

**School of Computer Science
Course 15-391**

Spring 2007

Final Consulting Report

Peoples Oakland

Nick Wolff

Peoples Oakland

Executive Summary

Student Consultant, Nick Wolff
Community Partner, Lisa Nevel

I. Background Information

Peoples Oakland is a member driven, mental health organization dedicated to providing help to attain complete well being. They provide a wide range of events and activities for members that are dedicated to helping members further themselves.

Peoples Oakland's mission is,

To develop an Oakland-based organization that facilitates consumer and community participation in identifying and responding to the changing social, economic, vocational, intellectual, political, physical and spiritual needs of mental health consumers.

II. Consulting Tasks

The first consulting task was to reorganize Peoples Oakland's website. This task was chosen to help reconfigure the website which suffered from numerous broken links, unneeded navigation, and outdated and unneeded content throughout the site. We attempted to rethink all content throughout the site as well as restoring the website to a fully functional state.

The second consulting task was to deal with website maintenance. This task was chosen to ensure that Peoples Oakland consistently maintained a high standard similar to the organization it represents. This task dealt with improving website maintenance routines.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

The first consulting task resulted in the complete restructuring of web content on Peoples Oakland's website. This process involved reviewing and re-writing sections of the more than forty pages belonging to the website. The process is still in progress which poses a substantial risk to sustainability. With improved content Peoples Oakland increased capacity by opening communication to outside parties through the internet that may have been lost to incorrect information in the past.

Additionally, the first consulting task resulted in all of the website's broken links and superfluous navigation being removed. This has substantially upgraded user experience with the website since the majority of the site was largely unavailable when navigating through the site.

The second consulting task addresses many of the questions of sustainability raised by the first. A plan was put into place to direct progress of the website in the future. It involved more frequent website content review as well as outlining possible website upgrades through the near future.

Significant staff training in web technologies had hoped to be attempted but was unable to materialize due to time constraints. A major recommendation was made that involved moving forward with staff web training. This would benefit Peoples Oakland by removing the possibility of the loss of organizational knowledge should Lisa no longer be with Peoples Oakland.

The second major recommendation is a technology plan that would help Peoples Oakland specifically structure technology into their mission and keep technology an important part of planning for the future to ensure that Peoples Oakland remains a state-of-the-art organization in not only its programming but everything it does.

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Peoples Oakland

Final Consulting Report

Student Consultant, Nick Wolff
Community Partner, Lisa Nevel

I. About the Organization

Organization

Peoples Oakland is a member driven organization dedicated to providing help to attain complete well being. They provide a wide range of events and activities for members that are dedicated to helping members further themselves.

Peoples Oakland's mission:

To develop an Oakland-based organization that facilitates consumer and community participation in identifying and responding to the changing social, economic, vocational, intellectual, political, physical and spiritual needs of mental health consumers.

Nearly 300 members are served each year by Peoples Oakland.

Facilities

Facilities consist of a building located at 3433 Bates Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The building is at the corner of Bates and Zulema St. in Oakland. The building is four stories with member areas mainly on the first and second floors. Member areas contain a snack bar, pool table, and sitting areas. A member computer lab is located on the first floor along with a reception area, and fitness area. Staff offices and meeting rooms are located on the second, third, and fourth floors. The third floor also houses the main meeting room.

Programs

Peoples Oakland main programs are Social & Recreational, Recovery & Wellness, and Employment.

Social & Recreational:

Programming includes activities geared towards developing hobbies, and finding friends. Social activities include basketball league, softball league, bowling, and attending events around the community each month (museums, sporting events such as the Steelers, etc.).

Recovery & Wellness:

This program encompasses fitness programs and health services (diet, lifestyle, yoga) along with treatment of mental illness and drug disorders. Members are able to access the first floor fitness areas with a doctor's permission and supervision from a staff member.

Employment:

Programming includes programming includes training in categories such as how to dress, help in finding a job, and job etiquette. Basic computer skills courses are taught by an intern in how to use e-mail and Office programs.

Staff

The staff at Peoples Oakland consists of five full time employees, three part time employees, along with several interns.

Peoples Oakland organizationally consists of:

Two Program Directors that oversee the three main programs previously described.

- Lisa Nevel, the Community Partner, who directs the Social & Recreational program. Lisa is in charge of Peoples Oakland's website. Lisa has experience using FrontPage but no HTML coding experience
- Rebekah Lott, who directs the Recovery & Wellness program as well as the Employment program. Peoples Oakland is in the process of hiring another employee to direct the Employment program. Rebekah uses Microsoft Office and also uses e-mail regularly.

A Quality Director, Ann Harris. Ann is in charge of dealing with technology issues within People's Oakland. These issues relate to areas such as the Peoples Oakland network. Ann recently inherited this element of her job after the previous individual in charge of technology left Peoples Oakland.

The Executive Director, Sandra Phillips. Sandra oversees day to day operations at Peoples Oakland. Sandra has limited technology experience.

