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ABSTRACT

This study explores partnerships among cultural and educational institutions engaged in informal lifelong learning, focusing on public libraries, museums, public radio, and public television. Data come from surveys of adults; surveys of library, museum, and public broadcast station executives and staff; and field investigations in seven urban communities. Chapters include: (1) "Introduction" (describes partnering behaviors across the four institutions in seven communities with 26 kinds of partnership agreements); (2) "Individuals and Free-Choice Learning Opportunities" (presents a conceptual framework supported by national survey data that shows how characteristics of individuals and communities lead to participation choices); (3) "Assets and Liabilities of Partnerships" (describes various governing, financing, and legal arrangements); (4) "Partnerships and Their Activities" (explains how each group of partnering activities involves unique challenges and opportunities, and meeting the challenges depends upon the routine demands of the activity and institutional resources); (5) "Partnership Risk and Mitigation Strategies" (notes that engaging in partnerships involves risks and returns, and partnerships have learned how to mitigate the risks); and (6) "Partnership Dynamics" (describes how institutional partnerships evolve through a sequence of program stages. An appendix lists the institution respondents.(SM)

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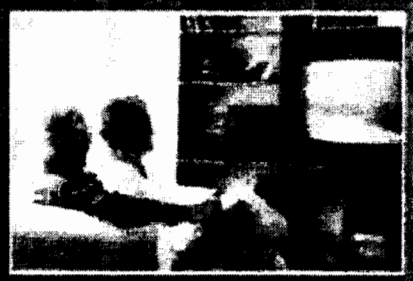

PARTNERSHIPS FOR FREE CHOICE LEARNING

Public Libraries, Museums, and Public Broadcasters Working Together

Chris Walker

Carlos A. Manjarrez

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Public Libraries, Museums, and Public Broadcasters Working Together

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About This Report

In the summer of 2000, the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), under the acting direction of Beverly Shepherd, awarded a grant to the Urban Libraries Council to conduct a research project to explore partnerships among cultural and educational institutions engaged in informal lifelong learning. This research was carried out in support of a new direction for IMLS, which, in addition to supporting partnerships among its traditional museum and library constituents, invited public television and public radio to join in collaborative efforts to expand lifelong learning opportunities. These efforts have included research and demonstration projects as well as several convocations of researchers, funders, and executives and staff of museums, libraries, and public radio and public television stations.

This report is part of the broadening national dialogue around informal lifelong learning, which we refer to as "free choice" learning. The report is based on the results of survey and field research into partnerships among libraries, museums, and public broadcasters. It also draws on the growing body of published case material describing the activities and outcomes of such partnerships.

Its core value is use of a conceptual framework that explores, for the four institutions that are our focus—public libraries, museums, public radio, and public television—the contributions, benefits, and risks of partnering across different types of activities. We build on the extensive case research done before us, and take a further look at a wide variety of activities carried out in practice. In addition, we make use of an extensive survey of adults 18 years or older; a survey of library, museum, and public broadcast station executives and staff; and information from field investigations in seven communities—covering partnerships among libraries, museums, and public broadcasters across 26 projects.

Readers can find more collaborative project information on the searchable database located on the Urban Libraries Council website: www.urbanlibraries.org.

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CONTENTS

Cultural institutions across the country are experimenting with partnerships in efforts to expand offerings to current clients and/or broaden their appeal to reach new constituencies. These partnerships offer important lessons for institutions hoping to engage new constituencies and for policy makers concerned with broadening access to public resources and fostering creative opportunities for free choice learning.

1 **I. Introduction**

We explore a variety of partnering behaviors across libraries, museums, and public broadcasters in seven communities, involving 26 different kinds of partnership arrangements.

5 **II. Individuals and Free-Choice Learning Opportunities**

The test of institutional and partnership value is whether learning opportunities expand. A conceptual framework supported by national survey data shows how characteristics of individuals and communities link to participation choices--the potential payoffs from partnering.

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The four types of institutions discussed here have different governing, financing, and legal arrangements. They also differ in the ways they engage their constituents, their organizational assets, and the imperatives and challenges they face.

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Institutional partnerships evolve through a sequence of program stages, from a partnership's gestation to its final termination or transformation. As a partnership changes, different partnering structures evolve.

63 **VII. Conclusions**

Partnership initiatives show that public institutions can be linked in ways that not only broaden opportunities for individuals but also provide unique public benefits to communities.

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The authors thank George D'Elia, Director of the Center for Applied Research in Library and Information Science at the State University of New York at Buffalo for use of the survey data he collected as part of this project, and Robin Redford for her help in field data collection. We thank Joey Rodger and Danielle Patrick Milam of the Urban Libraries Council for their insights, support, and sound advice, which made this publication substantially better than it would have been otherwise.

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And we thank the many local museum, library, public television, and public radio staff members for their contributions of time and talent to this effort.

Disclaimer

The views expressed here are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Libraries Council or the Urban Institute, its trustees or its funders.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Libraries, museums, and public broadcasters face an extraordinary challenge in the coming century. A surge of new populations, languages, and cultures has placed added demands on the content and quality of the services these institutions provide.

But innovative digital technologies offer exciting opportunities to meet this demand, even as they pose threats to traditional ways of doing business. Library, museum, and public broadcasting executives have begun to explore creative ways to seize these opportunities—through partnering with one another to expand and improve the services they provide.

We offer a framework here that helps in understanding how such partnerships can help executives of libraries, museums, and public broadcasters expand learning opportunities for a new urban America. The framework shows how different institutions offer different pathways to opportunity, so that partnerships can help increase the ways these organizations can connect to their audiences. It also shows how partnering can raise the quality of these opportunities, making them more rewarding to those who would seize them.

Partnerships are not necessarily easy, nor do they automatically lead to better programs. The institutions we studied have assets, but they also have liabilities. Partnering organizations need to get a fix on both, and on the ways they affect different types of projects, to minimize and mitigate the risks of failure. The partnerships we reviewed have found ways to do just that, even for innovative and complex projects. These examples of smart responses to problems offer guidance to others thinking about, or already involved in, partnerships with other institutions.

Cultural and educational institutions across the country are experimenting with partnerships in an effort to expand the range, quality, and accessibility of learning opportunities for America's citizens. Museums, libraries, and public broadcasters are

worthy members of this group. They all do cultural programming, and all have either deep connections to educational institutions or educational departments within their own organizations. At stake for all of them is their ability to attract the sustained engagement of citizens, which is essential to the survival of the institutions themselves.

Political, civic, and business leaders agree on the importance of continuing education to the life of the nation. Some have argued for a grand alliance of libraries, public television, museums, public radio, and elementary, secondary, and higher educational institutions across the country to further the nation's commitment to learning in all of its forms. This alliance, they say, would organize support for policies, programs, and research to further the vision of a continuously learning citizenry, workforce, culture, and community.

But such an alliance will have little traction among political and business supporters unless its members can demonstrate their ability to produce concrete improvements in the number, quality, and accessibility of learning opportunities for all citizens. This monograph shows how local partnerships among libraries, museums, public radio, and public television are doing just this.

EXHIBIT 1
Types of Partners Involved in Projects by Study Sites

SITE	PUBLIC LIBRARY	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	OTHER MUSEUM (HISTORY/SCIENCE/ART)	PUBLIC TV/RADIO
Chicago	✓	✓	✓	✓
Denver	✓		✓	
Cleveland	✓		✓	✓
Houston	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indianapolis	✓	✓		
Madison	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rochester	✓	✓	✓	

RESEARCH SOURCES AND METHODS

This monograph relies for the most part on field investigations carried out in 2001 and 2002 in seven communities—Houston, Denver, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Chicago, Madison, and Rochester. We selected these cities based on the variety of partnerships carried out by the four types of institutions that are our focus. In each city, we spoke with the directors of institutions involved in partnerships and staff responsible for day-to-day conduct of partnership activities. We also spoke with staff of institutions involved as secondary actors in these partnerships—those who played supporting roles but had no

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primary responsibility for the design or implementation of partnership initiatives. (Appendix I gives a complete list of persons we interviewed.)

The diverse institutions in our seven communities provide a rich set of comparisons. The public libraries range from mid-sized urban library systems, such as Madison Public Library and the Rochester Public Library, to large urban systems, such as the Chicago Public Library and the Houston Public Library. The museums vary considerably by size and content area. Children's museums are most common, with five of the seven cities having a local children's museum as principal partner. We found partnerships involving historical societies and museums in Denver, Madison, and Rochester; and art museums in Chicago, Denver, Cleveland, and Houston. Public radio and television stations were less common as partners, but we found them involved in partnerships in Chicago, Houston, Madison, and Cleveland. The report also relies on research carried out by Dr. George D'Elia, Director of the Center for Applied Research in Library and Information Science at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo. Supported by the same IMLS grant as the Urban Institute investigators, Dr. D'Elia was responsible for two surveys.

He engaged Goldhaber Research Associates to conduct a Random Digit Dialing Telephone survey in 100 of the largest US metropolitan areas. The 1,205 respondents were asked about their patronage of the institutions included in this survey, their interests and preferred modes of learning about their interests, and certain of their economic and demographic characteristics.

Dr. D'Elia and his staff also conducted a survey of library and museum directors and the chief executive officers (CEOs) of public radio and television stations in the top 100 U.S. metropolitan areas. Survey respondents were asked to report on their partnering activities, their reasons for partnering with any of the other three types of organizations, and their perceptions of their own and others' strengths as institutions. A supplement to the main survey asked the project managers of these partnerships to report on their activities.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section II provides a conceptual framework for assessing the opportunities and challenges presented by any partnering initiative. This framework builds on the premise that individual and community characteristics govern the participation choices institutions depend on for audience expansion and seek through partnering. Section III discusses the institutional assets and liabilities that must be taken into account when making partnering decisions. Section IV follows up this discussion with a review of different partnership structures and types of activity. Section V makes the point that partnership involves risks as well as returns and illustrates how partnerships can work to mitigate those risks. Section VI discusses how partnership structures inevitably change over time, as specific projects change or end. The report concludes with a brief discussion of how the types of partnerships reviewed here can help reshape public resources—to better meet free choice learning needs in our rapidly changing cultural and technological environment.

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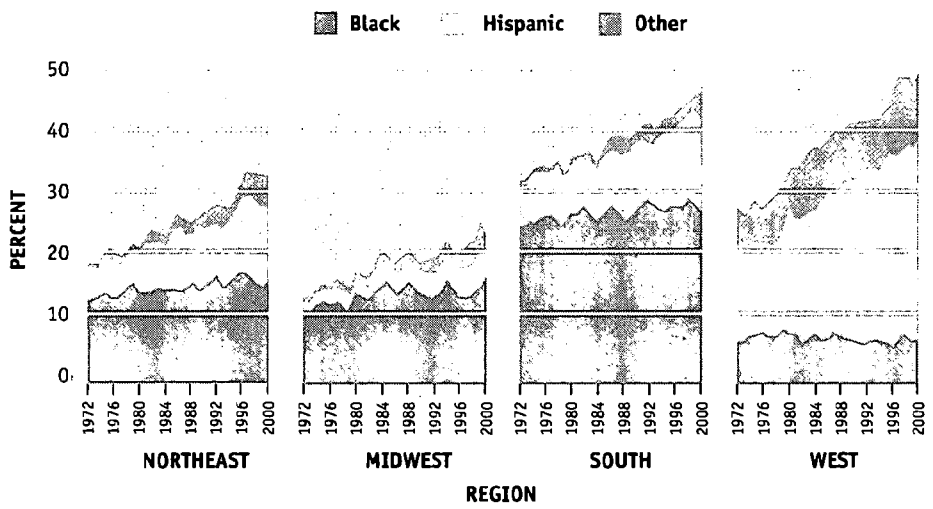
II. INDIVIDUALS AND FREE CHOICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The 2000 U.S. Census confirms what ordinary citizens know: Dramatic changes are under way in the American population as new immigrant groups change the demographic face of urban, suburban, and even rural communities. The most obvious example is the astronomical growth of the Hispanic population in places where few Latinos lived only twenty years ago. Since 1980, the Hispanic population of Atlanta has grown nearly 1,000 percent; of Portland, Oregon, 437 percent; of Indianapolis, 338 percent. This change has diversified both the economic and cultural mix of central cities and suburbs alike. More of today's urban Americans were born abroad than at any time since the last great wave of immigration at the turn of the 20th century. Nearly one-quarter of school-age children speak a language other than English at home.

These changes imply new and more diverse demands for cultural and educational opportunities than those traditionally provided by libraries, museums, and public broadcasters. The foreign language collections - increasingly known as community language collections – in most library systems have expanded rapidly over the last several years, as have demands for children's reading programs and adult reference services provided in languages other than English. Children's museums, science centers, art museums, historical societies, and other cultural and educational institutions have struggled to attract new patrons with exhibitions, programs, and events organized around new cultural themes.

Simultaneous with this demographic transformation and the new demands it brings are the continuing aftershocks of the high-technology revolution. Digital technology has democratized information in unprecedented ways, involving broad new access to ideas, images, and information, as well as the ability to reproduce and communicate them to others. Individuals now command "reference services" once

EXHIBIT 2 Percent of Public School Enrollment Grades K-12 Who were Minorities, by Region: October 1972-2000



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. October Current Population Surveys, 1972–2000.

available only in libraries; enjoy interactive learning experiences once available only in museums; watch, listen to, and even participate in cultural and public affairs programming once available only on public television and radio. Thus, these institutions confront new and serious competition for their services, and can no longer claim a unique custodial role for the services they typically provide. At the same time, digital technologies make possible new forms of programming that may allow libraries, museums, and public broadcasters to dramatically expand their cultural and educational offerings.

These new urban communities and new information technologies challenge libraries, museums, and public broadcasters to change the way they do business if they are to sustain their claims to public support. Innovations in institutional practices will help cultural and educational institutions increase the number and content, quality and accessibility of the learning opportunities they provide. But institution directors and staff can better understand how to increase learning opportunities by asking how and why individuals participate. The choices available to people have proliferated: How do people exercise them? New communities of people bring new interests and abilities to the urban mix: How do these influence what and where people seek to educate themselves or express themselves culturally? Does participation occur in ways that suggest effective collaborative opportunities? The following framework is helpful in answering these questions.

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF OPPORTUNITY

The framework presented here illustrates how individuals exercise choices to participate in cultural and educational opportunities. This individual point of view corresponds to a new paradigm for understanding individual learning activities. Developed by John Falk, and called "free choice learning," it looks at a world of individual learning activities that are freely engaged in, intrinsically rewarded, and not motivated by the formal requirements of educational institutions.[1]

The term free choice carries powerful and uniquely compelling connotations for Americans. Choice implies a range of alternatives or opportunities from which to choose, which embraces nearly every learning encounter one may have, ranging from personal and informal exchange to structured classroom settings. Choice also implies that the individual is the originator of his or her own experiences.[2] Empowering an individual to exercise choice, in other words, means shifting at least some responsibility for the creation of learning opportunities from the institution to the individual. This, in turn, implies that providers of learning opportunities must encourage individuals to creatively combine the various elements of educational experience. The individual, therefore, is the entry point of our framework.[3]

Exhibit 3 shows how individual factors combine with community factors to produce individual learning choices. A number of factors contribute to an individual's decision to participate in free choice learning activities, some tied directly to the person and others that can be influenced by the community. Individuals must have sufficient motivation to attend (which depends on their values, beliefs, and interests). To participate effectively, individuals also need resources (time, money, and skill) that not everyone has in equal measure. Communities can influence how participants connect to and become engaged in free choice learning—paths of engagement—as well as make available a structure of opportunity (programs and events). Note that paths of engagement can go both ways, with family and social ties, organizational affiliation, and business/professional relationships influencing individual motivations and resources as well as the structure of opportunity. Individual and community factors together constitute the necessary conditions for free choice learning—which help determine the resulting participation choice an individual makes (in terms of participation method, learning style, learning venue, and content). These participation choices are the primary product institutions are looking for when they decide to partner—with the hope of expanding the structure of opportunity available to the individual in ways that increase that individual's participation.

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[1] John Falk and Lynn Dierking, *Lessons Without Limit: How Free-Choice Learning is Transforming Education*. (Walnut Creek, CA: AtlaMira Press, 2002).

