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Tony Stanley is founder of Trilby Multimedia, an organization established in 1993 to use new and emerging media formats for the benefit of social and cultural development. Trilby's motto is "Excite and Inspire." The enthusiasm with which he has embraced new media is typical of a community cultural development career that has spanned two decades. As he wrote in the spring 2001 online dialogue with other authors:

My involvement with what we in the U.K. call "Community Arts" began in 1980 when I discovered a whole movement that had been developed in the '70s to use participatory creative activity as a means to empowering local people and presenting alternatives to the dominant culture. Previously I worked in supportive roles in arts and media institutions for 10 years after flunking art college in the mid-'60s. I had returned to higher education as a mature student to do a degree in Visual Communication and began working with Jubilee Theatre and Community Arts Company as a student placement.

At Jubilee, Tony's early work spanned British community arts practice, from posters and banners to large-scale community festivals and fire shows. By the mid-'80s, he and his fellow community artists had begun exploring new technology as a tool for cultural development. By now, he has a depth of experience apparent in the imagination Trilby brings to applying computer-based tools to social empowerment. While most new-media development continues to be driven by commercial and military applications, Tony's essay shows how these same resources can be applied for democratic purposes.

Let's Get Digital

USING MULTIMEDIA AND THE INTERNET IN
COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

by Tony Stanley

New technology is providing undreamed of opportunities to empower people and effect social change. Responding to this potential, we set up Trilby Multimedia in 1993 to work in three broad areas: Art, Learning and Society. This essay uses some of our projects to illustrate how we are attempting to democratize art and media, learning and knowledge and, indeed, to democratize the world.

Community cultural development takes many forms. My personal journey as a community *animateur* (organizer/facilitator/artist) began with voluntary work with a theater and community arts group. My role included driving variously converted double-decker buses around the inner cities of the British West Midlands, taking a range of arts and media activities to working-class housing estates. While never able to compete with mainstream media, my co-workers and I struggled to pass on the complex skills behind media production.

I was studying for a university degree when I began working as a volunteer, becoming obsessed with the principles of community arts as they were then expressed. As a new graduate (albeit in my 30s by then), I saw a worthwhile career with some difficult challenges but positive potential outcomes. I felt compelled to follow this fate rather than take the soft option of becoming an art-school tutor, passing on middle-class values to middle-class kids. In community arts there was a clear politics for change, as well as a healthy

skepticism about the way social structures and cultural expressions maintain the status quo. More importantly, we had an agenda of inclusion and fair representation that we later called "cultural democracy."

Since the late 1980s, the primary tools for our community cultural development work have been Apple Mac computers. They revolutionized the ways we work with people and our collective aims. Digital technology has developed to a point where it now provides us with a level playing field where kids in schools and elders in community centers can quickly and effectively have a voice on the worldwide stage, picking up new skills and being empowered to use them.

The same opportunities are available to community arts workers in our cultural development roles. In the early days, we tinkered about at the edges of education and social activism with crumbs of funding from hard-to-please government agencies. Now, as a small independent and self-financing company, Trilby has created a new role: to provide some of the infrastructure, establish networks of opportunity and develop examples of good practice in the use of digital media for social change, helping to move people from a state of passive consumption to become active participants in social communication, thereby growing into dynamic and informed citizens.

In the United Kingdom (U.K.) we are fortunate to have a government that is committed to fully exploiting the potential of digital technology in education and social development. They are creating Learning Centres in every community in order to make the Internet and its potential bounty of learning resources widely available. Wherever the Internet goes, we go, and Learning Centres are set to provide us with new users for our products. The Learning Centres are becoming both local information points and focal points for social action. They may eventually provide as much access to learning as do our outdated colleges of further education, institutions that are well past their sell-by date due to their reliance on text-based learning and academic aptitude. Through new technology, we are all rediscovering the power of learning by doing and learning through play.

