a standing ovation.”
• “In response to the video, engineers decided to scrap everything and make exactly what [was in] the video. Since then, engineers have been [following that process].”
• The video made his team of Google Creatives “proud and crystallized why they love Google so much.”

Shaping a new generation
A new project at Google is 30 Weeks, a school that offers designers the skills they need into founders of tech start-ups. “We are changing the [tradition] of kids coming out of a liberal arts college,” Wong says. He hopes they can “open source the school,” so that anyone who is interested can take part.

“I’ve begun to believe that everything is just made up—whether it’s one person or a group of people: Just make it up, and it will become possible. Right now is an amazing time for people in the arts to have a dramatic effect on the world.”

—Robert Wong
Keeping Etsy’s creative marketplace creative

With a background in music rather than in business or marketing, Stinchcomb shared that from the start, he and his co-founders wanted to do something different with Etsy. They started the company in 2005 by developing a small, simple idea in an unconventional way: creating a website where anyone could sell their handmade goods. Etsy used technology to do much more than drive sales of their own screenprinting products: to create a much wider and diverse marketplace, with a group of stakeholders that would expand exponentially.

A rapid online ascent
Etsy’s business model is to benefit not just its stockholders, but all of its stakeholders—the artists and craftspeople who use the site to sell and market their handmade goods. This booming online marketplace quickly became a mainstream online commerce sensation.

By May 2007 gross sales exceeded $1.7 million, and from there the company grew even faster. By early 2008 Etsy had fifty employees, over 650,000 members, and a marketplace with over 120,000 sellers in 127 countries. Sales in 2013 totaled $1.35 billion.

Building on a broader vision
Stinchcomb said the more they learned about “business as usual,” the more “brutal” they thought it was. “We could go a [different] route that would make us a lot of money,” he said. “But [we know that] those selling [their products on our site] wouldn’t like [that approach] very much.” How the leadership talked about the company changed over time. “We want to build community and not just sell stuff,” he said. “And community is the key to our survival—and to human satisfaction.”

Stinchcomb said that, in response, he began in 2012 to “reimagine commerce,” inspired in part by [scholar Pamela] Shoemaker’s work [and the concept of “media gatekeeping”—how information is filtered for dissemination]. He was drawn to the idea of using technology to “build [not just the business, but] the world in an economic way.”

If we want to create this abundance, then we need to shift the consciousness that underlies business. [We see] creative business as an ecosystem where all the individuals are interdependent. The abundance exists in the edges. If you start with the individual, [you can scale up into a] huge business.”

—Matt Stinchcomb

Putting theory into action
Stinchcomb emphasized that Etsy builds upon the existing skills already in the marketplace. “We found that people just needed [the right] platforms,” he said. Etsy uses technology to strengthen existing connections and create connections where they don’t already exist. He gave examples of how their business model now supports this mission:
• **Etsy Teams** is a community feature that provides tools to enable members to connect with one another. These can be organized locally, or be global.

• An Etsy program called **Craft Entrepreneurship** offers low-income makers (individuals and small businesses) entrepreneurial training, through classes in several cities on how to turn craft skills into supplemental income.

**Storytelling through games: A tide that lifts all boats**

As a game developer, Tracy Fullerton shared that she thinks about the world in terms of opportunities for play. Currently, she says, these opportunities are owned by a particular set of people, who are not diverse—and only make play for themselves. “Opportunities for play are not based in any sort of technology,” she said. “They have been a part of human culture as long as storytelling.

Fullerton’s work at USC has been to make what she calls “playful interventions in important areas” with diverse peoples. A decade ago she created an academic program to make games, and now she says, “We open their minds and think about play as an important part of culture.”

When said that when she tells people she makes games, they think she means violent video games like *Call of Duty*. The games she presented allow the player to explore spiritual and environmental topics and ideas. Her work at USC has included developing this new breed of games, including:

• **Cloud**, which has had more than a million downloads.

• **Journey**, which was named Game of the Year in 2013 at the Design Innovate Communicate Entertain (D.I.C.E.) awards. Fullerton describes it as “one of the most moving games I’ve ever played, and not one act of hostility” and noted that 2013 was the first time the industry ever recognized a game of that sort.

• **Walden**, which was inspired by Thoreau’s book and a visit Fullerton made to the place in Massachusetts where he composed the work.