The Board of Directors consists of seven active members.

Technical Environment

A functional website exists at www.peoplesoakland.org. Peoples Oakland is completely networked. All full-time staff have computers, access to the internet through a DSL connection, and e-mail addresses from their website domain.

Member computer lab contains 5 Dell Computers. Each computer has internet access through Peoples Oakland's network, basic Microsoft Office, and Adobe Suite. The computers are used by members for personal needs such as making an appointment, checking e-mail, or looking for a job.

The network server is a Dell PowerEdge 2800 along with an additional back-up server. Peoples Oakland owns 21 staff Dell PCs with Windows XP; 5 PCs for members with Windows XP. Microsoft Office is the only software that is installed across all PCs that is frequently used.

Technical Management

Technology issues outsourced through Unicentric and two paid outside consultants. Outside consultants come by on an as needed basis to fix issues that arise. Unicentric is in charge of maintaining the network.

Website maintenance is performed by Lisa Nevel as mentioned above.

Technology Planning

There is not a technology plan in place currently. Previous technology initiatives resulted in outcomes such as the network that is currently in place. These initiatives are for specific projects and do not sustain themselves.

Budgeting is proposal specific, and therefore there is not a fixed technology budget. Funding is granted by searching for funding amongst organizations in the community, the county, and foundations nationally.

Internal and External Communication

Internal communication is done through face to face meetings, due to the small size of the organization, or e-mail. An intercom system is also in place to page staff to meetings and events.

Though a website is in place, it fails to articulate critical organizational information in a meaningful way. It becomes frustrating to attempt to navigate the website, since visitors can reach “dead ends” in which no navigation links work. Additionally, website content was outdated and had not been changed significantly since the website’s inception more than a year ago. The website lacked the ability to communicate information to all possible interested parties (current and potential members, funders, etc.).

A paper newsletter is sent to the organization’s mailing list regularly including information about recent news and upcoming events.

Information Management

A system is in place that allows staff to electronically fill out forms that are sent to the county to verify the activities of the organization for funding.

There is a paper sign-in sheet signed by members at events and activities that gets manually logged for attendance purposes.

Information is electronically entered regarding volunteer hours and intern service hours and submitted to a county agency for logging that will reflect that they have served. In house information regarding member attendance at Peoples Oakland events is entered into Excel spreadsheets from existing paper sign-in sheet mentioned above.

In addition to HIPAA information that is kept strictly confidential subject to a large number of strict federally enforced guidelines. Information is entered into Excel databases that logs the demographics of members and progress towards goals set by counselors for members to achieve that may be social, physical, or any other measurable target.

A crisis log is in place to electronically submit information pertaining to major medical issues in case of a medical emergency involving a member. This allows for immediate transfer of information between Peoples Oakland and medical organizations that may be dealing with their members.

II. Scope of Work

Task 1. Website Reorganization

A problem that faced Peoples Oakland was efficiently communicating information to a large contingency of interested parties. Individuals potentially interested in Peoples Oakland include current and potential members, government agencies responsible for funding, peer organizations, potential volunteers in the community at large as well as potential interns attending neighboring Universities. Each group may be interested in Peoples Oakland for a different reason, whether it is to get information about history and mission for a potential funding or to access information about upcoming events for a current or potential member. The potential for organizational gain or loss is great dependant upon how these individuals regard Peoples Oakland based upon their experience with their website, the only way for many of these mentioned groups to evaluate the organization. With a strong response to the website, these groups are more likely to become involved in Peoples Oakland, contributing funds, volunteerism, and membership, thus contributing to Peoples Oakland's mission of facilitating a center for mental health issues that is inclusive to the entire community.

The website suffered from numerous broken links as well as outdated and irrelevant information. This made visiting the website a less than enjoyable experience since visitors were frequently rerouted to error messages and the information that was accessible did not reflect the current situation at Peoples Oakland.

The opportunity existed for Peoples Oakland's website to become an up-to-date source for information about what is going on within the organization that could serve as the changing face of Peoples Oakland.

Task 2. Continuing Website Maintenance

As the website represented a greater and greater leverage tool for communication with outside parties, Peoples Oakland needed a greater organizational awareness regarding website maintenance. The state of the website suggested that website maintenance has not been explored by Peoples Oakland as an area of high priority. Without this organizational knowledge, the state of the website was likely to quickly degrade after the consulting session was complete. For instance, the previous student consultant left the website fully functional, however at the beginning of the consulting session, the website suffered the aforementioned issues of poor navigation and broken links. With a poorly maintained website, Peoples Oakland was at risk of alienating potential donors, members, and staff by providing incomplete information in the form of incorrect information. For instance, the site had incorrect phone numbers and contact information for its staff, along with an out of date Board of Directors information section. This type of poorly maintained information could damage the credibility of the organization and possibly lead to losing support from interested parties. This would negatively impact Peoples Oakland's mission of acting as a mental health center for the entire community.