We now actively seek out new partners to collaborate in bringing community cultural development products and processes into the wider public domain. Community groups, not-for-profit organizations, trade unions and arts-education organizations are our primary focuses, although currently our main source of income is local-council clients such as education departments and youth services. Ironically, the global push toward privatization of formerly public functions is aiding our independence and our ability to maximize effectiveness: increasingly, we sell or lease our products and services to public agencies that were previously accountable through the local ballot box.

Trilby's small size means we can be flexible and accommodate clients' needs; and our unique approach, fusing arts, science and a politics of progressive development, makes us attractive to managers and decision makers who have social consciences. We often describe ourselves as Social Technology Designers, wanting to clearly label ourselves as a public-interest company motivated by social gain rather than commercial profit. But being a new-media company automatically places us, in many peoples' minds, into the dot.com brigade of techno-pirates. Thus we walk an unusual path that zigzags between technological research and development, artistic creation, media production and social action. We are satisfied only when we can synergize these aspects into practical tools. In contrast to the old days of community arts, when work was subsidized through government grants, we highly prize our financial independence, which enables us to set our own agenda and engage with partners and clients who share our core beliefs. We have built a formidable set of resources to facilitate the wide range of work that we do: we have all the technical equipment necessary for multimedia production and operate a 2MB Internet connection from our base in Birmingham in the Midlands of the United Kingdom, where we live and work.

This essay documents how we are using multimedia and the Internet for community cultural development, describing some of our products and services. It aims to show how we are using new technology to break down the distinction between spectators and actors, reinstating the equality of dialogue that Augusto Boal describes in "Theater of the Oppressed." Many of the products and services described are available on the Internet. We welcome readers' comments and suggestions about how the work can be made more effective. Please visit our Web site at www.trilby.co.uk, and e-mail comments or tell us about ways that you are using new technology in socially progressive work.

THE AIMS AND SCOPE OF OUR WORK

All of our work has a social dimension. But we sometimes get opportunities to do specific pieces of work that, while having a particular practical (and often local) purpose, also do a job in a wider context. We therefore look for certain integral qualities in all our work, seeking to meet three broad aims:

- **Building social knowledge:** learning about our communities and the wider world, making an analysis and finding ways to make things better.

- **Stimulating social action:** taking ownership of our local community, getting involved, having our say.

- **Supporting social change:** ideas for altering and improving the world, exploring alternatives.

The Ring of Progress for Mankind, a community activity to explore social solutions, offered something for everyone. Here a girl plays a game on one of the iMac® towers.
© Trilby Multimedia, 2000

The importance of this work is becoming better understood and appreciated. In the United States, Robert Putnam has identified a growing malaise not unique to that country, a "pulling apart" and a disconnectedness from each other that has grown over the last quarter century or so. In his book "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,"[1] Putnam reminds us that interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other and to knit the social fabric. For us it is more: creative interaction builds culture. We hope our contribution to people's imaginative lives advances this culturization. Here are two projects that in many ways encapsulate our aims.

[1]Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

Examples of Projects to Build Social Knowledge and Stimulate Social Action

RPM: Ring of Progress for Mankind—Interactive Exhibition/Workshop
The Ring of Progress for Mankind (RPM) is a social-issue exploration activity consisting of research, playing and making (which also add up to RPM). RPM was originally developed as part of the festivities to celebrate the year 2000. More than 12,000 people came to the three-day festival, and many came through the RPM space, where we had built a stunning set consisting of see-through plastic towers, each containing an iMac for "playing" the game part of the project. Fabric sails tied the towers to the floor and acted as a canvas for the illustrations created in the "making" section. The research was undertaken in several locations: at the introduction panels of our site, on the workshop boards at the back of the set and on see-through plastic tables with more iMacs running multimedia software. The set was brought to life with flashing and pulsed lighting.

As a public event, which was close in feel to a fairground, the RPM set was ideal: it provided something for everyone. Young children could play the game, competing with their parents, then move on to the "making" tables while the grown-ups put their minds to potential resolutions to social problems. It was an opportunity for us to be very visible with the concept of using interactive games and participatory workshops directly related to social action, attempting to raise people's awareness about how they can personally effect change while also challenging their imaginations and creativity. RPM is one of many projects we are involved in, which seek to use play and creativity as learning strategies.