“My goal has been to change [who owns opportunities for] play. I want to open up play, invite new voices, and [create] more diverse community of makers and players. This will make our relationships more tangible; it allows us to push and pull and discover things in new ways.”

—Tracy Fullerton

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5 See Fullerton quoted in Todd Martens, “USC Games Director Tracy Fullerton Pushes Boundaries, Touts Diversity,” *Los Angeles Times* (May 9, 2014): "USC has played a crucial and largely undocumented role in bringing more multiplicity to the game industry, both in terms of who is making games as well as the range in topics those games are exploring." Retrieved March 17 from [http://herocomplex.latimes.com/games/uscs-game-changer-tracy-fullerton-at-it-again/](http://herocomplex.latimes.com/games/uscs-game-changer-tracy-fullerton-at-it-again/)

Mary Luehrsen asked, “Where are we in [terms of] games replacing learning?” to which Fullerton responded, “Games will never replace teachers. Learning is about communities. It’s about when you are put in a situation where you [make mistakes] and so you grow. Sometimes it’s learning math tables, and sometimes it’s knowing that you have to sit down and do your work. I don’t think any form of media is going to replace a relationship that will encourage you in the process.”

“The great thing about learning games is not learning facts; [it’s that] you have to push against a system and take risks, and you put yourself in a situation to grow. Games are great at giving you a chance to practice around a subject that involves a type of hurt, [in a context] that doesn’t hurt that much.”
—Tracy Fullerton

Robert Lynch noted that Fullerton had introduced the “new concept of ‘procedural arts’—such as code—and that this needs to be included in the conversation about technology and the arts” when advocating for government support in various media. David Grant concluded the session with the observation that, “In terms of technology, we are operating in a world that is different from even two years ago.”

**Saturday’s Breakout Groups: Setting a Course for Action**

David Grant led Saturday’s team activity, which divided the participants into three breakout groups, organized by topics gleaned over the course of the weekend. He emphasized that the goal was “to capture the best thinking of all these folks stimulating each other.”

Based on the discussions that took place over the previous day and a half, Grant delineated three important areas for discussion on the topic of integrating technology into advocacy for the arts:

A. **Branding and marketing the change:** language and symbols to effect potent messaging, awareness, and education
B. **Community-building strategies through technology:** potential partners and opportunities in the public sector
C. **Connecting with funding opportunities:** leading to seed capital and private sector investment

The groups divided and spent time brainstorming, with the objective of devising specific assignments for working teams to carry out in the weeks and months to come. Grant instructed the groups to:

- “Think of a goal based on a broad interpretation of Americans for the Arts’ mission—All the arts for all the people.”
- “Make that goal manageable and reachable.”
- “If we are at the edge of the future, peer out over that edge. Ask: what is the goal that will take us there?”
- “What are the actions and steps we need to realize this goal?”

**Group A. Branding and marketing the change:**
Language and symbols to effect potent messaging, awareness, and education
Grant and Nora Halpern, AFTA’s vice president for leadership alliances, extracted the following topics from the groups’ brainstorming:

- **New language** (or new uses of language)
  - A vision of a highly effective group of art activists that know the language and how to use it to direct this conversation.
  - Storytelling, and ways to get these stories out to new and broader groups of people
- **Creating a symbol** [or celebrity driven campaign?], with the right amount of mystery, that advances the cause of the arts for America

**DISCUSSION:**

**Articulating the change**

Grant invited response to the broader question, “How do the words we use about the arts affect the way people understand them?”

- Randy Cohen, AFTA’s vice president of research and policy, asked: Given technology’s ability to sustain great ideas and passions, how can we harness power to keep our purpose alive and deliver the arts into education?
- Kenna emphasized the use of certain key terms in communicating the message: “innovation” and “entrepreneurship.”
- Keri Putnam proposed redefining the world “literacy.” “There are new literacies that we need to make available,” she said, “[and we can use] tools, metrics, and statistics to [advocate for] creativity.”
- Nora Halpern noted, “We are talking about all the arts, not just Americans for the Arts. We need to remember to think about things generally.”

**Devising a symbol**

- Robert Redford proposed a team devoted expressly to **develop an appropriate symbol** for arts advocacy work. Technology would be a platform to disseminate this symbol more widely.
- Scott Snibbe proposed a **hashtag as a symbol to unify** the advocacy movement.