[2] David Carr, "Cultural Institutions as Structures for Cognitive Learning", in Cavaliere and Sgroi, *Learning for Personal Development, New Directions in Continuing Education*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992).

[3] This framework is based on theoretical and empirical research in the areas of political, arts, and cultural participation.

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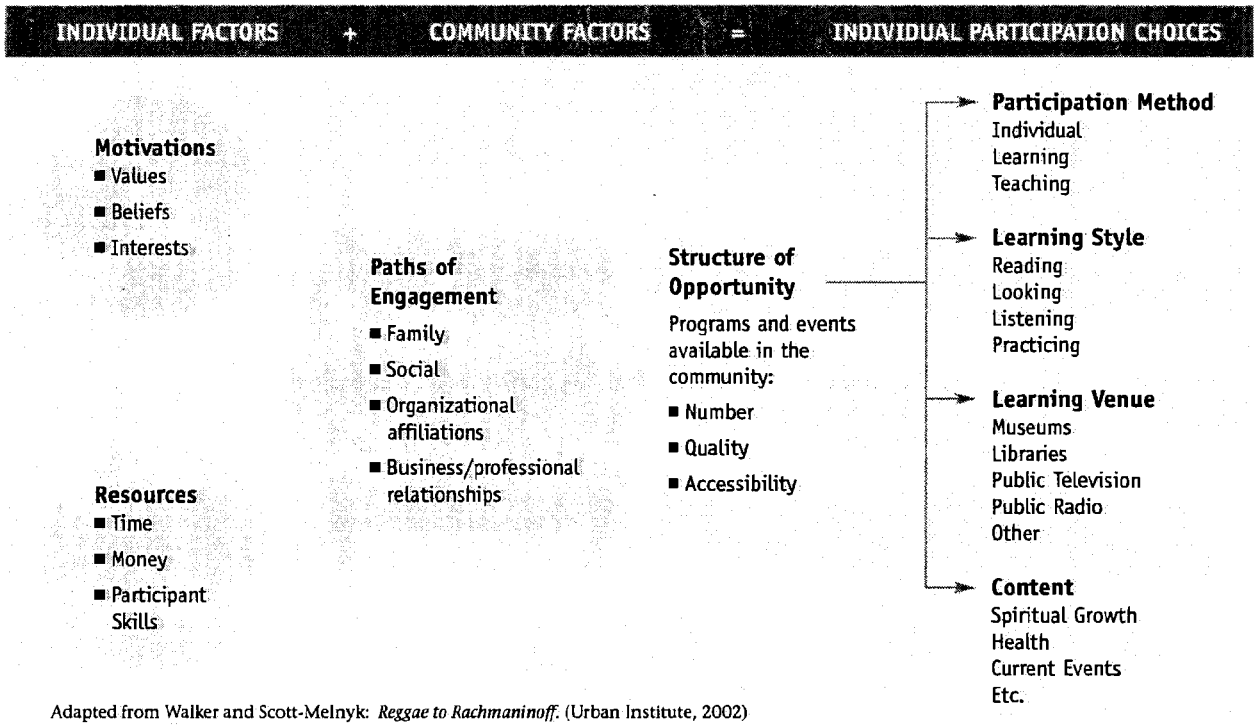
EXHIBIT 3
Framework for Participation in Free Choice Learning



Adapted from Walker and Scott-Melnyk: *Reggae to Rachmaninoff.* (Urban Institute, 2002)

It is useful to preface a more detailed discussion of the elements of our framework with a hypothetical example. Consider a person choosing to participate by learning about Mesoamerican art through attendance at a museum exhibition. This decision depends first of all on the individual having an interest in the subject (a motivation factor). The individual must also have the money to buy a ticket to the exhibition (a resource factor). The initial interest may have been influenced by family or social ties to tradition (a path of engagement), which may also influence the museum's decision to hold such an exhibit in that community (structure of opportunity). The individual's ultimate participation choice will involve individual learning (participation method) at the museum (learning venue) through looking at objects (a style of learning) and possibly a visit to the library as well (another learning venue) to reading about these objects from an ancient culture (another style of learning).

Individual Factors

Motivations cover a wide range of personal, social, cultural, and civic reasons people give to explain why they seek satisfaction in learning activities and attach importance to

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them, and why they choose to participate. Motivations may be grouped into four classes of learning: (1) to acquire formal education, from prekindergarten through postgraduate education, (2) to foster work-related interests, principally improvements to job skills, (3) to pursue personal avocations, including cultural interests, recreation, hobbies, casual inquiries, and (4) to meet personal and family needs, such as health and finances.

Resources include not only time and money, but also what we refer to as participation skills. Participation skills include awareness of opportunities to participate; knowledge of how to use libraries and museums; and aptitude and skill in assembling various pieces of information into a useful framework of understanding.[4] (Participation skills as they pertain to politics have been found to exert a particularly powerful influence over the frequency and type of political participation.) Navigating the offerings of different types of institutions requires different skills. Partnering may be particularly profitable in helping institutions to ease people from one kind of resource contribution to another, thereby diversifying their participation skills.

The salience of particular issues and the diversity of learning styles associated with them provide important information for institutional collaboration. The four major learning styles, as shown in Exhibit 3, are reading, listening, looking, and practicing. Exhibit 4 ranks the four areas of interest people believe are most usefully pursued

EXHIBIT 4
Learning Activities Most Usefully Pursued by Each of the Four Learning Methods

READING	RANK
Health Issues**	1
Spiritual/Personal Growth**	2
Current Events*	3
Science and Technology*	4

LOOKING	RANK
Arts	1
Nature and Environment	2
Health Issues**	3
Science and Technology*	4

LISTENING	RANK
Current Events*	1
Spiritual/Personal Growth**	2
Health Issues**	3
Understanding Others	4

PRACTICING	RANK
Job Skills	1
Spiritual/Personal Growth**	2
Basic Communication	3
Hobbies	4

Source: George D'Elia, National Survey of Markets for Museums, Public Libraries Public Television, Public Radio, and Their Engagement in Informal Learning Activities.

Note: * = Ranked among the top 4 choices in 2 learning styles. ** = Ranked among the top 4 choices in 3 learning styles.

[4] These skills are required no matter what type of learning activities are participated in, whether to find out about the latest John Grisham novel or the most recent translation of Dostoevsky's Brothers Karamazov.

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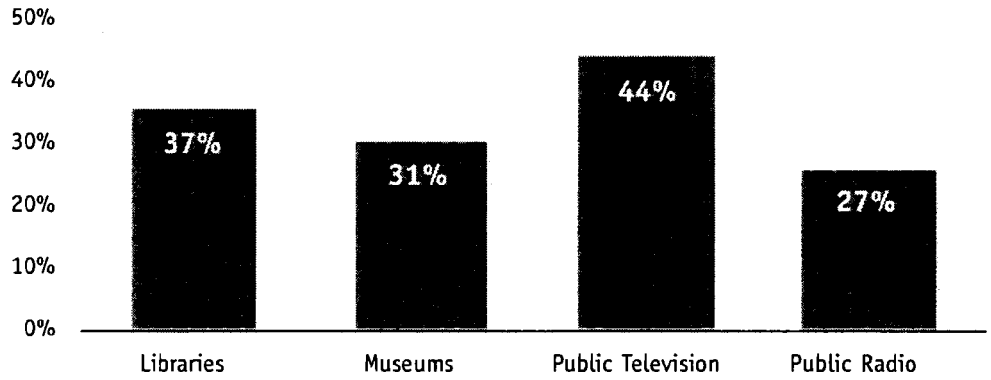
through each of the four learning styles. These match well with the typical offerings of museums, libraries, and public broadcasters—suggesting the value of institutional partnering around activities in the following areas: spiritual or personal growth (reading, listening, practicing), current events (reading and listening), and health issues (reading, listening, and looking and practicing).[5]

The good news for partnering is that people participate in multiple institutions. The national survey undertaken for this research indicates how frequently people who say they are "regular" users of the four types of institutions actually participate. Regular usership is defined as once a week or more for public TV, once a week or more for public radio, once a month or more for public libraries use and two times a year or more for museums. The results are shown in Exhibit 5. Public television heads the list, with 44 percent of the respondents saying they are regular users, compared with 37 percent for libraries, 31 percent for museums, and 27 percent for public radio.[6]

Of those households that say they are regular users (as shown in Exhibit 6), 37 percent participate in two institutions, 17 percent in three, and 7 percent in all four. Thus, 61

EXHIBIT 5 Percent of Regular Users of the Four Institutions



Source: George D'Elia. National Survey of Markets for Museums, Public Libraries Public Television, Public Radio, and Their Engagement in Informal Learning Activities.

Note: Regular users are individuals reporting public radio/TV use one or more times a week, library use once a month or more and museum use two or more times a year.

[5] These also are three of the four activities that people generally most often engage in (the other is non-job-skills or hobbies, learned by practicing).

[6] The figure reported here for regular radio listeners is higher than comparable surveys of public radio listenership. Mediamark reports an NPR audience of 7.5% in their Profile of 2002 National Public Radio Station Audiences and National Public Radio reports 12.6% regular listeners (Artibtron National, Act 1, Spring 2002).

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percent of those patronize more than one institution on a regular basis.[7]

EXHIBIT 6
Percent of Regular Users that Patronize One or More Types of Institution

PATRONIZATION	PERCENT
One type of institution	39%
Two types of institutions	37%
Three types of institutions	17%
Four types of institutions	7%
	100%

Source: George D'Elia, National Survey of Markets for Museums, Public Libraries Public Television, Public Radio, and Their Engagement in Informal Learning Activities. 2003.

Note: Regular users are individuals reporting public radio/TV use one or more times a week, library use once a month or more and museum use two or more times a year.

Community Influences

Paths of Engagement are the ways individuals become connected to, or engaged with, participation opportunities. People typically become involved in free choice learning through four types of relationships. First are family ties, which communicate information about opportunities or reinforce family commitments to the variety of interests and attachments that prompt learning activities. Second are social ties, which operate much the same way. Third are organizational relationships, including belonging to religious or volunteer organizations, attending schools, and taking part in other associations that directly sponsor learning activities. These groups communicate the importance of certain kinds of participation and connect people with the social networks that are the source of invitations or requests to participate. Fourth are business and professional relationships, which create expectations for learning.[8]

People belonging to different cultural communities may follow different paths of engagement. The centrality of the church to African American communities is well known, for example. The Latino reliance on family connections as a source of information and support is also widely observed. These different pathways are especially noteworthy in immigrant communities, which are forming ever-larger parts of American urban areas. Providers of free choice learning opportunities need to be aware of, and take advantage of, these different paths of engagement.

Paths of engagement also suggest certain kinds of community connections that may not be customarily regarded as profitable by cultural and educational institutions. In addition to the four types of institutions that are our focus here, for example, churches, commercial entities, and voluntary organizations become eligible partners for

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[7] This result is supported by other research. Indeed, the more active a participant, the more likely he or she is to participate in multiple forms of arts and cultural life (and in civic and community life, as well). Chris Walker and Stephanie Scott-Melnyk, *From Reggae to Rachmaninoff: Why and How People Participate in Arts and Culture.* (Urban Institute, 2002).

[8] Direct marketing by cultural and educational institutions to potential participants is another path of engagement.

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broadening learning opportunities. Individuals do not invent themselves from whole cloth. They acquire their tastes, preferences, biases, interests, resources, and social connections through the residential, professional, and cultural communities from which they come.

Structure of Opportunity encompasses the programs and events available in a community that match the interests of potential participants and that they perceive as accessible. Events and programs can range from casual encounters with sources of informal learning, sometimes from family members or friends, to attendance at programs sponsored by formal institutions. Opportunity has three basic aspects: (1) the number of educational and cultural programs or informal providers, (2) the quality of these offerings, and (3) their accessibility. Increases or decreases in the number, quality, or accessibility of educational and cultural programs and informal opportunities have the potential to encourage or constrain participation. Broadening opportunities allows a freer range of choice, which can be made available in ways that allow individuals to combine opportunities in the most appropriate ways for them.

Participation Choices

Methods of Participation refers to whether, and how often, as well as how people participate. Most discussions of participation in free choice (or informal lifelong) learning emphasize the role of individuals as "consumers." It is important to remember that people can participate in other ways as well: as supporters (through donations, volunteer work as docents or fundraisers, or political support); through membership on boards; or through direct provision of education and cultural opportunities, such as by teaching others.

Styles of Learning encompass the way people learn—the reading, looking, listening, and practicing styles already noted.

Learning Venues are the locations where participants engage in free choice learning. In addition to the institutions that are our focus here, they include schools and universities, parks, community centers, and a multitude of other sites, including participants' own homes.

Content refers to areas of individual interests. The top three reported in our household survey overall are spiritual growth, personal health, and current events.

Our survey evidence suggests that changes in structures of opportunity influence the types of free choice learning in which people are likely to engage. Expansion of the range of opportunities can influence (1) the frequency with which people participate, as new types of opportunities increase the likelihood of a match between educational and cultural offerings and people's motives for participating; (2) their abilities to participate; and (3) the ways they engage. Important to this interconnection among resources, motives, paths of engagement, and opportunities is the role of new opportunities in inducing people to discover new interests and to pursue them

actively. In other words, peoples' interests are by no means fixed. Their appetites can be whetted if appropriate opportunities are offered.

CREATION OF PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH PARTNERING

The policies, programs, activities, and assets of educational and cultural institutions, and their relationships with one another, create a rich range of free choice learning opportunities. Researchers and policymakers are accustomed to drawing distinctions among the variety of institutions based on size, nonprofit status, and other characteristics. But from the individual's perspective, our research suggests that it does not matter whether opportunities are provided by the public sector or private sector, whether they are free or paid for, whether they are provided by major cultural institutions or small community-based concerns, or whether they are provided by a lone institution or several acting in partnership. What matters are the number, quality, and accessibility of opportunities to participate.

Museums, libraries, public television, and public radio executives all understand that creation of public benefit is the core test of whether partnering is worth engaging in. In our survey of executive directors and chief executive officers of these four types of institutions, they were asked, among other things, to give the reasons why they had partnered with other institutions. The top two reasons given across all four types of institutions were (1) to expand educational opportunities and (2) to meet community need (see Exhibit 7).

EXHIBIT 7
Top Reasons for Partnering Offered by Institution Executives

LIBRARIES	RANK	ART MUSEUMS	RANK
To Enhance Use*	1	Expand Educational Opportunities***	1
Meet Community Need***	2	Expand Audience	2
Expand Educational Opportunities***	3	To Enhance Use*	3
Enhance Stature**	4	Meet Community Need***	4

PUBLIC TV	RANK	PUBLIC RADIO	RANK
Meet Community Need***	1	Enhance Stature**	1
Expand Educational Opportunities***	2	Expand Educational Opportunities***	2
Enhance Stature**	3	Meet Community Need***	3
To Be a Good Civic Player*	4	To Be a Good Civic Player*	4

Source: George D'Elia. Collaborations Among Museums, Public Libraries, Public Television Stations and Public Radio Stations: The Results of a National Survey.

Note: * = Ranked among the top 4 choices of 2 institutions.
** = Ranked among the top 4 choices of 3 institutions.
*** = Ranked among the top 4 choices across all 4 institutions.