PollCreator e-Voting Software (www.pollcreator.com and www.ypp.org.uk)
The e-voting system used in the Young People's Parliament Web site is based on our proprietary PollCreator software, which allows project organizers to customize an informed electronic vote on particular issues. Project organizers have the choice of channeling prospective voters through an infinite number of information steps where different arguments or aspects of an issue can be presented. These presentations can be in any media format—text, animated graphics, photos, audio or video or a mix of all. The user can be required to go through each and all of the presentation pages before voting, or enabled to vote at any time during the presentations. The vote can be a simple two-way vote, a two-way with a "Don't Know" or "Won't Vote" option or a set of multiple choices. Voters have the ability to specify reasons for their decisions, limited to 25 words. The database structure around which PollCreator is built also lets people use the facility to create online questionnaires whereby opinions can be solicited and consolidated.

We are promoting PollCreator as an empowering strategy in the quest to enable the mass of ordinary people to participate actively in public life. The PollCreator facility will also be at the heart of CitizensMag.net, the "citizenship" section of MagnetSites, a project that aims to widen the scope of Internet usage in schools and explore alternative ways of learning, including learning to be active citizens. In early 2002, the eVoteMag.net project (www.evotemag.net) was our pilot for putting e-democracy into schools through stimulating and supporting student debating groups and classroom voting.

So we employ a number of tactics, from playing to debating, in the process of interaction with participants. New technology provides a bounty of possibilities that we are keen to exploit across the various fields of social interaction, but our focus is on using the arts and we operate mainly in the area of learning. Below, I discuss why these are our primary tools for community cultural development work and describe how we use new media and networks in carrying out the work.

THE ARTS AND LEARNING

Digital technology is affecting all areas of human endeavor, especially the realms of creative production and imaginative communications. We are in the midst of a convergence of media, entertainment, publishing, telecommunications and other industries and activities. For society there is now an obvious need for new skills and for using information as a new commodity.

This convergence is having a massive impact on the arts and education. Its effects on the arts are to create new opportunities for collaborative work and work that crosses traditional mediums, and to provide radically different ways of presenting and distributing artistic endeavor, stimulating a new breed of media makers. In schools, similar opportunities are opening up the ways in which education is delivered and received, with movement toward self-directed and student-centered learning enhanced through digital media and new publishing modes. These changes will affect teachers' roles, providing new opportunities for them to fully exploit education as society's engine of change.

We have difficulty in drawing a clear distinction between creativity and learning; for us, these are limbs of the same creature, the arms and legs of our existence. The following sections on Arts and Media and on Learning have many obvious overlaps. Although the focus is clearly toward one or another area, the social impact is often the same: to nurture and stimulate individual growth and social cohesion, to excite and to inspire. Below, I summarize some of the observations we have made around education, creativity and new technology, then describe examples from our work in these areas.

THE ARTS AND MEDIA

In a 1999 Artform research project on "the potential creative uses of digital media in the arts classroom" commissioned by the Digital Media Project in Dudley (www.artform.org.uk), Trilby argued that there is a close relationship between engaging in creative activity and using information and communication technology (ICT), the term now used in education to add a social dialogue component to information technology (IT). The need for lateral thinking—seeing the bigger picture, bringing order from chaos and imposing structure on a limitless set of possibilities— are skills arguably shared by work in ICT and in other creative activity. Easy to learn and fun to do, ICT also liberates kids from parents and teachers. We are beginning to use this to great advantage in challenging the status quo and empowering groups and individuals.

For example, Peter, who lives on an economically deprived housing estate, was always in trouble with the local police and with school officers. He engaged in petty vandalism, was a fairly good graffiti artist and was too independently minded to conform to the culture of school. Family problems meant he had little direction from parents and skipped school most days. The Youthstart program offered Peter the chance to come into the youth club each day for three months. He soon got excited about the graphic capabilities of computer software and stuck to the course, which helped to normalize his social relationships and gave focus to his life. Now he regularly supports the teaching in other Youthstart projects and is seriously looking for a job that involves working with others, doing graphics and of course using new technology.