**Getting the message out**

**“What’s the ice bucket challenge for the arts?”**

The group’s brainstorming made clear the need to devise new and creative uses of technology platforms for delivering the arts.

- Sharon Corbitt House suggested a working group that would **create short videos** of what we would like to see come to fruition “Calling for people to create these short videos [would help us] shift away from [celebrity] culture and [the focus on] only the few talented [individuals who] are ‘allowed’ to be artists,” she said. (An example is what Robert Wong has done at Google; see page XX).
- Nora Halpern mentioned participant Molly Logan’s School of Doodle program, a peer-to-peer, **self-directed learning lab** for high school–age girls.
ACTION ITEMS:
Tracy Fullerton spoke on behalf of the group, which determined the following ideas:

1. **Create a campaign** called “The CQ challenge,” asking, “Where is your CQ (Creativity Quotient)?”
   - **Devise a means to take it viral**
     - Interject a new meme into the arts
     - Leverage celebrity:
       - Target great people who can demonstrate their CQ
       - Target noteworthy individuals both within and outside of the arts who take the CQ challenge and reveal their CQ, e.g.: Stephen Colbert, etc., or a figure in sports who could take the CQ test and show acumen in music or collaboration or the art of the game
   - **Organize** an army of individuals, like the “ice bucket challenge” to launch the challenge and encourage others to join

Fullerton noted that part of the strategy would be to avoid a focus on whether your CQ is high or low—but rather to use it to show you your strengths. The idea was that “It would never be a bad thing to reveal your CQ.”

Marty Albertson noted, “We would like AFTA to involve everybody here to create the challenge,” in the same way that Kenna and Justin Timberlake created a coalition around the issue of clean water.

2. **Devise a symbol**—Robert Wong suggested a kind of “pyramid of creativity” (analogous to the food pyramid)—that showed us all of the kinds of creativity we should inject into our lives
   - Incorporate a playful tag line (“There’s meat behind this thing.”)
   - Create mapping and studies on overall creativity based on the pyramid premise
   - Develop the research, pyramid, and have a group of “game runners” who are launching moments and responding at real time.

Sasha Costanza-Chock invited the group to explore “new ways of thinking about technology as a greater endeavor or enterprise—the creation of technology as a creative process.” Scott Snibbe reiterated the idea that creativity could be in the design of any program the group devised.

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**Group B. Community-building strategies through technology:**
Leading to action in the public sector

Sarah Eaton, Sundance Institute’s director of media relations, reported the group’s proposals, which were to:

- Utilize technology as a creative process
- Build on a vision to use technology to **reinvent the original concept of community libraries as community creativity centers.**
- Create a media lab to **bring arts into a community**, then use technology to connect those communities out to other communities
• Bring these resources into a local community.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Build the network of libraries as community labs, through a combination of AFTA and The Institute of Museum and Library Services and other strategic partners
   • Reach out to libraries to talk about existing programs and potential partners.

2. Source tech groups to build an app that will help to build communities
   • Use the model that Mayor Cory Booker has made successful in Newark, NJ.
   • Form a target group pulled from those organizations to reach out to tech companies.
   • Work with the tech group to build the app and build resources for the community labs.

DISCUSSION:

Related reflections

• Bill O’Brien noted that schools have already reframed the library as “a media lab” and a “digital sandbox.”
• Floyd Green spoke of the importance of reinventing a community and helping an industry that is dying. “Just as ‘clinics’ are now ‘wellness centers,’ we are talking about making a library into an innovation lab.”
• Kerry Adams Hapner noted that libraries are already established in a community, which could mean repositioning them as convenient hubs.
• Robert Lynch noted that each year libraries do their awards at the White House, thereby a logical connection could be made to existing opportunities at the federal level.

Roundtable resources:

• Robert Wong spoke about a program Google sponsors called Maker Camp, which is connected to a lot of libraries and is free to users (kids under 13).
• Nora Halpern called out a program called the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC; thearcdc.org) in Washington, DC, which houses top-notch arts programs alongside a boys and girls club, a children’s medical center, and an outpost of Covenant House, among other social service agencies. The program literally places the arts at the core of its community.
• Sasha Costanza-Chock spoke of opportunities to partner with groups that have intersecting experiences around digital making, including MIT labs, as well as the Hive Learning Networks.