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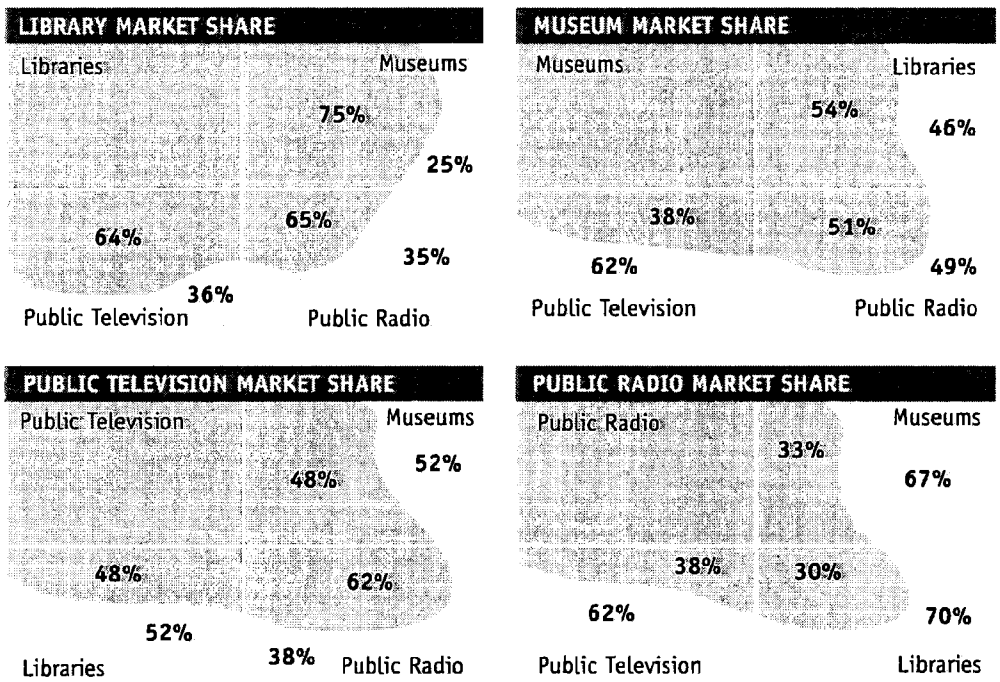
A particular value of our survey approach is that it ensured that these goals were not abstractions, but were anchored in the core missions and capabilities of the respondents' own institutions.

It may be surprising to readers that audience building or diversification was not the top-rated reason for partnering, even though representatives of all four institutions said this was an important factor influencing their partnering activities. Some of these activities were intended to increase the numbers of participants in institutional offerings, although few were obliged to show their funders or internal supporters that they were producing immediate audience development results. Partnering was not seen as compensation for institutional shortcomings. It is also important to emphasize that directors and CEOs did not partner because they wanted to reduce costs. Partnering was seen as primarily about improving the quality of the product they delivered.

What are the potential benefits from partnering in terms of expanded participation, on the assumption that partnering does improve product quality? Our research into market shares reveals substantial room for expansion. Exhibit 8 shows the currently overlapping market shares of the four types of institutions and, more important for our purpose, the shares of

EXHIBIT 8
Overlapping Market Shares of Libraries, Museums, Public Radio Stations and Public Television Stations



Source: National Survey of Markets for Public TV, Public Radio, Public Libraries and Museums, 2001

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each type of institution's primary market that are potentially available as targets for another type of institution through partnership efforts. The top left-hand square, for example, shows the opportunities for libraries. They currently reach 75 percent of the museums' clientele, leaving them a maximum of only 25 percent of that market to reach through museums as partners. They currently reach 65 percent of public radio's primary market, giving any partnership initiative with public radio a potential target of 35 percent of that primary market. For public radio, current penetration rates are generally low, yielding potential targets for partnership initiatives in the 62 percent to 70 percent range.

These findings make it clear that different types of partnering can be expected to yield different audience development results. Because untapped patronage is relatively small between libraries and public television, partnering may help improve the quality of offerings, but is unlikely to yield gains for either partner in audience shares. Overall, public radio appears to have most to gain in audience development from partnerships with other institutions. These institutions will gain less in audience expansion but can expect incremental improvements to quality made possible through the resources of public radio. It needs to be kept in mind in such efforts that the primary market of one's partner is likely to display somewhat different economic and social characteristics than one's own traditional clients, indicating the importance of identifying and taking into account those differences in efforts to reach those untapped participants.

****

We end this section by pointing out that adopting an individual's point of view makes it possible to ask questions in new ways, which can lead to a re-thinking of traditional institutional roles. A story from the history of housing policy makes the point: For decades, federal support for affordable housing came as aid to local public housing authorities, which built and maintained housing for poor and working-class families. Over the years, housing policy became defined in terms of the policies and activities of public housing agencies, which equated public support for their agencies with support for housing the poor. The liberating moment in housing policy came when legislators and policymakers began to ask not "What do public housing authorities need to better serve their clientele?" but "What does society need to do to ensure that citizens are better-housed?" The result was engagement of a wide range of private and nonprofit housing providers—leading to a substantial broadening in the policies, responses, and hence supporters of federal housing aid.

Understanding and acting upon the changing landscape of individual participant choice has implications beyond the survival of the four institutions that are the subject of this monograph. Business leaders have come to recognize their reliance on high-quality information and the abilities of their employees to analyze it effectively. Political and civic leaders have recognized the importance of citizens' active and informed engagement with one another and their government. In a similar way, the participation of individuals in cultural/educational free choice learning can be thought of as a crucial test of the value of the activities libraries, museums, and public broadcasters undertake and the partnerships they forge with one another to carry out these activities.

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III. THE ASSETS AND LIABILITIES OF PARTNERING

The different types of institutions that are our collaborators in this research each have their own typical governing structures, methods of finance, legal issues, forms of participant engagement and support, institutional assets, and environmental and internal pressures. These differences shape the nature of each institution's contributions to joint efforts, as well as the demands they place on partners and the expectations for reward they bring with them. For institutions to be attractive as potential partners, they must have a mission at least somewhat aligned with that of the potential partners, and they must be effective pathways into new communities of free choice learning practice. They must also have assets that are complementary and liabilities that are sufficiently offsetting not to outweigh those assets.

INSTITUTIONAL MISSIONS

The correspondence of mission among libraries, museums, and public television stations provides a natural basis for partnering. All are committed to expanding educational and cultural opportunities.

Libraries

The clientele of public libraries is as broad as the communities they serve. Their doors are open to people of all ages; of varying degrees of literacy, from early readers to independent scholars; and of varying interests, from lovers of popular fiction to devotees of the classics. The roles that the public library can play in a community may include provider of basic literacy, business and career information, a public commons, community referral, consumer information, cultural awareness, current topics and titles, formal learning support, general information, government information, information literacy, lifelong learning and local history and genealogy.[9]

[9] This list is from Himmel and Wilson, *Planning for Results: The Guidebook*, American Library Association, 1998.

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Each community shapes its public library differently, selecting its roles from these and other potential choices, assigning each role a priority, and designing and developing services to make these roles tangible and meaningful in the lives of the community's citizens. Some libraries follow this process informally. Others follow it formally—establishing, through the library board of directors and library administration, a mission statement, operational and materials selection policies, long-term plans, and yearly goals and objectives. Although each public library is unique in a sense, virtually all are built on the same ideological foundation: a belief in the right of all citizens—regardless of age, race, faith, personal beliefs, social status, physical abilities, or educational background—to enjoy free and equal access to the broadest possible spectrum of information. Here is an example:

The Cleveland Public Library's mission is to be the "best urban library system in the country by providing access to the worldwide information that people and organizations need in a timely, convenient, and equitable manner." The institution sees itself as a community leader in the area of public education, calling itself the "People's University."

Museums

Among other roles, museums serve as cultural conservators; they collect and interpret artworks, books, periodicals, maps, manuscripts, relics, newspapers, and audio and graphic materials; they maintain facilities that are at once museum, library, and research facility. Often they are connected to a broader set of institutions such as historic sites, school services, area research centers, and affiliated local societies. Museums often administer a program of artistic and/or historic preservation. Many publish scholarly or popular books and materials related to either exhibits or their holdings. Three kinds of museums appeared most often in our canvas of partners—children's museums, historical societies (or archives), and art museums. Here are examples of each:

> The Indianapolis Children's Museum's mission is to "create extraordinary learning experiences that have the power to transform the lives of children and families." To achieve this mission, the museum has outlined five key goals:
>
> 1) Create extraordinary family learning experiences.
>
> 2) Design and build the physical and virtual museum to meet the changing needs of our visitors, community, and staff.
>
> 3) Lead a revitalization effort within the neighborhood to create an extraordinary place for families to live, work, learn, shop, play and prosper.
>
> 4) Operate the museum as a world-class institution.
>
> 5) Ensure the financial means and reputation to fulfill the museum's mission.

The Wisconsin Historical Society, one of the oldest historical societies in the nation, is both a state agency and a private membership organization. It was founded in 1846, two years before Wisconsin became a state, and chartered in 1853. It is the oldest American historical society to receive continuous public funding and is charged, by statute, with collecting, advancing, and disseminating knowledge of Wisconsin and of the trans-Allegheny West. The society, according to its mission, engages "the public with the excitement of discovery, inspires people with new perspectives on the past, and illuminates the relevance of history in our lives today." The principles guiding that mission are to:

1) Reach out and partner with the broadest possible public.

2) Present and promote sound and authentic history.

3) Share our riches of staff, collections, and services in ways that captivate and respect our many audiences.

4) Collect and safeguard evidence of our diverse heritage according to the highest standards of stewardship.

The Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), though a much younger institution than the previous two museums, has a very similar statement of mission—to provide the Chicago area with an "innovative and compelling center of contemporary art where the public can directly experience the work and ideas of living artists, and understand the historical, social, and cultural context of the art of our time." The goal is to do so by engaging a "broad and diverse audience," creating a sense of community and creating an environment "for contemplation, stimulation, and discussion about contemporary art and culture."

Public Television

Public television programs have traditionally been distributed by broadcasting on a single channel or through a network of channels, though some stations have the capability of providing a second service on a local cable channel and most sell videocassette copies of programs they have produced. Over the last few years many stations have begun to supplement their broadcast programs by providing related materials on the World Wide Web. Public television stations are under a federal mandate to adopt new and powerful digital broadcast technologies. This shift will impose a heavy capital cost on broadcasters. It will also enable broadcasters to create new forms of interactive "television," able to exploit a vast archive of images, documents, books, and other material.

The mission of public television stations is to acquire, produce, and deliver cultural, educational, and informational programs and services to diverse audiences. Public television stations invest in production facilities and have the capability to produce very high quality programs that can attract audiences in a competitive marketplace. Here is an example:

The Cleveland Public Radio/Television corporation, WVIZ/PBS and WCPN public radio seek to strengthen "communities by providing distinctive, thought-provoking programs and services that enlighten, inspire, educate and entertain." This new corporation, called Ideastream, was formed when the two public broadcasting stations created a new organization to serve northeast Ohio. It distributes programs across an array of platforms, including videotapes, CD-ROM, internet, microwave signals, cable, and more. The two stations work together as one company, and have developed projects with the explicit intent of identifying what northeast Ohioans think about the region and how the public stations can help improve life here. Programming is being developed from "town hall" type meetings and will address a variety of listener and viewer concerns and input.

Public Radio

The public radio universe is comprised of nearly 700 noncommercial public radio stations that are generally owned by universities, local and state governments, libraries, or community nonprofit organizations. Stations vary widely in size from multi-million dollar organizations with hundreds of employees to those with few paid staff. Public radio stations range in format from classical music to news to a "mixed format" combining news and talk with music during mid-day and evenings.

Public radio stations air programming that is either created locally or that is purchased from the two national networks, Public Radio International (PRI) and National Public Radio (NPR). The vast majority of stations are affiliates of PRI and members of NPR. All stations operate autonomously from the national networks; they produce, purchase, and schedule programs according to their own market strategies and local listener preferences. In aggregate, approximately 47 percent of stations' schedules are made up of local programming and 53 percent is national programming, although these shares vary from station to station.

Here is an example of a public radio station mission:

Chicago Public Radio, WBEZ, has the following mission:

"Offer programs that speak with many voices to community needs, and are a reflection of the distinctive and diverse Chicago area. We help listeners learn about issues and ideas that affect the community, the nation, and the world.

"We produce, acquire, and distribute engaging, thoughtful, and entertaining programs of depth, breadth, diversity, and substance that speak powerfully.

"We are principally a broadcaster. We also serve our local and national community with supplemental distribution initiatives. We expand our outreach to the community and enhance our production effort through partnerships and educational programs with local and national institutions."

PATHS OF ENGAGEMENT

Sources of personal engagement (see Exhibit 9) are the pathways through which patrons engage the institution as participants and supporters. As noted, many people become involved in free choice learning through family and social ties that communicate information about opportunities, or reinforce family commitments to the variety of interests and attachments that prompt learning activities. Others become engaged through their organizational memberships, or through business and professional relationships that create expectations for, or produce an incentive to engage in, free choice learning.

EXHIBIT 9
Sources of Personal Engagement

	LIBRARIES	MUSEUMS	PUBLIC TV	PUBLIC RADIO
Family	Children's collections and storytime. Summer reading programs.	Family days, summer camps. Core programming for Children's Museums.	Extensive children's programming. Marketing of pre-school learning products. Trademark characters.	
Social and Community	Space for community meetings. Friends-of groups. Sponsorship of literary activities.	Museums. Friends-of groups. Some distance-learning activities.	Local public affairs programming. Pledge drives, volunteers	Public affairs programming. Literary activities.
Organizational	Reference collections, archives.	Private group viewings, programs and events.	Pledge drives, volunteers.	Pledge drives, volunteers.
Educational and Professional	Student use. Professional and business journals, periodicals, special reference collections.	School programs. Corporate programs and events, board memberships. Some distance learning activities.	Educational programming and distance learning broadcasts.	Special interest programming.

People's community affiliations are of great importance for our study of partnerships, insofar as many of the community connections people make are with organizations that, in turn, partner with one of the four types of institutions discussed. This means that these institutions, to varying degrees, are themselves pathways into communities of free choice learning practice—a feature that can make them attractive as partners.

Libraries, in particular, typically maintain well-developed relationships with local public schools, service organizations, and other community-based organizations that use neighborhood (and main) branches to hold meetings and put on community programs and events. Museums also maintain ties to local schools, offer educational

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and other programming, and sponsor support organizations active in some forms of community service.

Increasingly, public television stations have become involved in supporting community activities, sometimes tied to their children's programming. Public radio has established an important presence in local literary efforts. These connections all encourage feelings of familiarity, trust, habitual patronage, and active support.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES FOR PARTNERING

Assets refer to the comparative advantages institutions bring to free choice learning activities. Liabilities refer to the weaknesses or challenges faced by institutions as they strive to improve their cultural and educational offerings. Both assets and liabilities impel partnering activities and stand in the way of their constructive development.

Exhibit 10 groups commonly perceived assets and liabilities of our four types of institutions into four major categories: public perceptions of them, the scope and strength of their constituencies, their organizational technologies, and their corporate culture. These assets and liabilities are a synthesis of views elicited during research interviews from people involved in partnerships across institutional boundaries. In some cases, both assets and liabilities reflect directors' and staff views of their own institutions. The exhibit discusses each of the four categories of assets and liabilities briefly.

Public Perceptions

Commonly held views of the values, assets, and liabilities possessed by the partnering institutions are bound up with the forms of constituent engagement just noted. They merit separate discussion because of the importance of the engagement pathways they represent. These perceptions of the authenticity, authoritative character, public benefit, and other positive features of institutions are counterbalanced (to varying degrees) by negative perceptions of institutions as elitist (or proletarian), hidebound, shallow, or some other epithet. Just as goodwill has monetary value in the corporate community, so do positive public perceptions have value among public institutions.

In addition to their concrete ties with communities of free choice learning practice, each of the four types of institutions is branded by its history of public service—libraries as the "people's universities"; museums as the authoritative custodians of aesthetic, cultural, historical, or scientific value; public broadcasters as mass providers of unique cultural, educational, and public affairs information, interpretation, and entertainment. An important reason for institutions to partner with one another is to create new opportunities to invest these reputational assets.

Constituent Scope and Strength

The most active users of institutions donate time and money to their efforts, as board members and funders. These constituents comprise networks of relationships

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EXHIBIT 10

Commonly Perceived Assets and Liabilities of Partners

INSTITUTION	PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS	CONSTITUENT SCOPE AND STRENGTH	ORGANIZATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES	CORPORATE CULTURE
Public Libraries	Highly valued civic institution available to all. Highly ranked in citizen surveys. Seen as comfortable, safe places for families. Diminished relevance in digital age. Uneven quality of services in tough fiscal environment.	Ties to diverse communities. Strong support across races, classes, generations. Beholden to political demands for services. Barrier to reallocation of resources.	Public collections, free internet access, historical archives. Decentralized network of facilities. Strong community programming. Staff expertise in reference, research, information management. Outdated collections, inaccessible archives, deteriorating facilities, shortage of technically trained staff.	Commitment to service, freedom to choose. Inward looking. Conservative. Defensive.
Art Museums	Source of civic pride. Viewed as authoritative cultural voice. Increasing prominence of outreach/ public education. Elitist and aloof. Diminishing relevance in digital age, era of "democratizing" culture.	Ties throughout political, civic and economic and philanthropic elites. Access to major sources of financial support. Shallow support in minority, non-European cultural communities.	Collections, public education programs, prominent facilities. Staff research and curatorial expertise. Strong development departments. Inaccessible collections, not connected to community arts and culture. Copyright issues.	Commitment to excellence, scholarship, integrity of curatorial standards. Conservative, inward looking.