The relationship between creative activity and formal education has always been tense. Skills training for economic activity sits uneasily with the free thought, experimentation and potential transgression that the arts encourage, but the arts still provide our best opportunities for human expression. When we work in schools we encourage students to make a video rather than write an essay, or create a computer 3-D landscape rather than paint a bowl of fruit. This poses a dilemma for teachers and examiners, who seldom have the knowledge or experience to handle such demands. Yet these "experts" are increasingly expected by government to fully exploit new technology and support creativity. "You're just another brick in the wall," sang Pink Floyd in their sharp 1979 criticism of a blinkered and reactionary teaching profession. ICT can remove bricks from the walls that enslave young minds.

As cultural development workers, we also see the arts as transformative, able to alter perceptions and build strengths in groups and individuals, letting them take greater control of their lives and build the social fabric we call culture. We strive to promote everyone's right to make art and culture, building mechanisms for creative action and reaction so that human civilization can progress. But due to the nature of the funding system we can't get grants for this, so we have to find other ways of paying for this work. All our projects are in the public sector, where we establish partnerships and alliances to pursue this wider agenda. As informal educators with an interest in general learning, we are keen to explore the many different ways people learn and to seek to devise new ways to stimulate learning. Making learning fun is a way to be paid to offer enhanced arts activities to students; there is growing support for this approach.

[2] Elizabeth Wellburn, "Communications Technologies, Literacy and the Arts," at members .home.net/dhouston1/eliz _bctla.html. This article was originally published in *The Bookmark*, the official journal of the British Columbia Teacher-Librarians' Association, March 1999, Vol. 40, No. 3.

Through exposure to artistic expression and the combining of ideas from a variety of sources, many learners become motivated to explore and learn more deeply than would be the case in a sterile, prestructured, "single-subject oriented" learning environment.[2]

Trilby is also exploring the creative opportunities made available through digital media: interactivity, putting the participant in control of the presentation; the delivery formats of CD-ROM, DVD and the Web; and interactive environments. Exploiting possibilities to broadcast and communicate in the same global territory as anyone else, we are developing an aesthetics of new media—new languages and new forms of production.

Digital technologies are rapidly transforming the process of cultural production and reception. The technologies have made possible a number of new cultural forms such as the computer game and the hyper-linked Web site. They have also fundamentally changed many existing cultural forms, both on the level of aesthetics and of production practices.[3]

Examples of Arts and Media Projects

One project in this area is Digital Dabbling, an arts summer school for the University of the First Age (UFA), an initiative from Birmingham's influential Director of Education, Tim Brighouse. When he launched the UFA, he said, "Giving young people more time, to do more of the same, in the same way, with the same people is not going to raise standards of achievement dramatically upward—we need to seize the opportunity to do something radically different." The University of the First Age is grounded in the philosophy that all young people have the potential to achieve success. UFA seeks ways to maximize people's learning potential. Using strategies that employ theories of multiple intelligences,[4] accelerated learning[5] and associated approaches, the UFA is naturally interested in the arts.

In the Digital Dabbling Summer School, we used a potent mix of traditional art activities, digital media and collective expression to explore ways of illustrating and commenting on our community and ourselves. We used "Figures in a Landscape" as the motif to explore and make statements about our individual and group identities. Using Photoshop, Painter and Poser software, with photography, drawing and model making as our main off-computer activities, we created a range of images and other pieces for Web site publication. We began by looking at figures in landscapes from art history, using this to trigger contemporary commentaries. Composite photo images, 2-D and 3-D animations, issue-based Web pages and video were the end results.