III. Outcomes and Recommendations

Task 1. Website Reorganization

The approach attempted to enhance the website by creating a more user-friendly experience. It sought to organize information more logically, make information more accessible, and fix issues with site navigation (the site had suffered from numerous broken links).

Web Content Modification:

Peoples Oakland's website had serious problems with the content that it offered interested visiting parties. Much of the content was outdated, complicated, or uneasy to reach. In conjunction with Executive Director Sandra Phillips and Ann Harris, we addressed the content in each section of the website and allowed for review and appropriate alterations to be made. Several sections had content significantly updated, as content had previously never been reviewed by Ms. Harris or Ms. Phillips. Most notably, Ms. Phillips re-wrote Peoples Oakland's mission statement and vision statement to be displayed on the website's home page to give users a more appropriate idea of Peoples Oakland's goals immediately upon arrival to the website (Appendix A). In contrast, the page previously featured a confusing "Welcome" page that offered no content. Other examples of changes made were to make current information about staff as the list of staff and their contact information was largely outdated. A high majority of active content was considered outdated by Executive Director Sandra Phillips.

A new process was set in place to upload a quarterly newsletter to the website. The newsletter that will be added is already produced by Peoples Oakland. The addition of the newsletter to the website will help lower the burden of news updates, which have not been frequent. Only major news stories will be independently added to the news section by Lisa. This will also allow interested individuals in seeing something that members produced, which is important since it reinforces Peoples Oakland's member centered philosophy. Members will be in charge of recent news as well as contributing original, creative content. The current incarnation of the newsletter is distributed through the mail to the Peoples Oakland mailing list. The newsletter will be uploaded in PDF form to the website and will augment the monthly calendar. Lisa has in the past uploaded PDF files to the website on many different occasions to display calendars of events. This process will be no different but simply will be one additional task to perform when she does content updates.

The process of adding a newsletter to the website effectively replaced plans for a web calendar mentioned in the scope of work which the community partner did not believe would be a feasible solution to the problem after investigating a web calendar in more depth.

The current newsletter is an important part of Peoples Oakland because it represents the contributions of members to the character of Peoples Oakland's events and activities. Lisa believed that the amount of work required to update a calendar would have needed significant attention from a staff member and may have needed to replace the newsletter in the organization. In the future, Sandra Phillips has expressed interest in adding a web calendar to gain the functionality and ease of updating content. The web calendar is one of the items that is addressed in the "Web Planning" outcome below.

The website is still in the process of change as all content is undergoing careful review by Ms. Phillips. Certain sections needed significant alterations to its contents to reach a level that reflects

Peoples Oakland's current state as an organization, these sections were changed to an "Under Construction" page until appropriate content is rewritten. At present, approximately 75% of the content on the website underwent change. Out of the modified content approximately half has been re-worked and updating on the website and half is still in the "Under Construction" phase. The amount of "Under Construction" pages should be reduced to a negligible amount within one month at the current pace. There needs to be an organizational commitment to finalizing all web content changes, this process will not be extraordinarily long but must be done in order to ensure that communication with outside parties is being done effectively and accurately.

The new content is helping Peoples Oakland achieve their mission by ensuring that interested outside parties such as government and county agencies, funders, members, and other interested community members are being greeted by timely, accurate information about Peoples Oakland's goals and achievements and not basing their opinion of the organization on outdated or incorrect information. This builds capacity for Peoples Oakland by ensuring all aspects of the organization represent the highest standard of quality, which will assure outside parties who may base first opinions on their initial impression of Peoples Oakland through the web.

In the future, there is the possibility that consistent and diligent content updates would cease. When analyzing the site's content since the website's inception, it has obviously been somewhat stagnant. This poses an obvious risk to the sustainability of continuing to provide updated and relevant web content in the future. In order to address this issue of sustainability, a document was drafted to attempt to structure some rough outlines of procedures to take to ensure that the website does not become neglected to a similar extent in the future. This document is discussed more thoroughly in the section titled "Website Planning".

Repairing Website Navigation:

At the beginning of the consulting session, Peoples Oakland's website suffered from numerous broken links making navigation of the website difficult. The problem resulted mainly from the website's transfer from HTML to FrontPage. This transition was put into place to ensure easier editing and updating for the Community Partner, who is not familiar with HTML. FrontPage changed file names, thus rendering internal links broken. At the beginning of the consulting session there were several hundred broken links, basically accounting for each internal link in the site. Lisa had already changed a good number of these links, on her own back to the appropriate format. We went through the site and changed each link to reflect the newly named pages. Now there are no broken links in the site. To ensure sustainability, we have installed a piece of software called Xenu Link Sleuth to check for broken links that Lisa will run once a month or whenever she updates the website (Xenu is an Open Source application that is popular and will remain should remain sustainable over time). The software will allow her to view reports containing any links that may have broken internally for various reasons, or links to outside organizations that have broken.