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EXHIBIT 10

Commonly Perceived Assets and Liabilities of Partners (continued)

INSTITUTION	PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS	CONSTITUENT SCOPE AND STRENGTH	ORGANIZATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES	CORPORATE CULTURE
Public TV Stations	**Unique source of cultural, public affairs and children's programming. Valued alternative to commercial media. Timely public affairs programming.** Elitist adult programming. Lack of audience in segments between children and older adult viewers.	**Ability to appeal directly to users for funds. Demonstrated community support. National sources of financial / political support.** Shallow support in minority, non-European cultural communities. No strong ties to philanthropic funding. Lack of discretionary funding.	**Production technology and staff expertise. Connection to national production and distribution networks. Brand identity.** Large capital requirements for digital conversion. Upcoming shortage of program content. Lack of digital asset management standards. Copyright issues.	**Commitment to relevance, timeliness, technical quality, production values.** Medium over message; form over content.
Public Radio Stations	**Unique source of cultural and public affairs programming. Valued alternative to commercial media. Timely public affairs programming.** Elitist. Programming primarily for older listeners.	**Ability to appeal directly to listeners for funds. Demonstrated community support. National sources of financial / political support.** Shallow support in minority, non-European cultural communities. No strong ties to philanthropic funding. Lack of discretionary funding.	**Production technology and staff expertise. Connection to national production and distribution networks. Brand identity.** Lack of local content. Large capital requirements for digital conversion. Upcoming shortage of prgram content. Lack of digital asset management standards. Copyright issues.	**Commitment to relevance, timeliness, technical quality, production values.** Medium over message; form over content.

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throughout communities. And these extensive connections are, at least in principle, exploitable by partners engaged in joint activities. The creation of new networks of relationships as a result of partnering activities is one of the enduring public benefits of partnership formation.

Constituencies also are liabilities, however, insofar as they constrain the kinds of activities viewed as appropriate or beneficial to the institution. Each of the four types of institutions is under pressure to demonstrate its value to the public. These pressures operate differently on different institutions, however. Libraries are called upon to respond to the everyday needs of increasingly multicultural populations, who prefer materials and staff support in languages other than English and Spanish. Immigrants tend to require different kinds of services than do native-born library patrons. These new demands come at a time when municipal budgets are once again under stress, and libraries must bear a share of the burden of fiscal retrenchment.

Similarly, many museums are viewed as failing to keep pace with changes in urban communities, putting pressure on these institutions to diversify their patronage, staff, leadership, and boards. Public television and radio continue to be regarded by some as programming for only the most educated listeners (emphasizing classical and European culture, for example) putting pressure on these institutions to justify the public tax revenues they receive. They are under Federal mandates to convert to digital technologies, opening up multi-channel possibilities and substantially increasing their potential demand for new programming content.

Organizational Technologies

These are the physical, human, and technical assets of institutions, and the typical ways they are combined to produce public benefits. Within museums, for example, curatorial skills and practices are "technologies" just as much as are the skills and equipment required to produce audio or video programming.

These technologies have evolved over decades (if not generations) of practice, and however confining they appear to be to efforts to create new policies and programs, they arise out of the institutions' core mission. These technologies pertain in part to (1) the work styles of specific disciplines, from the typically individual approach of curators or reference librarians to the team approaches of television and radio production staff; and (2) the typically extended time frames that mark development of museum exhibitions and the tight turnaround expected in production of public affairs programs. They also extend to the basic relationships between the staff of institutions and ordinary patrons, as in the agnostic approach of librarians to the content of images and text, or the authoritative interpretation of curators of exhibits or producers of certain types of broadcast programming.

Organizations need the technologies to function, but they can become straitjackets of institutional flexibility. Work routines make efficient performance of core organizational tasks possible, but they sometimes become decoupled from their

underlying purposes. This is particularly likely when new activities require different kinds of practice, which was often the case in the partnerships we reviewed.

Such technologies create their own imperatives, related to the need to incorporate new technologies into institutional programs and practices. Widespread internet availability is a common challenge to all the types of institutions noted here, but they are affected in different ways. Libraries are obliged to provide internet access to patrons—an expansion of services but also a challenge in terms of access to material that may be unsuitable for public view. All institutions have established some form of Web presence, including e-catalogues and databases, virtual museum tours, and video and audio streaming. These represent unprecedented opportunities to open up access to collections and programs, and have been an important source of partnering behavior.

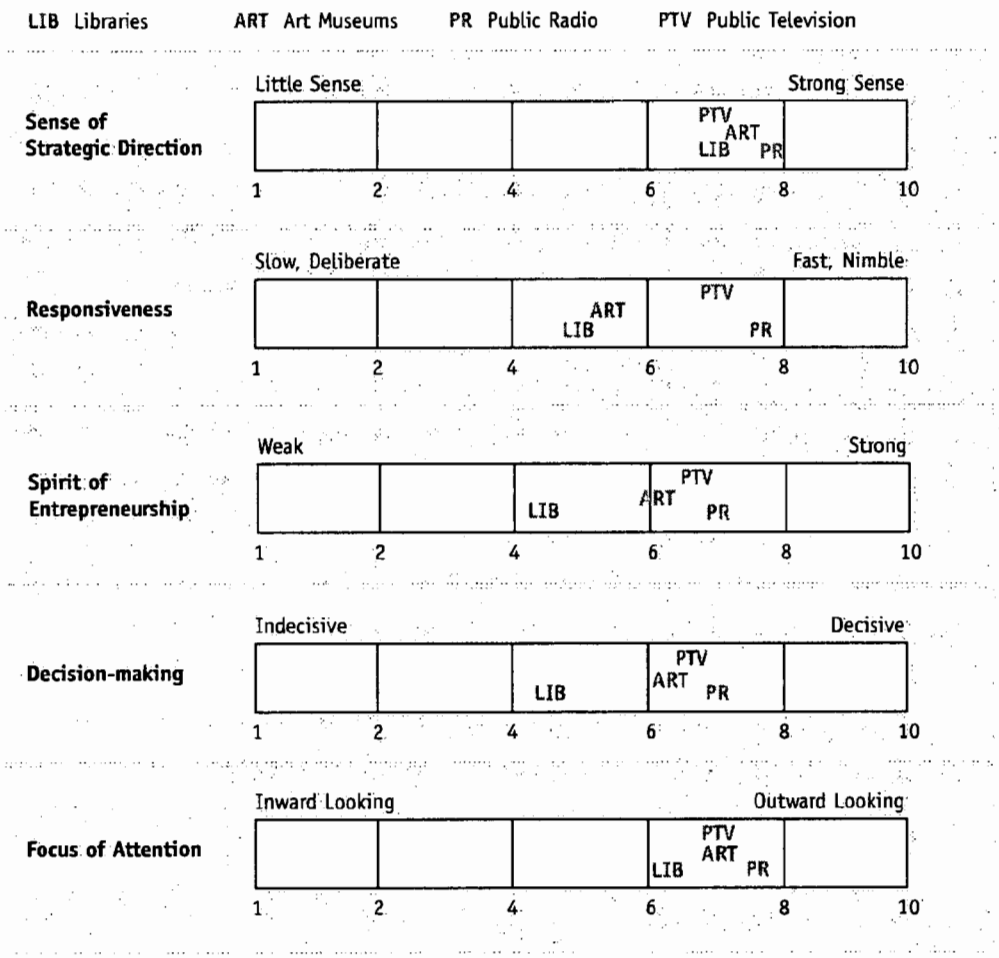
Particularly important for public broadcasters are the new obligations and opportunities posed by digital broadcasting. The federally mandated shift to digital television imposes large capital costs on public television stations. It also stimulates strong demand for new content, which museums and libraries have been called upon to help satisfy. These technologies offer exciting new opportunities to substantially widen community access to cultural opportunities, as some of our partnerships show.

Corporate Culture

Corporate culture consists of the norms, obligations, "authorities," and types and sources of information that allow people to form productive and trusting relationships with one another. These aspects of corporate culture define relationships among staff members in different departments, between staff and directors, between leaders and board members. But they can make relationships across organizations difficult, particularly when they interfere with clear communication or undermine agreement on what constitutes "quality" work. For example, public broadcasters exert a unique claim to relevance based on their ability to respond quickly to pressing concerns of the day (indeed, of any given day) with clear and forceful messages. Museum staff exert a unique claim to cultural stewardship based on the depth of their understanding of art, science and technology, and natural history and how these may have changed over thousands of years. Broadcasts may be written and produced within hours; museum exhibitions may require years to fund, curate, assemble and install. These very different styles of work and professional imperatives are well understood and valued within each institution; across institutions, they may be misread and dismissed.

Corporate culture pervades institutions, forming an important part of their public persona. Evidence shows, for example, that libraries are not viewed as particularly entrepreneurial by the directors of art museums or public television or public radio stations. In contrast, public radio stations are viewed by directors of other institutions as entrepreneurial and responsive. Exhibit 11 shows the average ratings given each institution by their counterpart CEOs in the other three institutions on five aspects of corporate culture. Ratings were given on a one-to-ten scale.

EXHIBIT 11
Director's Average Ratings of Institutional Characteristics of Libraries, Art Museums, Public Radio and Public Television



CORE CHARACTERISTICS IMPORTANT TO PARTNERING

Exhibit 12 shows the three structural aspects of the four institutional types that are important to understanding the opportunities and challenges partnering entails. These aspects—governance, finance, and legal issues—pertain to the core structural properties of each institution and, unlike the assets and liabilities discussed above, are relatively fixed.

Governance

Governance refers to the form of the institution's corporate decision making. All the partnerships we reviewed had a corporate board as the institutional decision maker. These boards nearly always have been supportive of the activities carried out by the

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institutions they govern, and on some occasions have been an important source of support, if not the impetus, for new institutional directions. Board support for major new institutional commitments appears most common among private sector institutions, which do not operate under the same political constraints as do politically appointed or elected boards that govern public libraries.

Finance

All the types of institutions in our study rely heavily on public support—in the form of tax revenue for public libraries, and individual donations for museums and public broadcasters. Libraries enjoy the relative predictability of tax support, which conveys financial stability that museums, for example, may lack. But museums draw more freely on foundation support, which is helpful in making innovation possible. Public broadcasters, like libraries, have the advantage of tax support, including federal and state tax supported contributions. Broadcasters and most libraries get some combination of local, regional, and national foundation support, which helps fund

EXHIBIT 12
Core Characteristics of Partners, By Institution Type

INSTUTUTION	GOVERNANCE	FINANCE	LEGAL ISSUES
Libraries	Public agency, Politically appointed or elected board.	General tax revenues, some dedicated taxes, foundation support.	Freedom of speech issues re: collection content and internet access. Copyright issues. Usually required to provide free access.
Museums	Government or Nonprofit. Self-perpetuating board.	Individual, corporate, foundation contributions; government support; and earned income.	Free speech issues re: exhibition content; image ownership; cultural repatriation; authenticity.
Public TV Stations	Nonprofit. Diverse board selection and composition depending on ties to state government, universities.	Federal and state, local and national corporate, local and national foundation revenue, listener contributions.	Restrictions on political speech (Fairness Doctrine); liability for program content.
Public Radio Stations	Nonprofit. Diverse board selection and composition.	Federal and state, local and national corporate, local and national foundation revenue, listener contributions.	Restrictions on political speech (Fairness Doctrine); liability for program content.

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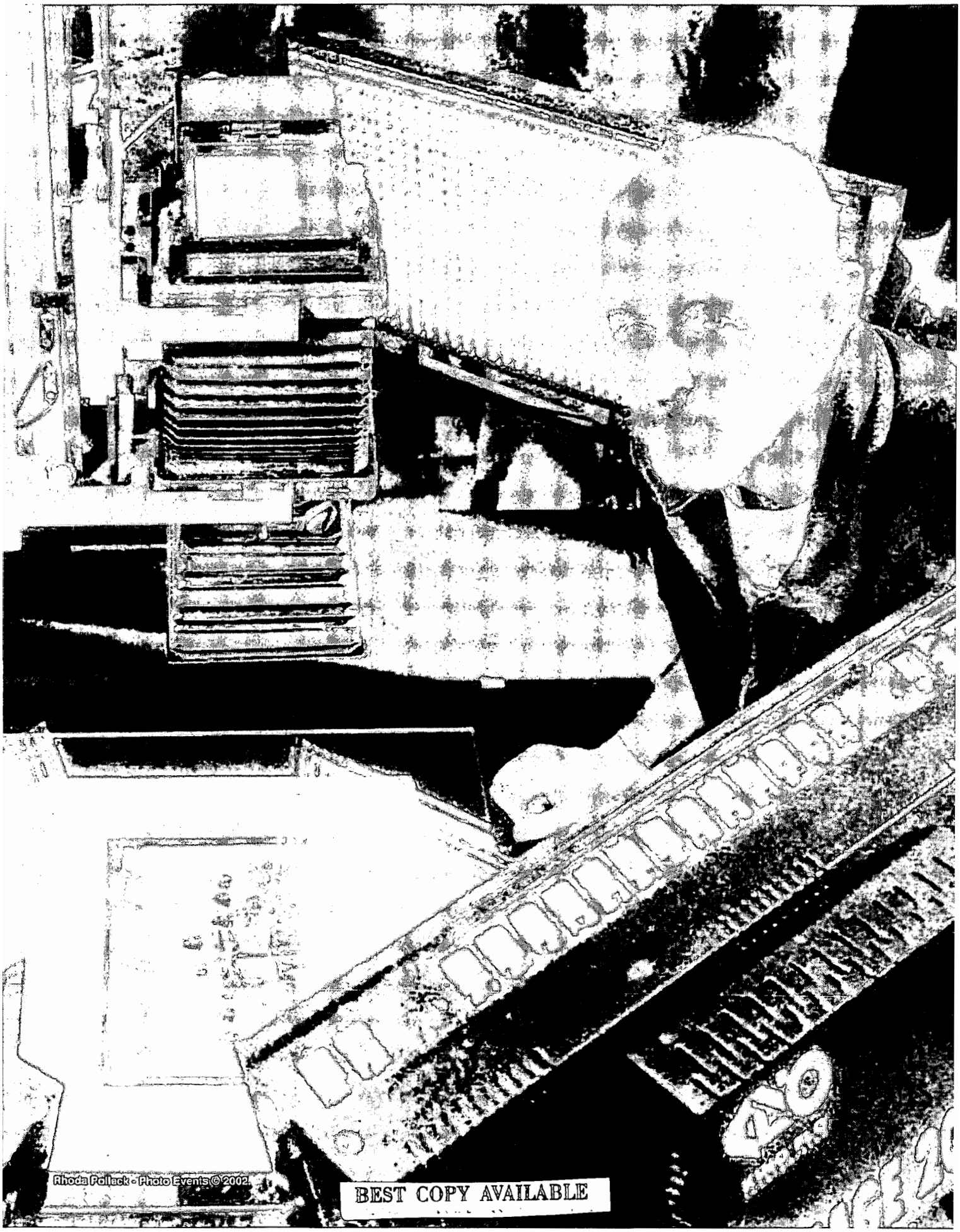
new institutional directions. In addition, public broadcasters and museums get corporate contributions, often in the form of underwriting programs or exhibitions.

Legal Issues

The statutory constraints under which institutions operate are also an important structural factor. Libraries operate within the parameters established by laws in the individual states. Laws address such things as funding and governance structures, qualifications for directors, and requirements for services to be made available without cost. Public broadcasting is responsive to federal law and regulation, including FCC monitoring of employment practices and requirements having to do with program sponsorship and underwriting. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, established by the federal government to channel support to television and radio stations, includes licensing language with certain performance obligations to qualify for funding. Moreover, as a venue for public speech, they operate under libel law constraints from which libraries and museums are typically free. Rarely are museums guided or restrained by a body of law unique to their institutions.