While we were keen for participants to use their local communities as the background to their composite images, the young people preferred to use international iconography such as the HOLLYWOOD hill sign or the Eiffel Tower. We made deals with them, agreeing to their use of such imagery if there was also a degree of subversion of the icon so that the Mount Rushmore image was titled, "We're as important as any President," and Hassan sits astride the BIRMINGHAM hill sign. Some of the animations involved the making of human figures in Plasticine (a colored, nondrying modeling material

[3] Julian Sefton-Green, ed., *Young People, Creativity and New Technologies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 2.

[4] Multiple intelligences theory was developed by psychologist Howard Gardner, who suggests there are many different ways that people perceive and make sense of the world. Verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences dominate current expectations in schooling to the detriment of the visual-spatial and musical-rhythmic intelligences associated with creativity. Gardner leads the Project Zero team at Harvard, with a mission "to understand and enhance learning, thinking, and creativity in the arts, as well as humanistic and scientific disciplines, at the individual and institutional levels." Their Web site is at pzweb.harvard.edu.

[5] Accelerated Learning, or more correctly Accelerated School, is an approach to school change which aims to improve learning by enriching the school environment through such processes as "unity of purpose," "empowerment and responsibility" and "building on strengths"— solid community cultural development principles. Find out more at www.stanford.edu/group /ASP/brochure3.html.

used in the United Kingdom). Alisha was so pleased with her model she said, "This is the best thing I have ever made, she has to come home with me," before going on to animate her creation and put it up on the Web site as a way of sharing her creativity.

The Digital Schools Initiative (www.digitalfilmschool.net)

The Digital Film School was the first of a set of digital schools that Trilby established to support the creative and social uses of digital media. Designed to offer access to professional-level digital-art and media production, the schools have three components: the Mobile Studio, the Online Resource and the Ideas Library. These Digital Schools are aimed at young people in schools and youth settings but are equally valuable in work with adults of all ages and abilities.

New technology makes it easy for anyone to quickly learn how to make movies, design Web sites and make digital art and music. This initiative aims to make these tools available to anyone and in any situation with a power supply and a phone line. Trilby also offers a "Hardware Plus Access" package for around $3,000, which provides all needed hardware, software and support along with a year's access to the Digital School and a space on our servers for each group's Digital Clubs, galleries or cinemas. Martyn, 13, wrote:

> Today we (me, Owen, Laura, Melissa, Emma and Adil) made a movie each about our school. I made one about the school production, Bugsy Malone. I have done interviews, camera, photos and directed all in one day. After this wonderful day I am hoping to get a career in acting. I thank the Digital Film School very much.

Collection Explorer Web Site (www.curiositybox.net)

Designed through a partnership with the New Art Gallery in Walsall, this package aims to connect young people with arts institutions in a dynamic and collaborative way. It is a fully customizable facility that allows users to mix given material such as images from a gallery or museum collection with their own original material, adding text and other details in order to create a new learning resource. The user chooses an artifact from the collection or uses the Personality Test to have an artifact choose the user, who is then invited to do things based on the item or to spring off into related activities. There is a working space where the user can build a collection of related resources, then submit them for inclusion in the catalogue of resources available for others to pick up and use.

This Web site facility stems from the New Art Gallery's Entitlement Project, which promotes the concept of entitlement to Walsall's rich art- and social-history collections by secondary school students (11 to 16 years old), strengthening teachers' awareness of the collections and encouraging their use in teaching. For us community cultural development workers, this is another opportunity to use the arts as a tool for personal and group engagement while also enjoying, exploring and analyzing cultural artifacts and their social context. The Collection Explorer software remains our property so is available for any gallery or museum to use as part of their community-learning and educational-outreach work.

KidsMag.net Web Site (www.kidsmag.net)

This is an Internet club for which students must register to participate. It provides an easy way for them to report about school clubs and other alternative- and extended-learning activities by submitting writing, photos and artwork for publication on the site. Games and other online activities make the site an interesting and stimulating environment for students both at school and at home. A set of Topical Polls and in-depth online questionnaires provide program managers with detailed insights into young peoples' attitudes and opinions.