Additionally during this process, we edited out some superfluous navigation bars that occurred randomly throughout the site at the bottom of certain pages from previous website updates. This gives the site a cleaner feeling, and helps to complete the transition from HTML to FrontPage.

Lisa has performed each of the functions of editing many times. She had already been in the process of editing the links prior to the consulting session. Also she was able to find and eliminate all of the extra navigation bars within the site on her own. With the inclusion of the link checking

software, Lisa will be able to more effectively see exactly what links are not performing instead of having the overwhelming task of identifying each broken link individually.

Now that the website no longer has any broken links, and a simpler navigation it will lend more credibility to the organization to anyone visiting Peoples Oakland's website along with allowing the website to resume performing its function of informing the public about the organization itself. This supports the mission by making information available to the community as a whole furthering Peoples Oakland's ability to help anyone in need of their services.

Task 2. Continuing Website Maintenance

This approach attempted to ensure continuing website maintenance through training of additional staff in website updating and maintenance practices as well as drafting a document to outlay goals for the future of the website.

Staff Web Training:

Prior to the consulting session, Lisa was the sole individual in charge of maintaining and updating the website. This leaves Peoples Oakland vulnerable to organizational change that would leave Peoples Oakland without Lisa's knowledge.

To remedy this situation, we had a plan in place to train at least one other staff member in FrontPage, and how to access the website files, as well as backing-up the website onto a disk so that it would still be available in case of a crisis, and access and use the FTP to place new files onto the website.

Several meetings between the student consultant and the community partner were missed due to extenuating circumstances throughout the course of the semester. Due to these time constraints compounded with the busy schedules of staff members at Peoples Oakland, we were not able to effectively create a plan that would have given significant and useful training to any staff members at Peoples Oakland through working with Lisa that could have been applied after the consulting session was completed.

However, through speaking with Ann Harris, we were able to ascertain that all files on staff computers are backed up by Peoples Oakland and would be able to be extracted in the case of a crisis. This means that the website is more secure than initially thought since it is not exclusively accessible through Lisa's computer.

Additionally, we drafted a document that outlined the steps to using the FTP for updating the website since the steps had not been documented on paper and became confusing at times. I went over the steps outlined in the document to make sure Lisa understood the wording and printed out a copy for her as well as saving it to her desktop. Individuals who would be interested in learning about how to operate the FTP could access the document.

This task addresses sustainability by adding organizational capacity to continue normal operation through extenuating circumstances. This possibility may not be sustainable, Lisa is busy and is likely unable to spend time teaching these practices to other staff members.

A recommendation is included that encourages a strong organizational commitment to ensuring that several staff are made an integral part of the website's progress and trained in all appropriate technologies reflecting the state of the site. The recommendation follows below.

Recommendation:

In order to ensure the avoidance of losing organizational knowledge of the operation of the website as mentioned above, this recommendation addresses steps to take in the future that would lead to the training of several staff members in appropriate web technologies. The recommendation involves choosing and executing a plan of staff training in web technologies to ensure that Peoples Oakland's web presence remains strong regardless of personnel.

In addition to protecting Peoples Oakland from organizational change, incrementing the number of employees able to work on the website will also open opportunities for new opinions and ideas to be more easily integrated. With the addition of these staff working with the website, there is the opportunity to have programming changes reflected as well. For example, staff members could link to interesting stories on the internet relating to the classes or programming that they are working on (e.g. weight training, finding a job) and suggest that members visit the site to have a chance to learn more information about the activities that they are involved in. This will allow the website to take on the role of a community resource more than a static entity. Web training will also allow for advances in the look and feel of the website which helps encourage users to stay longer since strong design lends credibility to an organization's web site.

If the website becomes an organizational resource as opposed to a closed off entity, it will open up conversation about where the website could or should go next which could be a move towards more advanced functionality.

Recommended Procedure:

In order to perform web training, first Peoples Oakland must decide whether to search for the training expertise in or out of house. If it is out of house, one or more staff members would need to attend outside classes to verse themselves in web basics (e.g. HTML, Web Design) and then return to teach other staff members what they had learned and how it was applicable.

My recommendation is to have Lisa hold in-house classes meant to teach other staff members about the use of FrontPage to edit content, website maintenance routines, and how to operate the web host's FTP, as well as other web related activities that Lisa performs as part of her day-to-day. If Lisa were to give this type of training to 2-3 other staff members, or possibly Peoples Oakland members at the suggestion of Sandra Phillips, then each individual who learned this information would become an important organizational resources as they would be able to check in with Lisa to help with the burden of the website on Lisa's schedule, perform updates in areas such as news when an important event in their area of Peoples Oakland programming fell, and also in turn eventually teach more staff and members how to put information on the web. In order to hold classes, Lisa should attend outside classes to become more proficient in what she is teaching so that she can answer questions others have during the process. There are classes mentioned below that are available near Peoples Oakland's facility.