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IV. PARTNERSHIPS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Institutional partnerships can substantially increase opportunities for community members to engage in free choice learning. However, a broad new set of organizational challenges often accompanies these partnerships. Partnerships don't exist in the abstract—they are formed and carried out in the context of specific activities and concrete tasks. The ability to meet their challenges depends upon the nature of these activities and the institutional characteristics of the partners, including the assets and liabilities they bring to collaborative efforts.

PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

Partnership arrangements may take on a variety of forms, as defined by the numbers of partners, their responsibilities, and the level of influence they have over decisions taken by the partnership. In corporate law, legal forms of partnership distinguish between general and limited partners, each with different responsibilities and claims on the benefits from joint enterprise. General partners have the most at risk but the most to gain from partnership activities; limited partners bear limited risks, but they can expect correspondingly limited gains.

Most of the partnerships we reviewed included only two "general" partners. But even between two partners, decision-making responsibility tended to lodge more completely with one partner or the other. When multiple parties were involved in defining and carrying out the work of the partnership, some of the partners indeed played more limited roles. For example, in the Colorado Digitization Project, the extension of the project to small historical societies around the state after most of the major project decisions had been made (and risks taken) reflected engagement of more and more limited partners as the effort progressed. Although not among the

partnership arrangements we reviewed, Connecticut Public Broadcasting carried out a project supported by Penn State and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Partners in Public Service initiative, which created formal tiers of partnerships to reflect differing levels of "willingness and investment in the project." [10]

Partnerships need not involve formal marriages, codified in the form of legal agreements, memoranda of understanding, or contracts. But most of the partnerships we reviewed did cement their relationships in this way, in large part because partners' respective obligations were stipulated by grant agreements between project applicants and government or foundation funders. Regardless of the formal specification of tasks and responsibilities, most negotiation around tasks and schedules took place informally, leading to not-always-documented but well-understood assignment of responsibilities.

PARTNERING ACTIVITIES

We identified four classes of partnering activities, defined by the types of resources required for their conduct and the purposes for which these activities were undertaken (see Exhibit 13). These classes of activities—marketing/outreach, joint programs,

EXHIBIT 13
Categories of Partnering Activities and Typical Effect on Free Choice Learning Opportunities

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
Outreach / Marketing	Coordinated efforts to publicize offerings, recruit participants, offer discounts.	Increase access
Digitization	Digitization of images and archival materials, such as maps, plans, legal agreements, and letters for web-based distribution.	Increase access Create new opportunities
Joint Production	Programs and exhibits that rely on contributions of content, venue, or both from different institutions.	Create new opportunities Increase access Increase quality
Shared Facilities / Infrastructure	Efforts to jointly develop or improve buildings, shared sites, common technologies.	Create new opportunities Increase access Increase quality

[10] PIPS, (6)

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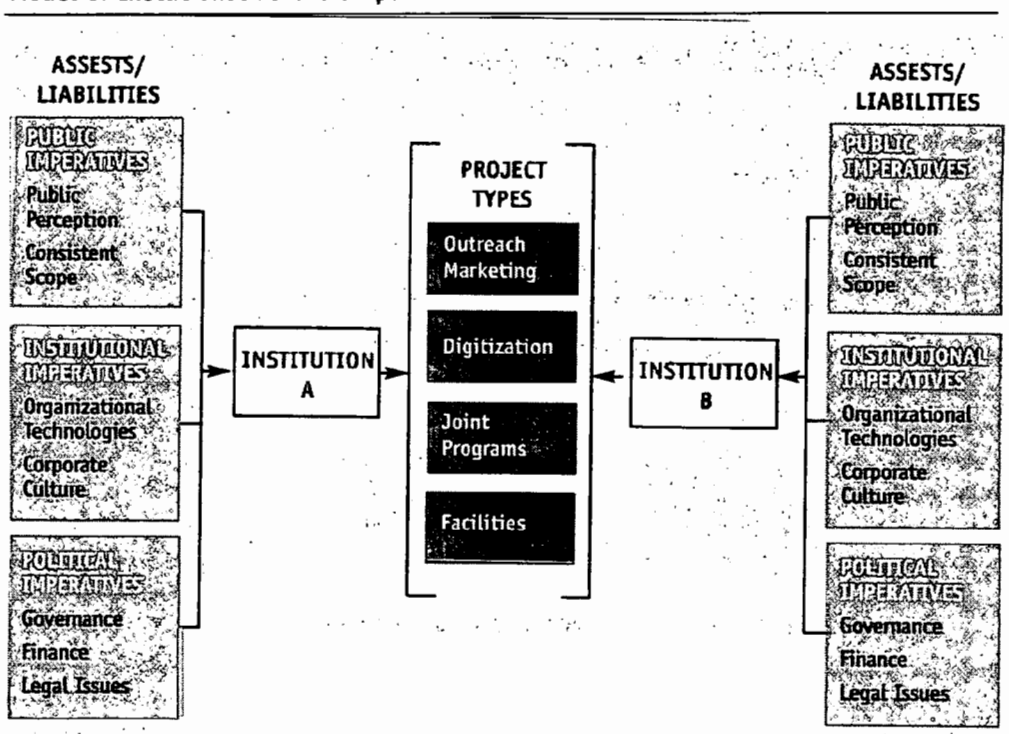
digitization, and shared facilities/infrastructure—are based on the resources these activities demand of the institutions that pursue them. (Several of the projects we visited had components that could be placed into multiple categories.)

Each activity class has different effects, as shown in Exhibit 13, on the number of educational and cultural programs or informal providers, the quality of these offerings, and their accessibility. Creation of new programs, improvements to the quality of educational and cultural offerings, or increases in community access to programs and informal opportunities can encourage broader, deeper, or more diverse participation in free choice learning opportunities.

Exhibit 14 illustrates how different activities draw upon different institutional assets. Some efforts involve the skill, experience, and patience of individuals willing to work in concert with one another to engage the public in new ways. Others use new technology to convert documents into digital form, making it possible to distribute images more broadly than ever thought possible only a decade ago. The former are relatively inexpensive and easily incorporated into the current policies and practices of the respective partners. The latter have high start-up costs and can be expensive to sustain over time.

EXHIBIT 14
Model of Instutional Partnerships



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The four asset types described above can be grouped into two general classes—public assets consisting of positive public perceptions and engagement of core constituencies and organizational assets consisting of core technologies and corporate culture. These assets are the source of institutional contributions to project activities; rewards from participation also fall into one of these two classes. (Recall, however, that these assets also bring corresponding liabilities, which constrain institutions' abilities to carry out activities, and to partner, effectively.) The exhibit also shows that pursuit of collaborative project activities also depends on other core features of the institutions—their governance, financial, and legal characteristics.

Outreach/Marketing

Outreach and marketing projects get the word out about the best each institution has to offer. They aim to increase usage of existing resources, not to develop wholly new programs. They are explicit efforts to engage their partners' constituents, drawing on established goodwill and community reputation. These efforts usually do not require substantial amounts of new investment because they rely primarily on already-built capacity within partnering institutions.

Partnerships engaged in outreach are both common and varied in our sample of partnership sites. Outreach projects in our sample fall into two categories: (1) those designed to engage existing patrons in new ways and (2) those designed to engage a new group of patrons. Examples of the first include development of museum discovery kits, which included videos, books, manipulative objects, and other learning resources, made available through library branches. Children can check them out like any other library material to take home and explore. A summary of these projects are included in Exhibit 15.

An example of the second is the Art Access program in Chicago, a partnership between Chicago Public Library and more than a dozen area museums. The program makes getting a free pass to the city's world-class museums as easy as checking out a book. Art Access passes, which are cataloged and charged to a patron's library card, are available at all 78 branch library locations. This program allows parents and children easier access to Chicago's educational and cultural institutions, without requiring new resource investments. Local branch libraries check out cards that grant the card holder free family access to local museums. All that is needed is the production of plastic access cards and assignment of a bar code so that they can be checked out on a patron's library card. For the museum staff, participation is even easier. The Access Cards program simply notifies the front line staff that the new cards entitle holders to free museum admission.

Each of the four classes of activities, including this one, requires certain kinds of contributions from partners, who expect some return from their investment. In the real estate development industry, assessments of whether certain types of investments are worthwhile in view of the returns they generate are called development pro-formas. Similarly, in considering whether partnerships are worthwhile, partners can

EXHIBIT 15
Outreach and Marketing Projects

SITE/PROJECT	PARTNERS	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Indianapolis: InfoZone Discovery Kits	Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library & Indianapolis Children's Museum	Discovery kits (media/project bags filled with videos, books and other educational materials) are developed by library and museum staff. The bags are checked out of the InfoZone by anyone with a valid library card.
Chicago: Art Access Cards	Chicago Public Library, Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, Grant Park Museums, Lincoln Park Zoo	The Access Card program, available at all 78 Chicago branch locations, allows a library patron to check out a small plastic card granting free family admission at a participating Chicago museum for an entire week.
Chicago: Chicago Matters (series cross promotion)	Chicago Public Library, Chicago Public Television (WTTW), Chicago Public Radio (WBEZ), The Chicago Reporter & Chicago Community Trust	Chicago Matters series video, audio and text materials are archived in all branch libraries. The series gets cross promotion on WBEZ and WTTW. The Library sponsors the opening event.
Houston: Discovery Kits	Houston Museum of Natural Science, Houston Public Library	Discovery Kits support Museum outreach to library branches by making instructional materials, objects, and education staff available to support story hours and other activities in branch libraries.
Cleveland: Museum Walk	Cleveland Museum of Art, Museum of Natural History	Museums sponsor family days and coordinate hours.

construct their own pro-forma analysis. Exhibit 16 describes the contributions and returns for outreach and marketing projects.

Joint Programming

Joint programming projects require two or more partners to collaborate to produce programs and events. Joint programming typically requires that partners explore new ways of providing services, rather than simply refining or extending services that rely on existing competencies and technologies.

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EXHIBIT 16
Investment Pro Forma for Outreach and Marketing

INSTITUTION	CONTRIBUTION	RETURNS
Library (Chicago Art Access Cards)	Branch libraries manage the access cards by incorporating them into routine circulation. Cards are charged to a patron's library card like other books or media. Library promotes Art Access program at the local branches.	Patrons get a new set of cultural services/opportunities at their local branch library. Access Cards can attract new patrons who may not go to branch libraries for traditional services but are drawn in for new program. Tie to circulation process may induce a continuing relationship to these new patrons.
Museum (Chicago Art Access Cards)	Museums assume the costs of Access Card production. Museums assume the costs of family admission.	Patrons who might not access a museum due to cost or some other barrier are given a new opportunity to do so through an institution that may be more familiar or convenient to them. Museums gain greater visibility in the Chicago neighborhoods through the program. Increased public reputation as a civic player for institutions that are often seen as national resources, but less responsive to local needs. Allows museums to target marketing in select communities by analyzing card use data.
Public Radio (Chicago Matters - Cross Promotion)	Cross promotion of citywide reading, discussion, and broadcasting program is done through regular broadcast schedule. Radio needed to inform library of programming in advance to help with the libraries program planning and for the town hall meetings that were part of the series.	Radio station gained 78 distribution points for past programming through information packets in local library. Library resources helped broadcasters sponsor events that required a physical space, such as town hall meetings. Program made a concrete connection between the radio station with other public affairs institutions in the city.

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EXHIBIT 17
Joint Programming Projects

SITE/PROJECT	PARTNERS	SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Houston: Travelling Art Exhibits	Houston Public Library, Houston Museum of Fine Arts	Fifteen-year long collaboration to bring small exhibitions of original art to library branches, which hold program activities tied to objects on view, including storytimes, lectures for seniors, after-school programs, and art-making workshops.
Houston: ScienceQuest	Houston Museum of Natural Science, KUHT Channel 8	Series of weekly 30-minute live interactive science programs for students, produced by Channel 8 using the Museum's staff, research and objects. Supporting lesson plans allow students to conduct experiments and do other in-classroom activities related to topics explored in the broadcasts.
Denver: Real West Exhibition	Denver Public Library, Denver Museum of Art, Colorado State Archives	Collaborative, multi-site exhibit on themes from Western history drawing from partners' collections. Staff from three institutions jointly designed, curated, assembled, and installed the exhibition.
Wisconsin: Wisconsin Stories	Wisconsin Historical Society & Wisconsin Public Television	Partners created a new documentary television series highlighting Wisconsin history. The Wisconsin Stories project drew upon the holdings and resources of the Wisconsin Historical Society and the video production and documentary expertise of Wisconsin Public Television.
Chicago: Chicago Matters Series	Chicago Public Library, Chicago Public Television (WTTW), Chicago Public Radio (WBEZ), The Chicago Reporter & Chicago Community Trust	Chicago Matters partners collaborate on the selection of a series theme one year in advance. Each series is designed to enhance public understanding of a policy matter affecting the Chicago region and is selected through a process that includes staff from the various institutions. Past Chicago Matters series have addressed issues of health, housing, immigration, regionalism, religion and violence.
Chicago: Contemporary Art Lecture Series	Chicago Public Library & Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art	MCA provides a contemporary art lecture series in six CPL branch libraries. Lectures are given February through May of each year and are arranged by a museum education staff member and staff member at the participating branch library.
Madison: Discovery To Go	Madison Public Library & Madison Children's Museum	The Discovery To Go project used the library's book mobile to conduct outreach to children and youth in resource poor communities throughout Madison. The partners worked with 10 local day care and community centers to provide the service. Library and museum staff developed the curricula, transported materials and delivered the programs.

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EXHIBIT 18
Composite Investment Pro Forma for Joint Programming Projects

INSTITUTION	CONTRIBUTION	RETURNS
Library	Made branch library spaces available for museum exhibits and lectures and public radio outreach activities. Collaboration with museum staff to decide program content. (Houston, Chicago). Contributed art works and photographs from special collection of regional and historical subjects. (Denver)	Improved variety and quality of library programming. Attraction of seniors and others to library branches for special programming. Opened up access to collections. Staff learned value of museum curation, of interpreting context and meaning of objects. Increased public recognition of value of library archives. Expanded knowledge of museum collections.
Museums	Contributed art and artifacts and time and expertise of education department staff, curators and other lecturers. (Houston, Chicago) Contributed art works and photographs from special collection of regional and historical subjects. Coordinated partners' activities. (Denver). Contributed text, images, and artifacts as well as experts in a wide range of fields. Connected broadcasters to local historical societies and schools. (Wisconsin, Houston).	Improvement in accessibility of museum programs to diverse groups of library branch patrons. Improvement to staff understanding of the learning styles and interests of different cultural communities. Learned from library staff the importance of clear and understandable interpretation of exhibition items, of a narrative or literary point of view. Expanded knowledge of library's collections. Significant expansion of public information about and knowledge of holdings and staff expertise. Increase in reputations of curatorial and research staff. Strengthened relationships between local affiliates and State Historical Society (Wisconsin). Created staff and organizational capacity to produce high-quality programming. Increased museum reputation beyond city and state boundaries. (Houston.)
Public TV	Technical support and production facilities to produce ongoing programming. Brought strong public identification with high-quality documentary or distance-learning productions. (Wisconsin, Houston).	Highest Nielsen ratings of locally produced programs, strengthening market presence. Burnished reputation for high-quality historical and documentary programming. Gained familiarity with important historical society holdings. (Wisconsin) Access to new content for to support high-quality science programming. (Houston)

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Two projects involved collaboration between public television stations and local cultural institutions. Wisconsin Stories, a partnership between the Wisconsin Historical Society and Wisconsin Public Television, consisted of two seasons of a ten-part series highlighting the people and history of Wisconsin. Some of the program themes covered persons and events that were centuries-old, relying heavily on the Historical Society's archival material and curatorial expertise, enlivened by Wisconsin Public Television's considerable ability to tell a good story. ScienceQuest, a partnership between KUHT in Houston and the Houston Museum of Natural Science involves creation of an on-going distance learning series on natural science subjects for school children throughout the country. Production expertise and program distribution is provided by television station staff, with objects and on-camera expertise provided by the museum.