“The library is now about action and community; it’s the gateway for new immigrants and pathway for new languages. Being at the library with the arts leads to new citizens and new audiences.”
—Robert Lynch
A new vision for education

Music producer Bob Ezrin spoke about creativity’s role in the workplace and how it relates to broader innovation within education.

“Picture the graduate that industry needs, and then work backwards. That’s [envisioning] the industry as America’s future. We should try to imagine what the kids’ needs look like, and then interweave all [of our efforts] into this new system [that supports those outcomes].

—Bob Ezrin

Matt Stinchcomb emphasized the integrated idea of “technology arts” and that—just as with art—the concept of Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) now permeates everything.

C. Connecting with funding opportunities:
Leading to seed capital and private sector investment

Scott Snibbe reported the group’s suggestions.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. **Create a fund for artists** to support entrepreneurial ideas
   - Complete this objective **within the timeline of one year**.
2. **Offer access to a dynamic community**, whose world-changing ideas need the reach and the scale to be realized
3. **Yield about a dozen projects** per year
4. **Establish partnerships** with private capital

Features of this initiative:
- **Build on a model** of contributing $1 million to an arts-based venture capital program that can raise the other $9 million.
- **Triple the bottom line** and social relevance “without wearing art on our sleeves.” Promote viewing of artists/creatives as entrepreneurs in the same way that financial venture capitalists are.
- Invite applicants to make **slide presentations and demonstrations** in lieu of writing huge grants.
- Create a team to **flesh out the criteria** for the fund. Provide support for mentorship and resources. Take equity form the projects, and the money comes back in, and makes something sustainable.
- **Identify partners** in various sectors
- **Devises a language—and a visual language**—for the communication and strategy. Snibbe added, “We don’t want to call it ‘tech art,’ but we do want to define the criteria.”
Robert Lynch called out the difference between what he called “old think (‘I want to apply’)” and “new think (‘I want to make’).”

**DISCUSSION:**

“True entrepreneurial innovators are risk takers, but much of the capital that’s available is risk-averse. How do we bridge the gap of risk takers [with that] risk-averse capital?”

—Julie Muraco, The Praiditis Group and AFTA Board member

- Scott Snibbe noted that many tech firms started as art projects. He recalled that the climate several years ago was such that one could create a seed fund and establish minimal criteria for art projects. He noted that now we need a project that interweaves art and social [media]—“so that [when one of them takes off and] becomes a huge business, that funds the [entire] model.”
- Doug Aitken observed how “mediated” funding streams have become and asked whether they could have a broader impact. “Funding [for a certain initiative] comes from this cloud [of resources and] rains into a pool—but where does that pool [of funds] go [next]? Why doesn’t it [flow] to a large group of individuals?”

**Aggregating the power in the room**

Kenna used the term “aggregation” repeatedly in his presentation, and Grant and Halpern circled back to it as the groups reported on their brainstorms. This strategy would include:

- Devising **new and expanded partnerships**
- A vision of **new metrics** to advance the arts
- A successful **seed capital fund**

**Building on Boston**

In terms of leveraging political and community resources, several participants expanded on the example that Katherine Oliver provided of successful initiatives in New York City (see summary on page XX):

- **Michael Lawrence Evans**, Program Director of the City of Boston’s Mayor’s Office of New Urban Mechanics, emphasized the importance of the arts to urban renewal and community development. “A new mayor [brings the opportunity for] a lot of awesome [new initiatives],” he said. “By helping to bring the arts back to Boston, [we are] moving away from Boston’s stigma as a city [that is stuck in its ways]. This creates not just a strong arts presence downtown, but [also supports change by] going into disadvantaged neighborhoods, through a number of art initiatives that are working to collaborate.”

- **Robert Lynch** noted that, with the guidance of Americans for the Arts, the city of Boston had handled issues of public-private partnerships by instating an arts-related zoning policy. “Two decades ago,” he said, “when Americans for the Arts worked with the Commission to revitalize the city through the arts, we [enacted] policy, which created a renaissance [by enabling] a section of the city called the Combat Zone to build new theaters where there had been only buildings falling down.” He added, “Now the new mayor has come to us [to seek a partnership together] inspired by what we do here [at this summit].”
Roundtable resources:

- Robert Redford suggested that, in terms of integrating the arts into the community, the group might follow successful precedents set by recent projects at Boston’s JFK Library. He proposed reaching out to its director, Tomas Putnam, given that the library has an existing framework that the group could adapt for its purposes.