Additional Resources:

Similarly to the first recommendation, Techsoup (www.techsoup.com) has excellent resources which detail important information about how to implement staff training in technology for non-profits, there are several articles dedicated to such topics:

This article discusses the obstacles faced and initial steps non-profits should take who are interested in technology training:

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/training/page5421.cfm>

This article is a resource specifically for the individual who will be performing the technology training which contains links to other teaching tips:

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/training/page5416.cfm>

Additionally, the Bayer Center for Non-Profit Management at Robert Morris University holds classes for those in non-profit fields. Several of these classes would be useful to Peoples Oakland, especially “Web Design with FrontPage” which is the application the website is currently edited in and “Website Planning”.

Bayer Center’s website and list of classes on-line:

http://www.rmu.edu/OnTheMove/findoutmore.open_page?iCalledBy=findoutmore&iPage=69943&iT=&iattr=redirect&ivisitor=0&ichap=bcnm_pdf

Website Planning:

Prior to the consulting session, there was no organizational plan regarding the future of the website. In order to change this we implemented a plan outlining when content should be reviewed and a timeline for upgrading the website to a CMS.

We set a procedure into place that encourages every six months a group including Lisa, Sandra, and Ann would sit down and review website content to ensure that it was current and accurate. Additionally, this meeting will serve as an opportunity to discuss the need to add additional pages or content to the website, as well as content that may have become obsolete over the previous six months.

Also, we set a meeting in one year to seriously discuss putting into place a CMS to replace the existing website. This will allow Peoples Oakland to more easily edit and add content as well as having more participation amongst other staff members easily, this will feed into Peoples Oakland’s community based goals. A CMS would create the opportunity to transfer the Peoples Oakland website from a static information only website to one the offered more features to the user. These features could be used by Peoples Oakland to expand their programming along with internal and external communication (e.g. A website message board would allow members to use the website as a community resource for posting information such as recipes, photos, or other information that might be of interest to other members).

As mentioned earlier in the document, a web calendar was also recommended. The web calendar was a portion of the scope of work that was unable to be accomplished as had been initially hoped. The web calendar would be a hosted option that would allow for a staff member to have the task of keeping events current with important information as well as times. The cost, as discussed with Ms. Phillips would be affordable for Peoples Oakland’s current situation.

Beyond the possibility of a CMS and web calendar, at each content review meeting, website development will be addressed and discussion will revolve around whether Peoples Oakland could benefit from upgrading the current incarnation of their website.

Ms. Phillips, Ms. Harris, and Lisa are excited, and I believe that the plan for content review will remain sustainable over time. A document was drafted that outlined the recommendation and was

sent to Ms. Phillips and Lisa and an initial meeting is in the process of being set for the fall. Ms. Phillips has shown particular enthusiasm for the project, and due to her position as Executive Director, I am confident that the plan will remain in tact and implemented in the future. The content and website review will allow Peoples Oakland to ensure that they are distributing appropriate information to the public, especially as digital information becomes a larger and larger element of Peoples Oakland's public face.

Web Maintenance Routine:

In order to keep the website functioning at a high level there needed to be a routine developed for Lisa to ensure consistent website maintenance.

We developed a routine in order to help structure how Lisa viewed editing the website, to attempt to transform the process from one that was possibly frustrating to a more simple, outlined process.

The routine we set involved performing the following tasks once a month on the same day of each month:

- Perform a check of the website using Link Sleuth, if any broken links exist edit and repair them in FrontPage, if they are external links delete the link or locate where the page has relocated
- Upload files and update links to new event calendar, special events calendar, newsletter
- If the season or time of year has changed, update the image on the websites main page
- Upload any editing that has been performed recently through the FTP
- Double check to confirm the appropriate changes have been made

By creating a routine for web maintenance and scheduling it for the same time each month, it will be possible to make website maintenance a undemanding process.

Lisa has preformed each task within the routine many times as they are the tasks she typically performs with the website at various times.

The routine has been printed and placed on Lisa's desk and is also saved to Lisa's hard drive. Lisa has expressed interest in performing this maintenance routine in the future. This outcome is likely to remain sustainable as it helps make an experience that is seemingly complex to a more straightforward process.

Recommendation 1. Create a Technology Plan

Peoples Oakland has established a strong technology base throughout the organization, however there is currently no plan in place that specifically interprets how technology fits the goals of Peoples Oakland and what direction needs to be sought out in the future to ensure that Peoples Oakland technology stays current and advancement is purpose driven.

It would be advantageous for Peoples Oakland to create a technology plan since it would give them an opportunity to look at technology on a whole and would allow them to be proactive towards technology in improving their organization with new technology instead of being reactive to technology and only changing technology when something goes wrong. A constant perspective on

the future of technology at Peoples Oakland would lend itself to Peoples Oakland furthering itself as a state-of-the-art leader in not only its programming but in its operations as well.