Other projects relied on public libraries as a place to hold community – oriented programming delivered by major art institutions. The Houston Public Library has maintained a long-standing partnership with the Houston Museum of Fine Arts to present art exhibits and lectures to groups of children, teens, seniors and others who may readily participate in offerings at their community library branches, but would be far less likely to travel downtown to the museum. Similarly, the Chicago Public Library branches provided venues for the contemporary art lecture series sponsored by the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Exhibit 18 summarizes the contributions and returns experienced by selected participants in joint programming projects. Libraries offered their partners unequalled access to communities not always served by museums and public broadcasters, and in some cases provided valuable document and photographic collections to joint efforts. The content provided by museum partners enriched joint programs by giving the partners' patrons access to material formerly not available outside the museum. Some museums gave their partners access to affiliated institutions throughout the broader community. Public television stations contributed technical support and production talent and facilities, in addition to a public reputation for quality work.

As returns on investment, libraries substantially improved the quality of some of their programming, and increased their public recognition as repositories of unique archival collections. Museums gained access to diverse communities, and at the same time found new appreciation for the importance of clear and understandable communication of culturally important ideas and values. Public broadcasters also were able to reach new audiences, and also gained access to rare, high-quality, collections of images that have proven invaluable in certain types of documentary programming.

Digitization and Other Web-based Projects

Digitization refers to the electronic recording and storage of images and text for purposes of internet-based transmission, typically involving digital reproduction of photographs, drawings, paintings, and other visual arts images; maps; legal documents; and other historical and often fragile material. Nearly all the cases in our sample used the Web as a principal vehicle for "exhibiting" newly digitized material.

These projects often aim to increase access to archived collections, and by doing so create new learning opportunities. Rochester Images, a partnership among the Monroe County Public Library, the Rochester Museum of Science and Industry, and the Rochester School District, drew from two collections of historical photographs, maps, and other materials to create an on-line resource for students, historians, genealogists, artists, advertisers, costume designers, decorators and others. Before digitization, those wanting to view these materials would have had to navigate the

EXHIBIT 19
Digitization and Other Web-Based Projects

SITE/PROJECT	PARTNERS	SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Wisconsin: Wisconsin Stories	Wisconsin Historical Society & Wisconsin Public Television	A web resource was developed to showcase the Wisconsin Stories 10-episode television series. The site contains the video in digital form as well as supplemental resource materials for each episode.
Chicago: Chicago Matters Series	Chicago Public Library, Chicago Public Television (WTTW), Chicago Public Radio (WBEZ), The Chicago Reporter & Chicago Community Trust	Community partners collaboratively decided upon the annual theme for city-wide public information series. Each partner produced material for the series at their respective institution and then supplied the content to Community Trust, which subcontracted with a private firm for web development.
Indianapolis InfoZone	Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library & Indianapolis Children's Museum	Partners are collaborating to build an icon-driven book and image database to support the InfoZone space and make the resources more accessible to outside users.
Denver: Colorado Digitization	Colorado State Archives Denver Public Library	Partners have created on-line archive of historical photographs, maps, documents, and other historical materials drawing on collections of the State Archives and Public Library, as well as from local historical societies around the State.
Rochester: Rochester Images	Monroe County Public Library, Rochester Historical Society, Rochester Museum of Science and Industry, Rochester Public School District	Partners developed a web archive of historical photographs, newspapers, and other documents. The images are catalogued and interpreted, and aspects of site content and structure, as well as training for users, are linked to local public school curriculum and the State's educational standards.

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collections of two different institutions, meaning that only those with a professional interest were likely to use the collections. Web access, coupled with teacher training on using the materials to help students meet state standards, has created new opportunities for students to learn about their community's history.

EXHIBIT 20
Composite Investment Pro Forma for Digitization Projects

INSTITUTION	CONTRIBUTION	RETURNS
Library (Rochester Images)	Tied image cataloguing to public catalogue, drawing heavily on library staff expertise.	Increase in public accessibility to hitherto hidden collections. Expansion of library services to school children through ties to elementary curriculum.
	Played lead role in technology acquisition and application. Invested in training for library and museum staff.	Staff learned new ways to describe and arrange collections. Mastery of new technology and linkages for web mounted products. Ability to market large format capacity around the region.
	Took lead responsibility for organizing, recording, and monitoring the implementation of partners' decisions.	Lead role helped library establish more central leadership role among area cultural and educational institutions. Increased community reputation for ability to deliver high quality services; to partner effectively.
Museums (Rochester Images)	Contributed unique collection of photographs and past efforts to catalogue them.	Increase in public access to collections, including historical African-American and abolitionist newspapers and documents.
	Curated images and participated in thematic organization of images into web "pathways" for public access.	The collaboration helped the museum staff place new value on collection accessibility and on the primacy of service delivery as a corporate ethos. Also learned to digitize 3-D objects in collection.
	Contributed volunteer labor to monitor image color balance and scanned image quality.	
Public TV (Wisconsin Stories)	Production of documentary programming, drawing on expertise of staff.	Avidly-watched series on state history and new advances in range and quality of documentary programming.
	Program marketing drawing on public reputation for production quality, educational excellence.	Increase in public reputation for high-quality work and connection to community interests.

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Digitization projects can require significant capital investments, as well as changes in institutional practices, depending on the amount of interpretive work (or curation) the images demand. These efforts are content- and labor-intensive, and involve considerable coordination of work activities and sustained interaction among partners.[11] The contributions of library partners were very much connected to the ways these institutions organize their work. For example, the Rochester Images project required substantial bibliographic research and image cataloguing, and the partnership benefited from Monroe County Public Library's 20-plus years of experience cataloging its own photographic collection in the Local History Collection.

Museums involved in digitization projects contributed to the project's content and design. Museum partners drew heavily from their own collections to provide photographs, historical documents, and other archival materials; and their curatorial experience played a key role in the presentation of materials on the Web. This is seen quite clearly in InfoZone's Web resource developed jointly by the Indianapolis Children's Museum and the Indianapolis–Marion County Public Library. The site, which provides multiple ways to search for information, includes an array of colorful icons, designed by an illustrator of children's books, that invite the user to click and explore. For the Rochester Images project, the museum and civic partners contributed journalistic photographs from the early part of the 20th century, historical photographs depicting city events and official government services, and images from other adjacent communities.

Both the library and the museum partners saw substantial returns from their involvement. Library staff learned new ways to describe and arrange collections based on content and interpretation and linkages for Web-mounted projects. Library staff also gained a stronger emphasis on image and cataloging quality, as well as new ways to describe and arrange collections. Museum partners gained greater visibility though their digitization activity. The Strong Museum, one of the Rochester Images partners, saw improved public relations and public access to its holdings. Museum staff also learned from their library partners the importance of broad access to collections and state-of-the-art cataloguing techniques for records and images. In Wisconsin Stories, public television built on digitization work to ramp up its ability to produce high-quality documentary programming.

Shared Facilities/Infrastructure

Shared infrastructure projects require development of spaces in which one or more partners share in their design, programming, and operation. All of our examples involve collaborations among children's museums and libraries to create spaces that are part circulating library, part museum exhibit. These provide young people or their parents with a broader menu of activities to chose from under one roof. In the words of one project participant, "try to capitalize on the initial spark kids get from an exhibit

[11] Web use for promotional purposes—for example, announcing receipt of IMLS grants, describing the work of the partnership, or providing links to the partner sites—are not included in this analysis.

EXHIBIT 21
Shared Infrastructure Projects

SITE/PROJECT	PARTNERS	ACTIVITY TASKS
Indianapolis: InfoZone	Indianapolis Children's Museum & Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library	The InfoZone, housed at the Indianapolis Children's Museum is a fully functioning branch library of the IMCPL system. The project costs were covered by foundation support, development of the project and operational support for the space will come from a 4.5 million dollar endowment.
Houston: Children's Library Museum Branch	Houston Public Library, Houston Children's Museum	The Houston Public Library operates a parent resource library inside the Children's Museum to provide books, brochures, and other materials on parenting and literacy to museum visitors. Materials may be checked out and returned to any branch library throughout the community.
Rochester: Children's Library Museum Branch	Rochester Children's Museum & Monroe County Public Library	The Rochester Children's Museum sponsors a fully-operational branch of the public library within the museum space. Children's "book nooks" are fully integrated into exhibits throughout the museum, with books selected to match exhibit themes. The library trains staff, provides the circulation system, helps select books, and handles acquisition.

and push it further with books and other materials that can be checked out and explored at home."

The InfoZone in Indianapolis and branch libraries at the Strong Children's Museum in Rochester and the Children's Museum of Houston are solid examples of this partnership form in practice. These projects set out to develop new opportunities for children, creating literacy-based learning spaces that parallel the physical exhibits in the museum. In one case the reading and information space was integrated into the exhibit. In another, the project took the form of a branch library connected to the museum. Libraries help shape the physical spaces to make them more inviting than traditional children's sections of the local libraries.

InfoZone is a fully operational branch library with 20 computers in five kiosks. Visitors access information from Web sites and databases or reserve books, kits, and other resources to be picked up after their museum visit. Traditional library services are given a new twist, as children browse through the collection's labels by content areas that match the exhibits and check them out, or use a shoe for collateral when checking out a wireless laptop. The wireless Web server, which is displayed and labeled in a plastic case, gives young people the freedom to plop down anywhere in the

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EXHIBIT 22
Investment Pro Forma for Shared Infrastructure

INSTITUTION	CONTRIBUTION	RETURNS
Library (Info Zone)	Library makes resource contribution to building, holdings and helps with the cost of maintenance. Two full time employees staff the InfoZone. Library's InfoZone staff attend Children's Museum's staff meetings and develop book lists and other resource tie-ins to museum exhibits.	Increased library services to neighborhood around the Children's Museum, an area that lost its branch library over 20 years ago. InfoZone provided the Library with a new model of children's library services. InfoZone became one of the highest circulating branch libraries in the system. Collaboration with Museum had a direct impact on the design plans of the new central library.
Museum (InfoZone)	Museum development department took the lead in fundraising and put forward the initial construction costs. Infozone facility is on the museum grounds. Curatorial staff coordinate work with Infozone librarians and maintainance staff help with facility upkeep. Museum drew from curatorial expertise for the design of the InfoZone space.	Project provides public reputation benefit to the museum as local residents had a greater incentive to engage through the InfoZone's branch library services. Deepens the museum experience for patrons who check out materials related to exhibits.

InfoZone to use the Internet or other on-line services. Librarians staff the InfoZone, which is attached to the Children's Museum and has its own entrance and operating hours. The museum draws visitors from across the state, but has had difficulty drawing in children who live within walking distance. The library space gives the museum a new way to engage local residents, and it conveys a substantial benefit to the library as well. In the first month of operation, InfoZone circulated more materials than three of the system's 21 branches, 500 library cards were issued, and 3,000 people per day walked through its doors.

The effects of the collaboration on the library system extend well beyond the InfoZone space. The success of the collaboration has allowed program planners in the library system to explore dramatic changes for their new central library. For example, the

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library has chosen to employ a museum design firm for its new central library instead of architects experienced in public library design. As of the design stage, the new library space included design elements that feature information technologies in ways that are both visually engaging and tailored to the ways in which people access these information resources. Teen spaces include cyber cafe-like internet portals. Activity zones can be adapted for use by individual family learning activities on one day, or learning for home school and other groups on another.

* * * *

The partnership activities discussed here expand free choice learning opportunities by multiplying the points at which individuals access institutions, increasing the menu of free choice learning opportunities, creating new spaces (both virtual and physical) for individuals to engage, and increasing the value of their own programs and services by combining and augmenting their resources with those of their partners. These efforts are not without risk. Though educational and cultural institutions draw on very different and often complementary resources, partnership activities place a number of demands on the respective partners, as discussed in the next section.

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V. PARTNERSHIP RISKS AND STRATEGIES FOR RISK MITIGATION

Challenges are inevitable, failure is not. The premise of this section is that the risks of failure can be anticipated – others who have embarked on similar projects have accumulated a body of experience that shows where problems are likely to arise – that several factors are known to aggravate these risks, and that others have worked out effective strategies to mitigate these risks.

TYPES OF RISK

In any new initiative, and certainly in the ones discussed in this monograph, institutions draw upon their assets to invest in activities intended to produce benefits to themselves and communities. But project failure can mean damage to public reputation, constituent support, organizational resources (not least, cash invested), and the strength of internal values, ties, and ways of doing business that comprise corporate culture. In other words, organizational assets are placed at risk.

Institutions engaged in partnership arrangements worked hard to overcome challenges posed by any project, let alone collaborative ones. But, certain factors specific to partnerships pose additional risks not faced by those who carry out activities on their own. These risks include:

Capacity risk

Capacity risk refers to the prospect that partners will be unable to perform agreed upon tasks. Even good faith commitments by executive directors or staff cannot be upheld because of shortfalls in technical capacity, finance, project management, or other organizational assets. This risk was real in several of the projects we reviewed.

The Real West art and cultural exhibition in Denver was a massive undertaking, ultimately engaging more than 100 staff, full-time, from three institutions. Production of Wisconsin Stories required increasingly large commitments of time from the short-staffed Wisconsin Historical Society. Digitization projects in Rochester, Colorado, and Wisconsin posed considerable technical demands on project participants.

Strategy risk

Even well-conceived, adequately-resourced, projects may not pan out as their designers intended. Because navigating new terrain is difficult, project staff cannot always accurately reckon the investments required and the likely payoffs from collaboration. As an example, the Real West exhibition in Denver, however worthwhile in the view of project participants, disappointed some project participants on several counts: they had hoped for a more positive review from local art critics; they had hoped for even greater attendance than realized.

Commitment risk

In some circumstances, not all partners will commit fully to successful accomplishment of partnership goals. Senior management may change in mid-stream, introducing a new team with a different set of priorities, ones less supportive of a course already agreed-upon with partners. In other instances, senior management may make commitments that more junior staff do not feel obliged to honor, or conversely, junior staff may find that senior management won't back up the commitments made lower down. In Rochester, senior managers committed to leading a digitization project encountered initial resistance from one department wary of the new technology. In the Discovery to Go project, some daycare staff expected to participate fully in the museum collaboration preferred to use the museum time to take a break from the children.

Compatibility risk

Assets and liabilities sometimes don't match. In the best partnerships the assets of one partner offset the liabilities of another. Museums that do not have a strong track record of community engagement can partner with libraries that do; libraries without collections and interpretive materials of interest to senior citizens can partner with museums that have them. But different institutions can clash—museum curators and librarians disagree on how much and what kind of interpretive materials patrons should receive, as shown in nearly all of the digitization projects and joint exhibitions we reviewed.

SOURCES OF HEIGHTENED RISK

These four kinds of risks are not found to the same degree in every project. As in the corporate world, the risks (and returns) of one firm engaging another in corporate alliance or merger often depend upon willingness to break from traditional practice and to innovate;[12] the ability to pool resources to accomplish complex tasks;[13] and the degree to

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[12] Gulati and Gargiulo 1999. "Where do organizational networks come from?" *American Journal of Sociology*. 104 (5): 1439-1493.

[13] Pfeffer, Jeffrey and Phillip Nowak. 1976. "Joint Ventures and Interorganizational Dependence". Administrative Science Quarterly 21: 398-418; Stinchcombe, Arthur. 1990. *Information and Organizations*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

which organizations already are embedded in a set of exchange relationships, and are thus interdependent.[14] These concepts of organizational innovation, project complexity, and partners' interdependence provide a useful lens through which to examine the risks of and returns to institutional partnerships for free choice learning.

These three sources of risk are present in varying degrees in each of the project types we studied (see Exhibit 23). Each block of the insert describes a challenge drawn from the experience of one or more of the free choice learning partnerships we reviewed, and reflects the parties' assessment of the degree of risk involved.

Innovation

Innovation refers to policies or practices that break from customary ways of doing business, such as uses of unfamiliar or untested technologies, outreach to new communities, and changes to organizational practices and forms of organization. Some activities are inherently more risky, insofar as they require major departures from current practice. Other activities come with uncertain levels of risk; e.g., because activities may be far removed from their institution's usual practices and culture, resource requirements may be very difficult to estimate. These partnership activities typically required new learning on the part of all partners, and heightened the need for trust among project partners.