An approach focused on abundance or scarcity?

- Marty Albertson noted, “In the last 30 years we’ve made some incremental [improvements in] arts, and now the arts are growing in momentum. We can now make more aggressive goals.”
- One proposed approach was a thought experiment of abundance to assist in establishing a list of priorities: “What would we do if we had billions of dollars for the arts?”
- Robert Wong had the opposite perspective on how to tackle the same issue, suggesting that, rather than talking about abundance, the group “think about the most effective thing for our scarcity.”
- In response to the presentation on the Save Studio A campaign, Sasha Costanza-Chock raised the issues of identifying alternatives to the private sector. He asked, “How do we recognize those communities where the technology innovations are happening, rather than money [having to] attract money?” Robert Lynch responded, “The answer may have a lot of [the same issues as in] public-private ownership of a policy.”

Robert Lynch noted the many subtexts that were happening inherent to the discussion. “There are so many ideas, hidden resources, and conversations” coming to fruition, he said. David Grant concluded the Saturday morning sessions with the important observation that each group’s goals sounded doable.

Conclusions

Floyd Green, the 2014 National Chair for the Arts Roundtable and Vice President, Community Relations and Urban Marketing, Aetna, Inc., shared several reflections about what inspired his involvement with AFTA. “When asked why I agreed be the chair of the Roundtable,” Green said, “I say that it’s because of stories about the impact of the arts on young people.” He spoke to the importance of arts in a school curriculum, including to academic performance. Green also cited the example of a university choir that is using technology to help students tell stories about health, depression, violence, and bullying. “The impact of young people on the arts is essential,” Green observed. “We invite young performers here to the Roundtable because they remind us why we fight for the arts.”

The NEA’s Bill O’Brien observed that the weekend’s performances by young artists “give us an opportunity for our hearts to swell and the inspiration to try to figure things out.” This reflection captured the broader spirit of the weekend, as a way for participants to step out of daily responsibilities so that they might draw upon experience and insight, to ask questions about how
to break boundaries and move past more routine constraints. It was, in this way, a means to explore creativity as a kind of freedom.

At the conclusion of the three days together, Robert Redford invited Roundtable participants to join him in releasing into the wild a number of birds that were rehabilitated at Sundance Institute. It was a lovely moment—a fitting symbol of the work the group came together to initiate that weekend.
ABOUT THE NATIONAL ARTS POLICY ROUNDTABLE

The National Arts Policy Roundtable was launched in October 2006 by Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, and Robert Redford, founder of the Sundance Institute, on the premise that issues important to the arts are also important to society. Since its inception, the Roundtable has convened more than 300 top level decision makers and thought leaders from the fields of business, government, the social sector, education, and the arts in a unique cross-sector forum designed to discuss issues and propose solutions critical to advancing American culture and vitality.

Each Roundtable yields a series of recommendations on public policies and private sector practices that are necessary to move the issue from thought to action. Past topics addressed include the future of private sector funding for the arts, the role of the arts in building a creative and internationally-competitive and 21st century workforce, fostering civic engagement, and in strengthening global communities.

The National Arts Policy Roundtable is the pinnacle convening of more than 100 meetings sponsored annually by Americans for the Arts—conferences that enable government and business leaders, scholars, funders, arts agency directors, and others to network, share knowledge, and proffer policies for consideration by the Roundtable. Policies recommended by the Roundtable are, in turn, circulated back to these networks for implementation.

For more information, visit www.AmericansfortheArts/napr.

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The 2014 National Arts Policy Roundtable was facilitated by David Grant.

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About Americans for the Arts

With over 50 years of service, **Americans for the Arts** is the leading nonprofit organization committed to advancing the arts in America. Americans for the Arts believes that all the arts are critically important; that the arts are essential to the health and wealth of our communities; and that every American should have opportunities to experience the arts and arts education. Americans for the Arts works to achieve three “ends:” supporting the development of locally appropriate environments in which the arts can thrive; advocating for increased resources for the arts and arts education throughout America; and working hard to foster individual understanding of and appreciation for the arts. Americans for the Arts has four key program areas: research and policy; advocacy; professional development; and visibility. This work embraces a rich array of activities, including studies of the arts’ impact on our economy and the workforce; online networks and software tools that enable arts professionals to share knowledge with one another and citizens to communicate with their elected officials; conferences and specialized training workshops; and visibility programs. Americans for the Arts is committed to the excellence of its services and to their breadth and reach across all geographies, ethnicities, ages, educations, and levels of arts experience. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York, Americans for the Arts provides tailored services for its more than 26,000 members as well as free information, online advocacy tools, and research data to thousands of additional stakeholders all across the country, including local, state, and national arts organizations, government agencies, business leaders, individual philanthropists, and educators.