Recommended Procedure:

The following steps will be needed for Peoples Oakland to implement a technology plan:

- 1.) **Assess organizational resources:** Peoples Oakland will need to hold organizational meetings to discuss and document the state of technology within the organization at the current time, both the positive and negative aspects that currently face P.O. Additionally, P.O. will need to inventory all current hardware as well as programming and organizational use of technology extensively. This will be used as a benchmark against which P.O. can judge progress in the coming months and years.
- 2.) **Define organizational needs:** Using information gathered in Step 2, attempt to define the needs that the organization currently has, where its shortcomings lie. Wherever there is an area of the organization that suffers technologically from other areas should be taken into consideration
- 3.) **Define solutions:** Using the needs determined in Step 3, develop solutions. Goals should be set for specific technological advances to the organization that attempt to solve specific defined needs. These solutions should be set in the future through the next three years (e.g. Changing website to a CMS, redesigning the website, buy new computers all set for specific goal dates).
- 4.) **Write technology plan:** After needs and solutions have been developed, the plan itself should be written documenting these results.
- 5.) **Get funding:** Each solution may be a significant project in itself requiring planning and possibly significant costs.
- 6.) **Implement the plan:** Once the plan is ready and funded, then Peoples Oakland will be able to address each solution and task as it is laid out through the plan.

If specific and achievable goals are set and strived for, then Peoples Oakland can feel more confident in the fact that technology within their organization is not stagnant, but rather moving forward as the organization grows.

Additional Resources:

Techsoup (www.techsoup.com) is a resource designed for non-profits dealing with technology issues, it has excellent information available that details technology planning ideas and models. The steps above are developed from a Techsoup article that can be found with links to more detailed information at: <http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/techplan/page4891.cfm>

This resource also has extensive information about current technology use within non-profits that could be extremely useful for Peoples Oakland in understanding developments in technology and how they can apply to Peoples Oakland's mission and goals.

Another resource is the Technology Literacy Benchmarks for Non-Profits, a copy of which has been given to the Community Partner. This document gives helpful advice, including useful checklists that detail steps to ensure that a useful and constructive technology plan is in place.

About the Consultant

Nick Wolff is a sophomore Information Systems major at Carnegie Mellon University with a minor in Business Administration. This summer, he will be working for the United States Golf Association dealing with operations and merchandising for the upcoming U.S. Open in Oakmont, PA.

Appendix A.

The front page of the Peoples Oakland website after the completion of content revisions:

About Us
News
Member & Staff
Information
Pages
Jobs At PO
Facts About
Mental Illness
How You
Can Help
Contact Us
Helpful Links
Referrals



PEOPLES OAKLAND

Putting People First In Recovery From Serious Mental Illness

Welcome To Peoples Oakland!

Vision

Peoples Oakland will continue to build an organization that, with partners and through networks, will make this region a leader in supporting people who are recovering from serious and persistent mental illness & substance abuse disorders. Peoples Oakland will accomplish this vision through building healthy and productive lives for our members.



Mission

Peoples Oakland strives to be a premier recovery and wellness center, and is committed to holistic, comprehensive, member driven recovery. To carry out holistic and innovative approaches to mental health, we have constructed a facility with a multipurpose social center, a commercial kitchen, a fitness center equipped with fitness machines and with space for yoga, dance and exercise classes, meeting rooms, offices, a large secure outside deck and a resource and information center staffed by peers and equipped with computers for access to email and to the internet.

[Learn more about our mission goals.....](#)