InfoZone, a shared infrastructure project partnership between the Indianapolis Children's Museum and Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library, was conceived as a way to "extend the visit" of children at the museum by linking their experience to books and other materials relevant to exhibits. This new space, which resembles both a children's library and a museum exhibit, was seen as a way to bridge the interests of the library, attempting to replace a local branch lost years ago, and a museum eager to develop new ways to engage local residents. Planning and fundraising from local foundations required two years. During that time, a change in senior leadership introduced a new director with concerns about the financial viability of the project over the long-term. Both institutions agreed to undertake a $4 million endowment campaign to support the InfoZone's $200,000 dollar annual operating budget.

In Wisconsin Stories, the partners didn't anticipate the amount of coordination and planning required to produce a regular series. The staff of the Wisconsin Historical Society, especially, found it difficult to balance the project time with their regular work load: they had to collaborate on script development, produce archival material, and review first cuts. And for Wisconsin Public Television, producing a series in which whole crews traveled the state to collect interviews and footage for local story segments became very expensive.

Complexity

Activities that required substantial investment of resources from different levels within and across partnering institutions pose special difficulties in marshalling the skills and resources needed for these projects. This is true even when resources of the partnering institutions complement one another. Mobilization of resources from a variety of offices often meant inviting new voices into planning and development of projects,

[14] Granovetter, Mark. 1985. "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness." American Journal of Sociology. 91 (November):

EXHIBIT 23
Risks of Partnering Activities

	INNOVATION	COMPLEXITY / SCALE	INTERDEPENDENCE
Digitization	Medium Interest in web resources difficult to gauge, thus risking investment in resource that few people use. High risk if web resource is only activity.	Medium –High Specialized skills needed means that project tasks are assigned to single work group. But content options beyond text (e.g. video, sound and high-resolution images) require multiple inputs and investments.	Low – Medium Higher with multiple content providers. Some issues between libraries and museums around level of interpretation and curation.
Joint Programming	High Often requires new relationships with partners and (on occasion) outside agencies. Demands new skills of staff and new financial commitments.	Medium Usually not resource intensive, especially when the actual work of the project can be delegated to a relatively few staff members from each institution.	High Usually called for pooling of talents and resources from the institutional partners. High demands on communication and need for joint decision-making strategies.
Outreach & Marketing	Low Cross promotion requires few changes to a partner's regular practices, as partners often promote in-house activities and programs.	Low These efforts were often concentrated in pre-existing outreach offices such as marketing or education departments.	Medium Partners required to establish consistent communication to coordinate activities and information.
Shared Infrastructure	High These projects challenge partners to justify costs for projects that are untested and whose outcome is uncertain.	High Facilities development requires intensive work for planning, resource development, contracting.	Medium New roles and policies must be agreed upon by directors of partnering institutions in design, development, and maintenance phases.

reconciling incompatible interests and priorities of different project participants, and contending with the goals, priorities, and resource constraints of "third party" institutions often involved in complex projects. Such projects heighten the importance of strong communication and coordination among the partners.

Partners in Wisconsin Stories immediately saw the potential of the Web as a supplement to the documentary series they set out to produce. Each of four short stories in a half-hour historical news magazine format called for difficult decisions on which images to select from

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among those in the Wisconsin State Historical Society's rich collection. The Web became a way to deepen the content available to those interested in particular subjects by providing information not covered in the segments. But Web content presented a new set of challenges. The effort mushroomed as each thirty-minute show became its own Web project. For each show (or story), curators wrote summary essays; staff posted digitized museum artifacts like maps, newspaper clippings, and photographs; staff produced resource pages with links for further investigation; and staff posted teaching materials for youth groups and educators. The flexibility of the Web and the wealth of resources available for each story induced the partners to invest considerably more time in site development than anticipated. Project partners found it necessary to "close the book" on some story Web sites in an effort to keep costs down.

The Rochester Images project to digitize items from the historical archives of two institutions required the acquisition of new and unfamiliar technology, integration of work flows from two institutions, recruitment of volunteers to review the quality of scanned images, consultation with the school district on priorities for selection of images and development of text that matched the state learning standards, and adoption of seamless-to-the user cataloguing that covered both images and bibliographic materials in the library collection. The project crossed internal bureaucratic boundaries, required library staff to work off-site at the museum, and encountered copyright and difficult cataloguing issues.

The risks of complexity seem to be relatively high for joint programming. For example, producing joint programs for public broadcast requires considerable capital investment and the coordination of many different workers with specialized expertise. For the Wisconsin Stories project, whole production crews were sent to different parts of the state to videotape historic sites or interview people. But partners sometimes found it difficult to agree on program content. Historians felt the story wasn't being conveyed with enough breadth, but public television staff felt they needed to keep the story concise to engage viewers.

Institutional Interdependence

Interdependence refers to the inter-weaving of project tasks across institutions. Even though project participants spoke of the "natural" connections between resources of their own institutions and those of their partners, these ready matches were no guarantee that sequencing and timing would work out smoothly. In some cases, these demands placed obstacles in the way of staff continuing to meet the demands of their own institutions.

Interdependent projects may suffer from ambiguous assignment of project responsibility and heightened costs to coordinate the work of multiple departments and organizations and to sustain the engagement of junior and middle-level staff on projects that do not have equal importance across institutions. Interdependence required coming to terms with the schedule and resource limitations of other partners, a situation aggravated where institutions draw upon different resource bases. When projects depend upon the resources of two or more institutions, the constraints of one partner become the constraints of all.

Discovery to Go embarked upon a new outreach initiative targeting 12 community centers, neighborhood centers, and child-care centers. Project staff developed literacy-based programs designed as mobile "kid-friendly" exhibits and the Madison Public Library Bookmobile transported exhibits, books, and program materials from site to site. Library and museum staff presenting the materials jointly planned the exhibits. The project was

well received by community partners, but project staff found it difficult to develop a broad menu of outreach materials and establish relationships with local community centers at the same time. Integrated programming took both partners a considerable amount of staff time. Conversations among partners often led to changes in exhibits and book selections, and pre-exhibit visits produced changes in outreach projects. Because of these difficulties, partners chose to reduce the number of agencies they contacted in the second year, allowing them more time to develop the curriculum and more easily coordinate logistics.

The Real West exhibit in Denver required the cooperative efforts of three different institutions to put on a joint exhibit of documents, artworks, photographs and other objects pertaining to the varied histories and cultures of the American West. Each institution contributed content; each institution was a venue for the exhibit (made possible by their close proximity). The project created huge management demands, required reconciliation of many diverse points of view concerning content, interpretation, presentation, timing, marketing and a range of other tasks. Working groups consisting of staff from all three institutions carried out most of the work in a project that did not allow easy allocation of project tasks to one institution or another. Although most staff agreed that the effort was successful, few would be willing to take on another project of the same scale.

RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Partnerships found ways of mitigating the risks they incurred and of resolving the difficulties encountered as they pursued their projects. Many of these approaches resemble generic, commonly used strategies for carrying out projects done without partners. But these approaches gain force with the need to communicate across corporate cultures and institutions with different constituent service imperatives, organizational technologies, and public reputations to maintain.[15]

The organizational management literature is replete with advice on how to develop and implement complex projects successfully. The importance of the following prescriptions increases with overall levels of interdependence, innovation, and project complexity, whether partners are involved are not. And they certainly gain force with inclusion of one or more partners, especially as some partners—particularly those in libraries, and to some extent, museums—are not equally adept at project management (the corporate culture and organizational technologies of both emphasize process over projects).

Clear goals and objectives

What are the projects about? What are the partners expected to accomplish? Clarity on these issues helps the parties make decisions about timetables and allocation of responsibility more easily and effectively.

Feasible timetables of tasks and deliverables

Who does what, when? Feasibility should be understood in terms not only of the simple ability of any partner to accomplish work in a timely way, but also of the episodic demands

[15] Other, less obvious, strategies have been adopted by parties to the activities explored here, and are reported separately.

EXHIBIT 24
Summary of Risk Mitigation Strategies

Define clear goals and objectives	What are the projects about? What are the partners expected to accomplish?
Establish feasible timetables of tasks and deliverables	Who does what, when?
Ensure timely communication among project staff	Who knows what, when?
Make clear and appropriate project assignments	Who is responsible for what?
Recognize contributions	Who gets credit for what?
Connect like with like	Where's the right match-up across institutions?
Borrow models	Has something like this been seen before?
Accept increased risk of failure	What really counts as success when there are no benchmarks?
Create consultative mechanisms	Who should have a say, and how should they say it?
Involve senior staff in project review and decision-making	What problems require high-level resolution?

partners face in the course of their ordinary work that might prevent them from accommodating unexpected changes in schedules. In Discovery to Go, project staff arrived at an explicit decision to scale down the work in subsequent project phases to avoid capacity issues faced in earlier phases. In Rochester Images, partners proceeded incrementally through a demonstration phase before embarking on a full scale digitization efforts. In contrast, Real West project staff believed, in retrospect, that an ambitious major multi-party exhibition was probably not the right scale for an initial effort.

Timely communication among project staff

Who knows what, when? Several of the projects found communication through e-mail to be useful, but not all the staff from various institutions were equally reliant on that tool. Again in the Real West project, staff found themselves in near-constant communication with project partners from other institutions, reflecting the scale, complexity and interdependence of project work.

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Clarity and appopriateness of assignments

Who is responsible for what? Even when worked out in advance of project implementation, assignments are not always clear or appropriate in practice. Lack of clarity especially pertains to tasks not directly related to work content, such as communication with funders, documentation of decisions, and cost accounting. As an example, actual work of digitization projects seems to flow to the partners with the right technological capacity, and in each of these, libraries involved tended to play a lead role. But even in these instances, projects did not necessarily fit with the current bureaucratic allocation of work. Sometimes, avoiding existing bureaucratic boundaries and assigning work to parts of the organization that might not have seemed the obvious choice was useful and important, as in the Rochester Images project.

Some partnerships were able to bypass challenges by dividing up parts of the project based on the skills and resources of their partners, thus maximizing the autonomy each partner had over a given part of the project and reducing some of the risks associated with interdependence. However, this risk reduction strategy has the disadvantage of moving the partners away from the potentially richest returns of partnering with entities that have different strengths.

In Chicago, the program content was the product of a joint decision-making process between the various partners, but actual productions were not. Chicago Matters partners convened a year in advance to decide jointly on a series topic, but once a decision was made, individual institutions set about developing the programming independently of one another. During the year, WTTW Channel 11 produced documentaries; WBEZ radio produced and aired documentaries and short news stories, and the libraries developed reading lists, sponsored opening events, book discussions, and lectures, and at the end of the series, became its archival home.

Recognition of contributions

Who gets credit for what? Always important within institutions, this aspect of joint project work gains particular force when multiple parties need recognition to ensure that their own staff are rewarded properly and that funders realize the full value of their support (or the true capabilities of the institutions they are being asked to support).

Connecting like with like

Where's the right match-up across institutions? It is often helpful to connect institutions with one another at places that resemble one another. In one project, one museum staff member explained that "The library and the museum had a shared concept of order; it was easier to work with the library than with our own education department." The partnership between the Rochester Children's Museum and the Public Library was greatly aided by the museum's strong, in-house library and research center, a function that pre-dated creation of the museum itself. In the Real West project, the strong education department at the Denver Art Museum advocates for public accessibility in ways that resemble the traditional orientation of the Denver Public Library. These connections, even if they are slightly off-center to the main project work, can help like-minded people cross boundaries between sometimes un-like minded institutions.

Borrowing models

Have we seen this one before? Some project participants adopted models from other projects or activities that generally resembled those being pursued in partnership. To mitigate risks and ensure project success, projects used partners' currently available technologies; improving upon the wheel rather than reinventing it. Models can be borrowed even within the same project. For the Chicago Public Library Access Cards, the library extended the access card model to other museums in the city. Two of the Children's Museum projects we studied - in Houston and Denver - had benefited from the earlier experience in Indianapolis.

Recognizing increased risk of failure

What really counts as success? It is especially important at the beginning of projects to ensure that major stakeholders understand that new projects, and partnerships, entail higher risk. This means that in the event project goals are renegotiated, it will not count as failure.

Creating consultative mechanisms

Who should have a say, and how should they say it? More complex and interdependent projects benefit from creation of diverse sources of information on project requirements and outcomes, and empowerment of individuals to resolve issues at lower management levels. Complexity places a premium on in-project reviews and inclusive decisionmaking, although inclusion risks delay and unnecessary debate. But especially where partners have not worked together in the past and their activities mesh throughout project implementation, junior managers may be the only staff with a solid view of what is going well or badly.

After the first year of struggling through the increasing demands of program production, the Wisconsin Stories partnership established a set of committees to manage decisionmaking. One large "story" committee developed the ten episode themes for the series. Ten smaller committees developed sub-stories within episodes, and even smaller work groups fleshed out these sub-stories, provided content, and produced each one. Committees communicated via e-mail and met throughout the production process and had final sign-off on the product at a prescreening meeting (improved communication and inclusion).

Senior-level involvement in project review and decision making

What problems require high-level resolution? This is sometimes needed in circumstances where it might not otherwise be required or welcomed in projects not carried out by partnerships. This involvement is needed to reconcile the sometimes competing views of lower-level staff within one's own organization, or to negotiate solutions across institutional boundaries.

These responses to the levels of risk encountered in partnership projects sometimes impel organizations to shift responsibilities within and across organizations. These changes may alter the structure of partnerships or the partners' contributions and returns—in other words, partnership dynamics, a subject to which we now turn.

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VI. PARTNERSHIP DYNAMICS

Institutional partnerships, like most relationships, evolve over time. The evolution of partnerships can be thought of as a sequence of stages from gestation to transformation or termination. As partnerships change over time, different partnering structures sometimes evolve to execute partnership activities. Typical changes in partnerships are discussed here, along with some of the long-term effects of partnering on institutions and communities.

SEQUENCE OF PROGRAM STAGES

Gestation

Gestation is the initial germ of the idea of partnering. It can have three basic sources—funders, institutional leaders, or staff. Funder-initiated partnerships typically stem from national foundation initiatives that aim to encourage particular activities through partnerships. These initiatives typically begin with invitations for grant proposals linked to national demonstrations and are therefore tied to concrete prospects for funded projects. Leader-initiated partnerships come from informal (or sometimes more structured) conversations among principal board members or CEOs of the institution interested in looking for a partnership. Staff-initiated partnerships usually stem from ongoing discussions among staff in two or more institutions that already have some kind of working relationship.

Design and Early Implementation

Design and early implementation is the stage when project goals, resource allocation (including staffing), schedules, and other project details are hammered out. Contact among staff of the different institutions tends to be most frequent during this stage,

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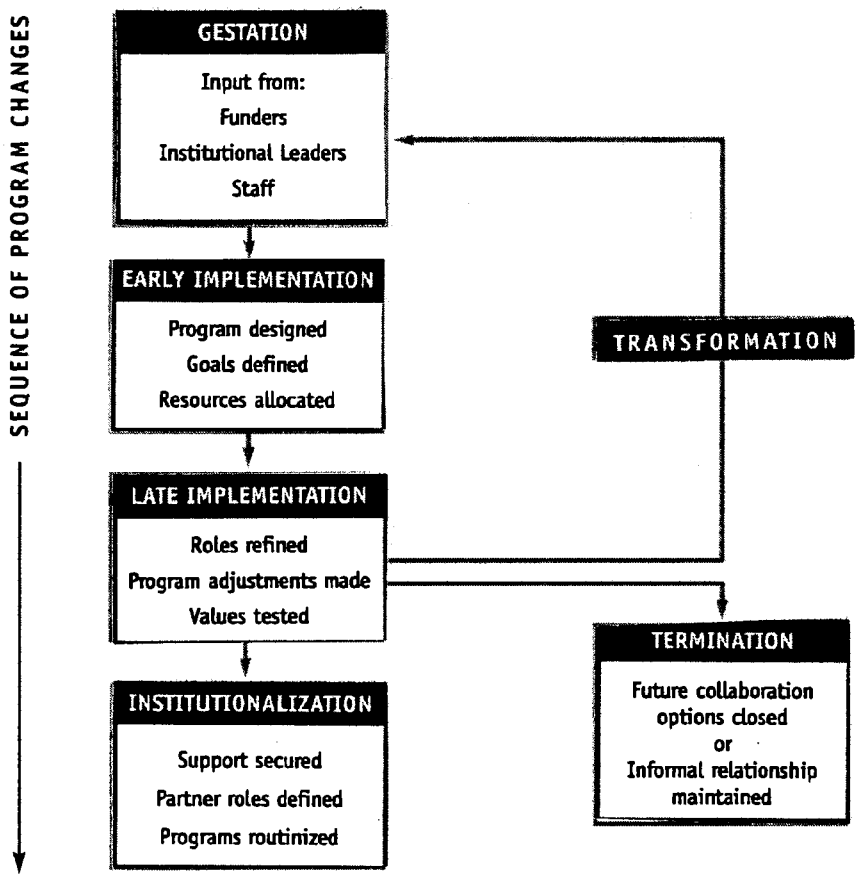
EXHIBIT 24
Partnership Dynamics



although the degree of interaction is tied, obviously, to the timing of project responsibilities and whether the institution is a full or limited partner. Typical stresses during this phase pertain to sorting out basic responsibilities among partners.