KidsMag.net uses the Collaborative Authoring Engine that we have developed to encourage collective working. The Internet is a good tool for collaborative working, and we are always looking for ways to simplify the process whereby people can access the facility for creative communication. KidsMag.net grew out of our action-research exploring the potential creative uses of digital media in the arts classroom (detailed in www.artform.org.uk), and the Learning Express Summer School (www.learningexpress.org.uk), a 10-day summer school program for 150 to 200 students. Two 11-year-olds who participated in the program wrote:

> We think Learning Express is a brilliant idea. It helps young people to find
> out more about using a computer! Jenny and I think that we have learnt
> more about using a computer just by logging on and seeing what cool stuff
> we all have done over the past three days. Thanks for making this happen!

The site is complemented by StaffMag.net, a program-management and monitoring facility designed to help project organizers and the management team deliver and report on these new ways of engaging young people in learning. We call the whole package "MagnetSites," and the development is widely seen as an innovation in the use of new technology for social development. EducationExtra, a nongovernmental organization in the U.K. that promotes and supports extracurricular education, has profiled the site as a model of good practice, and government ministers are examining the value of promoting the facility nationally. It is currently used by four city authorities including Birmingham, the largest local authority in the United Kingdom with more than 300 schools. This sort of online resource meets many of the objectives of Prime Minister Tony Blair's target of "empowering the frontline workers" in the U.K. public services. We are adding ArtsMag.net, SportsEdMag.net and YoungCitizensMag.net to the MagnetSites facility during 2002 to provide ideas and support to project organizers. See www.magnetsites.com for more information.

> Educators do not act in a value free way. In our view, for something to be called "education," whether it takes place in the classroom or the canteen, it must be informed by certain values—respect for persons, the promotion of well-being, truth, democracy, fairness and equality. These values should inform both the content of conversations and encounters, as well as our behaviour and relationships as educators. Julius Nyerere once summed these concerns up when he talked of the purpose of education as being the liberation of humans from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency. "Nothing else can be properly called education. Teaching which induces a slave mentality or a sense of impotence is not education at all—it is an attack on the minds of men."[6]

Ask teachers, "Where is the worst place to learn?" They will consider a short time before saying, "The classroom!" The Internet offers the possibility of replacing this defunct Victorian concept. The 24-hour school, where you learn as and when you want or need to, is with us now.

Britain's New Labour government understands there is a need for change in the way we organize and deliver education. It has put hundreds of millions of pounds of National Lottery money into "out of school hours learning." This program is designed to provide something different from regular school, actively seeking new and alternative learning settings and approaches.

One of Trilby's motivating ideas is the examination of alternatives to formal education: exploring different learning styles, being aware of multiple intelligences; seeing "operacy"[7]—the ability to do things—as fundamentally more useful than literacy; the notion that "more is caught than taught,"[8] learning through doing; learning through play; and casual learning, where knowledge and understanding happen almost without the learner realizing it—one of the distinguishing characteristics of community arts practice. New media let us create learning settings and experiences that are self-directed on the learner's terms (such as when, where and how often). The learning can be facilitated in an appropriate manner by the use of online tutors or learning mentors, and the collaborative nature of the Internet can help peer-group learning and mutual support. The Web offers access to ways of presenting information that make it relevant to the user. All these new mechanisms and facilities are part of the process of democratizing learning and knowledge.

The U.K. government's interest in supporting this work is providing indirect support to Trilby's operations, especially the products and services we have developed for use in schools. The MagnetSites suite of Web sites is also providing a platform to encourage creative work and stimulate learning by older students and adults in other social arenas such as youth clubs, libraries and community centers. Our new work in Learning Centres is about empowering local people to create their own learning materials, making full use of the new creative, production and distribution possibilities.

[6] Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith, *Informal Education: Conversation, Democracy and Learning* (Ticknall: Education Now Books, 1999). Used on the bottom of the "What Is Education?" page at www.infed.org /foundations/f-educ.htm. Also, see www.infed.org /thinkers/et-hist.htm #contemporary for a brief history of thinking about informal education and www.infed.org/thinkers /et-nye.htm for more about Julius Nyerere's vision of education.