Past Community Partners

4 Kids Early Learning Centers
Addison Behavioral Care, Inc.
Alafia Cultural Services
Alcoa Collaborative
Allegheny County Housing Authority
Allegheny General Hospital Pastoral Staff
American Association of University Women
Animal Friends, Inc.
Animal Rescue League
ASSET, Inc.
ASTEP-Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church
Auberle
Bedford Hope Center
Bedford Initiatives
Bethany House Ministry
Bethlehem Haven
Bishop Boyle Center
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation
Borough of Crafton
Boys & Girls Club of Duquesne-West Mifflin
Boys & Girls of Wilkensburg
Braddock Carnegie Library & Community Center
Braddock Redux
Brashear Association, Inc.
Breachmenders
BTC Center
Calliope: The Folk Music Society
Career and Workforce Development Center East
Carnegie Library of Homestead
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Carnegie Science Center
Center Avenue YMCA
Center for Creative Play
Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, Inc.
Center of Life
Central Academy
Central New Development Corporation
Child Watch of Pittsburgh
Children Youth Ministry
Children's Museum
Christian Life Skills
Citizens to Abolish Domestic Apartheid
Community Day School
Community House
Community Human Services Corporation
Community Technical Assistance Center
Competitive Employment Opportunities
Conflict Resolution Center International
Consumer Action Response Team
CONTACT Pittsburgh
Creative Nonfiction Foundation
Dance Alloy
East End Cooperative Ministries
East End Neighborhood Employment Center
East End Neighborhood Forum
East Liberty Development
East Liberty Presbyterian Church
East Side Community Collaborative
Eastminster Child Care Center
Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center
Education Center
Every Child, Inc.
Fair Housing Partnership
Faison Development & Opportunities Center
FAME
Family Services of Western PA
Family Tyes
First Charities/First United Methodist Church
Friendship Development Association
Garfield Jubilee Association, Inc.
Gateway to the Arts
Girl Scouts - Trillium Council
Glen Hazel Family Reading Center
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
Greenfield Senior Center
Guide Runners
Gwen's Girls
Hazelwood Senior Center
Hazelwood YMCA
Heritage Health Foundation
Hill House Association
Hill/Oakland Workforce Collaborative
Himalayan Institute of Pittsburgh
Hope Academy of Music and the Arts
Hosanna House
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
HUB Downtown Street Outreach Center
Hunger Services Network
Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers
Jane Holmes Residence
Jewish Family & Children's Service
Jewish Residential Services
Joy-Full-Gospel Fellowship After School Program
Just Harvest
KidsVoice
Kingsley Association
Lawrenceville Development Corporation
League of Young Voters
Light of Life Family Assistance Program
Madison Elementary School
Manchester Academic Charter School
McKees Rocks Terrace
McKeesport Collaborative
McKelvy Elementary School
Mental Health Association of Allegheny County
Message Carriers
Methodist Union of Social Agencies
Miller Elementary School, Principal's Office
Mon Valley Initiative
Mon Valley Providers Council
Mon Valley Resources Unlimited
Mon Valley Unemployment Committee
Mon Yough Community Services
Mount Ararat Community Activities Center
NAACP National Voter Fund
National Alliance of the Mentally Ill
National Association of Minority Contractors /
Black Contractors Association
Negro Educational Emergency Drive
New Beginnings Learning Center
New Penley Place

Past Community Partners (continued)

Northside Coalition for Fair Housing
Northside Institutional Children Youth Ministry
Northside Leadership Conference
OASIS Senior Center
Opera Theater of Pittsburgh
Operation Better Block
Orr Compassionate Care Center
Outreach Teen & Family Services
Parental Stress Center
Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership
Pennsylvania Low Income Housing Coalition
Peoples Oakland
Phase 4 Learning Centers, Inc.
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape
Pittsburgh Citizens' Police Review Board
Pittsburgh Foundation
Pittsburgh Health Corps
Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network
Pittsburgh Mediation Center
Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners
Pittsburgh Toy Lending Library
Pittsburgh Vision Services
Pittsburgh Voyager
Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra
POISE Foundation
Program for Health Care to Underserved
Populations
Project Educate
Providence Family Support Center
Radio Information Service
Reading Is Fundamental Pittsburgh
Regional Coalition of Community Builders
River Valley School
Rodef Shalom
Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh
Rosedale Block Cluster
Sacred Heart Elementary School
Rx Council of Western PA
Salvation Army Family Crisis Center
Sarah Heinz House
Schenley Heights Community Development
Center
Second East Hills Social Services Center
Sharry Everett Scholarship Fund
Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church
Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health
St. James School
St. Stephen Elementary School
Sustainable Pittsburgh
Thomas Merton Center
Three Rivers Center for Independent Living
Three Rivers Youth
TLC-USA
Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments
Tzu Chi Wen Chinese School
Union Project
United Cerebral Palsy
Univ. of Pittsburgh - Division of Applied Research
and Evaluation
Urban League of Pittsburgh
Urban Youth Action
Ursuline Services
Vintage Senior Center
Weed & Seed Program, Mayor's Office
Wesley Center
West Pittsburgh Partnership
Wireless Neighborhoods
Women's Enterprise Center
Working Order
YMCA McKeesport
YMCA Senior AIDE Center
Youth Fair Chance
YouthBuild
YWCA Bridge Housing
YWCA of McKeesport

Community Partner Information FAQ

(continued from back cover)

7. What does it cost to be a Community Partner?

The cost for participating in this experience is your time and your commitment to follow through as agreed. As leaders of community organizations, we know your time is of premium value. Those who have made this investment of time have reaped returns many times over.

8. What does the Community Partner have to offer Carnegie Mellon students?

- Students learn to structure unstructured problems. Community organizations are complex environments with complex problems. Your organization provides excellent environments in which to practice the art of structuring problems.
- Students come from different cultural backgrounds and most have never been in a nonprofit organization. They are practicing how to communicate across cultural differences and across technical knowledge differences. They need to be able to make mistakes and learn from them. Community partners provide a supportive relationship in which students can take risks and learn about how to communicate, how to relate, and how to maintain professionalism.
- Students get the opportunity to practice process consulting. They are learning that expertise is only as valuable as the ability to help others solve authentic problems. You provide a context in which students can practice these skills.
- We've found that Community Partners are very appreciative for the students' assistance. There is nothing more rewarding than to experience your efforts as valuable and rewarding for others. You provide that experience for students.
- Finally, you offer a glimpse into career opportunities in the nonprofit arena. Students learn to appreciate those who work in the nonprofit sector, and they grow to appreciate the role and function of community organizations. We hope this appreciation not only informs the choices they make in life, but also encourages them to care and give back to the community throughout their professional careers.