About Sundance Institute

**Sundance Institute** is a global nonprofit organization founded by Robert Redford in 1981 to promote independent storytelling to inform, inspire, and unite diverse populations around the world. Through its six artistic development programs: Feature Film, Documentary Film, Theatre, Film Music, Native and Indigenous Program and the Sundance Film Festival -- the Institute seeks to discover and support independent film and theatre artists from the United States and around the world, and to introduce audiences to their new work. What began as a retreat for a handful of artists has today expanded to serve composers, directors, editors, playwrights and screenwriters worldwide.

Each year, the Institute brings international artists to the United States to develop their work in uniquely creative ‘labs’ alongside American artists and under the guidance of acclaimed advisors, all experts in their fields. The Institute has also adapted this model for use in other countries, working with local partners to engage artists on their home soil. Internationally recognized for its annual Sundance Film Festival, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as Born into Brothels, Son of Babylon, Amreeka, An Inconvenient Truth, Precious, Winter’s Bone, Spring Awakening, Light in the Piazza and Angels in America. Institute alumni have gone on to win Academy Awards, Tonys, Emmys, Grammys, and the Pulitzer Prize.

[www.sundance.org](http://www.sundance.org)
2014 National Arts Policy Roundtable Participants

1. Kerry Adams Hapner; Director of Cultural Affairs, City of San Jose
2. Doug Aitken; Visual Artist
3. Marty Albertson; Non-Executive Chairman, Guitar Center, Inc.
4. Kerry Brougher; Director, Academy Museum of Motion Pictures
5. Randy Cohen; Vice President of Research and Policy, Americans for the Arts
6. Sharon Corbitt-House; Co-Owner, HouseKopp Management, LLC
7. Sasha Costanza-Chock; Assistant Professor of Civic Media, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
9. Sarah Eaton; Director of Media Relations, Sundance Institute
10. Michael Lawrence Evans, Program Director, Mayor’s Office of New Urban Mechanics, City of Boston
11. Bob Ezrin; Producer, Stillwater Music
12. Ken Fergusson; Chairman, NBC Oklahoma
13. Ben Folds; Singer, Songwriter, TV Personality, Philanthropist
14. Tracy Fullerton, Director, USC Game Innovation Lab
16. Marian Godfrey; Founding Chair, National Arts Policy Roundtable
17. David Grant; 2014 National Arts Policy Roundtable facilitator
18. Floyd Green; Vice President, Community Relations and Urban Marketing; Aetna, Inc.
19. Nora Halpern; Vice President of Leadership Alliances; Americans for the Arts
20. Matt Jacobson; Head of Market Development; Facebook
21. Kenna; artist/producer/tech & social creative
22. Mike Kopp; Co-Manager, Ben Folds; Partner, MMA Creative
24. Paul Lehr; President & CEO; National YoungArts Foundation
25. Lisa Leone; Vice President of Artistic Programs; National YoungArts Foundation
26. Molly Logan; Co-Founder, School of Doodle
27. Mary Luehrsen; Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations, National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM); Executive Director, NAMM Foundation
28. Robert L. Lynch; President and CEO, Americans for the Arts
29. Chris Milk; Artist, Director and Photographer
30. Julie Muraco; Founder and Managing Partner, Praeditis Group LLC
31. Bill O’Brien; Senior Advisor for Program Innovation, National Endowment for the Arts
32. Katherine Oliver; Principal, Media and Digital Strategies, Bloomberg Associates
33. Keri Putnam; Executive Director, Sundance Institute
34. Robert Redford; Founder, Sundance Institute
35. Edgar Smith; CEO, World PAC Paper, LLC
36. Scott Snibbe; Media Artist and CEO, Eyegroove
37. Matt Stinchcomb; Vice President, Values and Impact, Etsy
38. Robert Wong; Chief Creative Officer, Google Creative Lab, Google