[7] "Operacy" is a word coined by Edward deBono, the originator of the term "lateral thinking," and is widely used in *New Thinking for the New Millennium* (London: Penguin Books, 1999); see for example page 4. His Web site is at www.edwarddebono.com.

[8] "More Is Caught Than Taught" (MCTT) is the mantra and a training program of the Federation of Childcare Centers of Alabama (FOCAL). MCTT is a new approach to training and development for all those working with children in the community. More information is at www.playtrn.demon.co.uk /mctt.htm.

The examples below are from our range of work that has a clear education or learning role. Because these projects have a specific and defined purpose, they don't always involve the target groups in production, a process we generally seek to embed in every project. This is always a dilemma for us—being paid by a client to deliver the goods but wanting to "subvert" the funding into community-based workshop activities. Often Trilby personnel act as technology gurus to our clients and partners directing the projects, so the education takes place a couple of strata above street level. A lot of what we do is still very new to many people, so we divert some of our time into evangelizing and explaining the significance of multimedia and the Internet for learning. This has led to our offering training as part of our work and writing a primer on the creative uses of computers and the Internet. We also produce and distribute a small bimonthly newsletter to update community-based arts workers about new possibilities. This can be downloaded as a portable document format (PDF) at www.creativetechnologynews.net.

Examples of Learning Projects

Cultural Roots Multimedia Knowledge Base (CRMKB)—CD-ROM for Young Children
CRMKB is a multimedia resource on the cultural history of the world's population. Volume One contains information on the Ten Sikh Gurus, the Punjabi language, the Black Pioneers and islands of the Caribbean. The general themes of the disk are People, Places, Beliefs and Lifestyles. CRMKB provides a rich overview of some aspects of African-Caribbean and Sikh culture and history, making the most of its multimedia format with music, sounds and animations. We use time lines, games and quizzes to make the learning fun and engaging for young children. Many adults also find the information and activities are an entertaining way of learning about their own and others' cultures.

Got Messed Up—Young People's Health Project CD-ROM
This is an initiative from the Young People's Health Project team in Birmingham, U.K. It is designed as a multipart resource for use in residential settings or other situations where a group of young people will have the time and the focused attention to spend on the issues behind the program. Based around a murder-mystery role-play idea, the CD-ROM contains video scenes from the young murder victim's recent past, as well as other evidence and clues for the detectives to examine.

We worked with the Young People's Health Project, a group of teenagers and the London Workshop Company theater group to make the interactive component of the resource. This murder-mystery game is complemented by role-playing and other activities exploring health issues. We like the way the digital-media element here is only one part of an integrated package, and we are exploring other uses for this multidisciplinary approach.

Also aimed at young people, SkillStationBASIC is an online literacy and numeracy course. SkillStation is a series of online learning packages based on Flash and Shockwave technology, using animation and narration to make it fun to learn important skills. SkillStationBASIC is the first in the series, and we are using the same model to make other online learning resources. Currently in development are SkillStationDIGITAL, to introduce basic computer and multimedia skills; SkillStationCOMMUNITY, to support community organizing; SkillStationBUSINESS for stimulating social enterprises; and SkillStationHEALTH for health and safety awareness. More information is at www.skillstation.net.

We are also working with Learning Centres to design and create online learning resources that are appropriate to their local communities. This ongoing activity is part of our role as community cultural development workers and also an effective response to research findings that indicate the need for such local production. The influential Fabian Society proposes a radical approach to delivering an inclusive information society:

> Bridging the digital divide is about more than simply improving access to new technology. For excluded groups in particular, there is little relevant "content" available on an Internet which is driven by the market and aimed at affluent consumers. The best solution is to let people develop content for themselves. … The case studies show how excluded people can be engaged in using technology on their own terms, and how technology can be used as a tool for social inclusion more generally.[9]

[9]From the publisher's promo for Samantha Hellawell, *Beyond Access: ICT and Social Exclusion* (London: The Fabian Society, 2001) at www.fabian-society.org.uk.