9. How do I become a Community Partner

Contact an instructor, Joe Mertz or Scott McElfresh. Send your contact information: name, title, name of organization, address, phone, fax, location of organization and your interest in being a Community Partner. You will have a telephone conversation and possibly an on-site visit. All organizations are considered, though preference is given to organizations providing services to a low-income community or a community at risk for falling into the "digital divide."

**Send email to
instructors@tcinc.org
(email preferred)**

**Or call
Joe Mertz: 412.268.2540
Scott McElfresh: 412.268.4859**

10. Caveats

- We do our best to ensure that students who sign-up for the class are committed to completing the class, however, occasionally, a student ends up withdrawing from the class during the semester. Typically, this happens when a student has underestimated the time they need for this class. We do our best to advise students so this does not happen. When it does happen, there is nothing we can do except to invite the Community Partner to participate in the following semester.
- The semester is short and the student has to do a lot of work in a short amount of time. For this reason, it is critical that you keep your scheduled appointments, do the work you agree to do, and maintain communication with the student. The student will need your feedback on reports quickly, often the next day. When we get to the final consulting reports, we will need fast turnaround time from Community Partners because we also need to get the reports published in time for the Community Technology Forum.
- If there is any chance that you think you will not be able to follow through with the requirements of this partnership, please wait until such time as when you are able to do it. Since the Community Partner is the focus for the student's learning, it is essential that the partnership be sustained for the semester.

Community Partner Information FAQ

1. What is the goal of the partnership in this course?

The goal of this class is to expand the capacity of the Community Partner to use, plan for, and manage technology, administratively and programmatically. The student is learning process consulting, project management, communication, relationship management, problem identification, and analysis.

2. As a Community Partner, what can I expect to happen?

Once you match with a student consultant, you will set a meeting schedule that you and the student will keep for the remainder of the semester. The student comes to your location for 3 hours a week. During this time you and the student work together. This is not an internship in which the student merely works on site. Rather, it is a consulting partnership in which you must work together to achieve your technology goals. The student facilitates a process that moves from assessment, to analysis of problems and opportunities, to defining a scope of work, to developing a work plan, to analyzing outcomes and finally presenting that analysis. As the Community Partner, you are the consulting client. You provide information and discuss that information with the student. But you are more than a client; you are also a learner. In process consulting the client "owns the problem" as well as its solution. The consultant facilitates the client in achieving that solution. The consultant doesn't "do for" the client. Rather, the consultant works with the client.

3. What types of activities are typically included in a scope of work?

Each scope of work is unique and depends solely upon the specific needs and opportunities of the individual Community Partner. Partnerships have focused on a wide range of activities, including: personal information management (how to use Windows, organize files, backup files, use various software packages, use time managers, use Palm Pilots and other personal information management tools, e-mail, etc.), developing a plan for how to train staff and how to incorporate knowledge and skill into job description, designing a local area network, implementing Internet connectivity, designing and developing a web site, determining effective data storage methods, analyzing the needs for an information database, designing and implementing a database, solving technical problems, designing a public community technology access center, determining the specifications for computers, developing disaster recovery plans, and more.

4. Who can be a Community Partner?

This course target individuals playing an administrative or programmatic leadership role within a community organization. Typically Community Partners are Executive Directors, Directors, Assistant/Associate Directors, Coordinators, and Managers. But, we make the selection based on the organization and the role that the individual plays within that organization, regardless of title.

5. Why do you focus on organizational leaders?

For an organization to use information technology effectively, its leaders must have a vision for how it can support the organization's mission, they must be comfortable enough to integrate technology into their personal work practices, and they must know enough to budget, staff, and subcontract appropriately. By partnering one-on-one with a student consultant, the leader has a unique opportunity to build that vision, comfort, and knowledge, no matter where they are starting from.

6. What are the requirements for being a Community Partner?

- Hold a leadership role within your organization.
- Have a computer in your office or one you could or do use in your job.
- Reliably meet with the student consultant 3 hours per week, every week, for about the 13 weeks.
- Come to an on-campus gathering 2 times during the semester. Once at the beginning and once at the end.
- Share information about your organization with the student consultant.
- Read project reports prepared by the student and give the student immediate feedback.
- Complete a brief response form after reading each report and return to the instructor.
- Keep a log of consulting sessions and send to instructors twice during the semester.
- Read the final consulting report. Give feedback to the student immediately.
- Make a brief presentation at the end of the semester (with the student) at the Community Technology Forum. (This is the 2nd on-campus gathering you are required to attend.)

(continued inside back cover)