Late Implementation

Late implementation is the stage when critical project activities take place—where the value of the partners' efforts is tested. For digitization projects, this phase occurs at the rollout of Web-access to digitized images; for joint programs, at the opening of exhibitions, programs, or events; for outreach, at the initiation of exhibitions, programs, or marketing materials; for shared infrastructure, at the completion of physical development activities. Each has its tests of project success.

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Termination or Transformation

This is the stage when projects either end or become something else; they rarely continue indefinitely without considerable alteration, if only in the scale of the work. Termination is the expected result for time-limited projects funded from external sources. It also may result from decisions by one or more of the parties that continued efforts do not serve their interests further.

Transformation typically happens when initial external funding comes to an end but the parties choose to continue their partnership funded from internal sources. In those rare instances in which partnerships were initiated and funded from internal sources alone, some institutional changes typically are required to sustain the project once the parties conclude that continuation is worthwhile. In some of our cases, sustainability came from extremely close alignment of missions and core competencies and the presence of a committed funder. In several other instances, projects were sustained because the partners were able to fundraise for an endowment to cover operating costs.

CHANGES IN PARTNERING STRUCTURES AND BEHAVIORS

In the cases examined for this research, the evolution of each partnering relationship, as well as the allocation of responsibilities within institutions, pursued its own particular course. Nevertheless, we did observe general patterns of change that partnerships can expect.

Changing Nature of Leadership

Early stages of partnership, especially when projects are leadership-initiated, typically require different kinds of leadership than do later stages. Early phases of partnerships, when most project elements are not fully formed or assignment of institutional responsibilities has not yet been fully resolved, require two forms of leadership. The first is articulation of a project vision that helps inform mundane decision-making; the second is negotiation at senior executive levels to help guide staff-level decisions on, and acceptance of, project roles.

Later stages seem to demand something else of senior managers—the demonstration of interest and recognition of staff responsibility for successful conduct of the work. In principle, this shift in leadership is no different than would be required for projects carried out entirely within one institution, except for higher risk to external reputations. This additional risk places a premium on continued senior executive oversight.

Devolution of Staff Responsibility

Consistent with the changing nature of leadership is devolution of responsibility for project completion or continuation. Responsibility may move down the hierarchy and become lodged in line departments. Outreach/marketing and joint programs provide

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good examples of devolution. These projects tend to be planned by offices with greater authority and then carried out by front-line workers. The Chicago Access Card project, for example, was developed by the director of development at the Chicago Public Library. She contacted the marketing departments of the various museums and got them to agree to the terms of the Access Cards. Once the museums were identified and the Access Cards produced and catalogued at the various branch libraries, the actual work of the partnership was left to the checkout persons at the branch library and the museum admissions staff. None of the Access Card partners have asked the library for use reports, nor do they appear to collect their own. The contemporary art lecture series (a joint program) is another good example of the devolution of work. Here the arrangement was conceived by the marketing department of the Museum of Contemporary Art and the development office of the Chicago Public Library. Once the library branches had been selected, the day-to-day work of the program—setting up lecture dates, coordinating schedules, selecting series content—was left to the outreach docent from the education department of the Museum of Contemporary Art and staff from the various branch libraries.

Migration of Lead Responsibility

In our pool of projects, we encountered several instances in which lead responsibility for project implementation shifts from one party to another between design and late implementation. This shift is accompanied by additional demands on leadership. The challenge is to ensure that project vision follows changes in bureaucratic assignments. Because it is a predictable project phase, the stresses that accompany this transfer can be anticipated and reduced. The importance of documenting earlier processes and decisions is critical at this stage.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITIES

Not everything worth doing is worth preserving. Many of those engaged in partnerships, including those who fund them, believe that sustainability is the acid test of project success. Is the project valued enough by the participating institutions that they are willing to fund it from internal sources? One director we spoke with stressed that he didn't engage in any partnership project that he didn't view as a possible, even probable, add-on to the core activities of his institution. In his view, if activities did not merit this status, they were not worth pursing in the first place. This point of view is valid and instructive but not necessarily the only way to think about project success.

In our view, there are three good reasons why even temporary collaborative projects, funded and carried out with a view toward short-term gains, can produce useful longer-term results. They are reforms in institutional management, institutional convergence, and creation of relationships that make future partnering more profitable.

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Changes in Institutional Management

Institutions usually do not collaborate around routine tasks; they participate in joint projects in order to improve or expand their services. Partnership activities typically are innovative ones. This fact places twin demands on leaders and staff, called upon to both carry out a new activity and to do so in new ways. Not all staff are equally able to meet the two challenges, and in many of the partnerships we examined, directors tended to rely on staff who were somehow outside the ordinary lines of authority within their institutions. This tendency was far more noticeable in libraries and museums than in public broadcasting, where work assignments tend to be more fluid and team projects far more common.

In several instances, directors created formal or informal special projects departments within which to lodge responsibility for partnering arrangements. These special departments usually reported directly to the CEO. In at least one instance, an informal working group established to carry out a new technology project ended up becoming the nucleus of a new division, staffed by the top technical talent within the institution. In these ways, managers have created centers of innovation within their organizations, initially in response to the need to be effective partners with external actors, but subsequently to create more general centers of creativity and innovation within their organizations. For example, one organization created a special projects office to house people with entrepreneurial skills and strong partnering instincts. This organization also created a new division within its information systems group to handle high tech projects. These centers then became the platform for new work and new partnering activities.

Institutional Convergence

Partners learn from one another. In the partnerships we reviewed, we found a number of instances in which staff from one institution began to take on some of the typical values, attitudes, and practices of another with which they partnered. We also found that changes within institutions, particularly their embrace of new technologies, have led them to emulate the kinds of programs and services typically provided by others. This convergence provides a ready basis for future productive partnering.

Several of the collaborative projects we reviewed between museums and libraries, whether involving digitization or some other kind of joint programming, led to particularly interesting mutual borrowings of institutional practices. These practices concerned the way in which objects, exhibits, or other articles on view were labeled, as well as more fundamental approaches to work; e.g., the way in which education and outreach staff communicated in immigrant communities. As one staff member put it, "we think that we became something more like a museum and they became something more like a library." This statement referred to the library's recognition of the considerable value that interpretation (curation) adds to a patron's understanding of an historic image, and the museum's recognition of the importance of interpretive materials being clear and understandable to a full range of possible viewers.

Technological change is producing yet other forms of convergence, in which museums (and some libraries) have become more heavily involved in distance learning. Several museums have acquired the program production staff, equipment, and institutional support to produce high-quality arts and natural history programming with interactive capability and on-demand video archiving. In other instances, such capabilities have been supplied by local public television stations, with museums responsible only for scripts, on-air talent, and creation and distribution of supplemental educational materials. With the declining costs of new technologies, increasing numbers of large arts and cultural institutions may begin to acquire their own production capability and public television may become more of a distributor than an originator of distance learning programming.

The Cleveland Museum of Art exemplifies this trend. Building on years of experience in distance learning efforts, it has acquired production equipment and expertise to produce its own local content with only modest amounts of new investment. This means that one of public broadcasters' presumed advantages may be eroding, and that their enduring value now lies in distribution and brand identification. This appears to be true in Pittsburgh, where the Carnegie Library provides a server and tech support and WQED provides graphical assistance and "advice on a new branding identity."

According to our interviews, staff find considerable reward in the creation of new mind-sets, new approaches to everyday work, and new tools for carrying it out. Where salaries and upward mobility opportunities are constrained by the necessarily bureaucratic and hierarchical character of both libraries and museums, the changing nature of work and the opportunity to think creatively is even more highly prized than it might be in other work environments.

Community Relationships

In one important respect, partnering creates a public good. Public goods are benefits from which people cannot be excluded. The example typically given is clean air, for which people cannot be charged. Partnerships create another kind of public good—the habits and techniques of effective partnering—which, once present in a single institution, become available to others. Similarly, the relationships among institution directors and staff thus created are the future conduits of information about resources and opportunities to the original partners, as well as to others who may partner with them in future.

In every community of educational and cultural institutions, staff migrate from organization to organization and carry their partnering experience with them. For example, a staff member of a strong local historical society, which had partnered with a library and a school district, moved on to direct a local historical site. One of her first acts as director was to initiate a joint project with her erstwhile library partner. In this way, her new institution benefited from the skills and relationships she acquired in her former position. The longer-term payoff from partnering activities carried out by multiple institutions over several years is creation of communities of practice that value partnering, come to be good at it, and thereby expand the range of free choice learning opportunities to community residents.

VII. CONCLUSION

Partnering activities and the changes they induce in institutions and local communities of practice have the long-term potential to equalize access to free choice learning opportunities. Access Cards encourage citizens to consider options across a broad range of cultural and educational institutions, not just those they are accustomed to patronizing. Joint museum and library exhibitions improve the quality of branch library offerings to people who feel uncomfortable in "elite" institutions. Partnering between public television and libraries to make historical photographs and documents accessible to ordinary people allows students and adult citizens to learn about their past in new and exciting ways. Partnerships between public radio and public libraries have helped many establish virtual connections to authors and poets and offer deeper understanding of their work. These activities offer three basic benefits to communities. They:

- Expand the range of cultural and educational opportunities available in communities, through projects to digitize previously hidden cultural artifacts, to link the unique experiences of art, literature, and moving images in new ways, and to bring children and adults together as learners.

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- Increase access to those opportunities that are already present, through efforts to present the many cultural heritages of Americans in the communities where they live; to break down barriers of distance, cost, and familiarity; and to bring books inside children's exhibits.
- Improve the quality of existing programming, through blends of images, text and physical objects that tell stories to children in powerful ways, encourage adults to encounter historical and cultural topics, or provide exhibits that take advantage of objects from multiple collections.

Nearly all these new learning initiatives depart from traditional institutional practices in some way, presenting real challenges to collaborators. But partnership initiatives reviewed for this study demonstrate that it is possible to change public institutions in ways that can deepen their ability to serve their communities and at the same time:

- Broaden, deepen, and diversify audiences by expanding the reach of institutional offerings through mass communication, internet-accessible collections, exhibitions and programs in urban, rural, and immigrant communities, and programs that exploit the multiple ways people choose to learn.
- Afford opportunities for staff and managers to initiate creative new programs, learn from the best practices of other institutions, adopt work styles and methods that make for more creative and productive work situations, and learn ways of seeing cultural assets as new resources for public service.
- Demonstrate to funders and constituents that educational and cultural institutions merit the support they receive, and indeed, that their services are critical to the future health of democratic institutions, the knowledge-based economy, and personal fulfillment through free choice of cultural and educational opportunities.

In so doing they not only help broaden life opportunities for individuals, but they provide a unique public benefit at a time when private companies command new technologies in a rapidly evolving information marketplace. These partnerships highlight what is possible when public resources are reshaped to meet community need. They redefine the role of the public institution in community life and present policymakers and foundations with a significant justification for renewed investment in cultural projects and institutions that have a direct impact on people's lives.

APPENDIX I: LIST OF RESPONDENTS

CHICAGO SITE RESPONDENTS

Phillip Bahar, *Director of Marketing,*
Museum of Contemporary Art

Anne Blanton, *Vice-President,*
The Chicago Community Trust

Sue Teller Marshall, *Manager of Academic Programs,*
Lincoln Park Zoo

Jeanne Salis, *Director of Community Services,*
Chicago Children's Museum

Sarah Tschaen, *Education Coordinator,*
Museum of Science and Industry

Wendy Woon, *Director of Education,*
Museum of Contemporary Art

CLEVELAND SITE RESPONDENTS

Virginia Desharnais, *Director of Programs*
Children's Museum of Cleveland

Mike Gesing, *President*
Smart Coast, Inc.

Jan Ridgeway, *Head of Branches and Outreach Services*
Cleveland Public Library

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Mercia Robinson
Cleveland Public Library

Leonard Steinbach, *Chief Information Officer*
Cleveland Museum of Art

Andrew Venable, *Director*
Cleveland Public Library

Jerry Wareham, *President and CEO*
WVIZ/PBS

Frank Wilson, *Educational Projects and Instructional TV Director*
WVIZ/PBS

DENVER SITE RESPONDENTS

Kelly Campbell, *Children's Library Manager*
The Denver Public Library

Diane Schieman-Christman, *Director of Development*
The Denver Public Library

Jim Kroll, Manager, *Western History/Geneology Department*
The Denver Public Library

Eric Paddock, *Curator of Photography & Film*
Colorado Historical Society
The Colorado History Museum

Jennifer Thom, *Curator of Photos, Western History Department*
The Denver Public Library

Ann E. Werner, *Development Officer*
The Denver Public Library

Patty Williams, *Dean of Education*
Denver Art Museum

Kay Wisnea, *Senior Reference Librarian*
The Denver Public Library

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HOUSTON SITE RESPONDENTS

Cindy Bandemer, *Director of Education*
Museum of Health and Medical Science

Gayle Barnett, *Marketing/Community Relations*
Museum of Health and Medical Science

Jeff Clarke, *General Manager*
Channel 8 Television

Ann Beall Crider, *Director, Community Education and Outreach*
KUHT

Nancy Davis, *Director of Development*
Museum of Health and Medical Science

Barbara Gubbin, *Director*
Houston Public Libraries

Connie Hill, *Education Coordinator/Ready to Learn*
Houston Public Television

Tammie Kahn, *Executive Director*
The Children's Museum of Houston

Andrea R. Lapsley, *Director, Marketing and Development*
Houston Public Libraries

Cheryl McCalllum, *Director of Education*
Children's Museum of Houston

Beth Schneider, *Director of Education*
Houston Museum of Art

Douglas H. Smith, *Office Manager, Education Department*
Houston Museum of Natural Science

INDIANAPOLIS SITE RESPONDENTS

Chris Cairo, *Director, Project Development Services*
Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library

Francine Kelly, *Director, Community Initiatives*
The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

Ann Kitchen, *Campaign Manager*
Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library Foundation

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Sonja Staum-Kuniej, *Director/Team Leader*
Herron Art Library of IUPUI University Library

Beverly Martin, *Director*
Johnson County Public Library

Kelli Park, *Teacher*
Johnson County High School

MADISON SITE RESPONDENTS

Kelly Hamilton, *Field Coordinator, Museum Archeology Program*
Wisconsin Historical Society

Monica Harrison, *Special Events & Program Coordinator*
Wisconsin Historical Society

Debbie Kmetz, *Coordinator, Public History Division*
Wisconsin Historical Society

Carol Larson, *Producer*
Wisconsin Public Television

Linda Olsen, *Youth Services Coordinator*
Madison Public Library

ROCHESTER SITE RESPONDENTS

Rahleigh Adams, *Director*
Strong Museum

Connie Bodner, *Senior Director of Programs*
Genesee Country Village and Museum

Linda Cruttenden, *Director*
Rochester School Library System
Rochester Public School District

Marion French, *Assistant Vice-President*
Education and Marketing Services
WXXI Radio

Carole Joyce, *Assistant Director for Technology and Systems Services*
Rochester Public Library

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Richard Panz, *Director*
Rochester Public Library

Jenny Peer, *Director*
Rush Public Library

Rod Perry, *Assistant Director for Organization Development*
Rochester Public Library

Carol Sandler, *Library Director*
Strong Museum

Paula Smith, *Assistant Director for Central Services*
Rochester Public Library

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