For me there is a sense of déjà vu in this work with Learning Centres, a flashback to 20 years ago where the double-decker bus is now replaced by technology-rich community facilities. We go into communities and facilitate the production of multimedia digital pieces just as we did multiple-media arts events in local communities—involving and empowering with the potential to transform. And of course many of the precepts and core values of 1980s community arts such as inclusion and empowerment are now woven into the mainstream thinking and policymaking of the U.K. government. Today however we have a global distribution network that opens up further possibilities.

GOING GLOBAL

I would like to end with two ideas for global digital projects that put digital media and the Internet at the forefront of international development. We hope readers will agree with the suggestion that new technology offers enormous potential for social progress and for redressing injustice and ignorance. We further hope that you will work with us and other community cultural development agencies to use these new tools to make the world a better place.

The myth of the global village—a utopian world of no borders, free association and equal trade—is rapidly being demonstrated as a convenient sham. Perhaps the only significant exception is the Internet, a global village of information that still has a long way to go in terms of availability and access before the digital divide is bridged. From our point of view it is an opportunity to take aspects of our work around the globe. There are many instances where our community cultural development tools would enhance local action on issues such as gender, as in environmentalist Hazel Henderson's exhortation to "think globally, act locally." And there is an increasing number of examples of new media in action for social change:

> "We didn't see any women on (election) posters, so it meant that men were listed at a higher level," says Kganyago. "Women were shadows in the background." Women'sNet used the Internet to publish and distribute its Election Bulletin newsletter, which contained a wide range of articles on issues relating to women and the elections. The newsletter provided an open window for women from diverse backgrounds, encouraging women to vote and thus have their say in the democratic process.[10]

[10] David Lush and Helliate Rushwaya, eds., *Into or Out of the Digital Divide? Perspectives on ICTs and Development in Southern Africa* (Lusaka: Panos Southern Africa, 2000), from www.panos.org.zm. This quote is one of the Case Studies at www.panos.org.zm /SAwomen.htm.

Examples of Going Global

LiberationTools.com

This project is in development as I write in the autumn of 2001, and the Web site is open for contributions and feedback. The concept came directly from the Community, Culture and Globalization conference, where we agreed on the need to share some simple tactics and ideas for community cultural development. In LiberationTools.com we will use the global broadcasting facility that the Internet provides to share and exchange tools and resources to support our personal growth and development; to help us explore, analyze and challenge the status quo; and to set up alternatives to the dominant social structures that so often oppress and restrict human progress. I see this project as addressing the homogenizing effects of multinationals and the "new world order"—in other words, challenging globalization.

We also hope to use the site to develop some form of international accreditation for community cultural development workers, especially those of us who come from an experiential learning environment rather than academia. Alternative accreditation could promise liberation from the dictates of ivory-towerists and self-serving educational bureaucrats.

RainbowCivilisation.com

RainbowCivilisation.com is a prospective international Web site based on Trilby's multicultural education project here in the United Kingdom (www.positivediversity.com). Its aim will be to celebrate and promote cultural pluralism, serving as a reference point for those working to combat ignorance and prejudice. This is needed more than ever as Europe goes into a protectionist state of mind, closing its borders to citizens driven from their countries by the forces of globalization as much as by wars, natural disasters and persecution. As the world fractures from reactions to the terrible events of September 11, all of us must develop a worldview that includes all humanity if we are to make headway in preventing injustices that give rise to terrorism.

At Trilby we believe that community cultural development is pre-eminently about building individual and shared agendas for interacting in local, national and global communities in ways that mutually empower all of the actors. To do this we each need to have a basic understanding about the roots of our diverse cultures and gain a feeling for, and empathy with, the emotional importance culture has in guiding our collective action. This is the proposed mission of RainbowCivilisation.com, and it is also the broad agenda that we work on here at Trilby Multimedia.