

## Technology, Power and Resistance

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### Description:

Safety Net, a technology safety project of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), holds an annual Training of Trainers conference. At the conference, the network discusses how technology is being used to victimize domestic violence survivors and also how it is being used positively in their advocacy and organizing efforts. In 2008, I was asked to deliver a keynote talk about my work on technology, violence and women's citizenship at the conference. They also asked that Christine Nealon and I develop a hands-on workshop dealing with some aspect of our popular technology work.

We created the "Technology, Power and Resistance" workshop to help advocates and activists think through how technology impacts their day-to-day work and their broader social justice concerns. It was important to us to help participants think about the relationship between technology and power in a broad and structural way, rather than seeing technology as simply a tool for their work or a threat to their clients.

# Welcome to *Technology, Power and Resistance!*

## Workshop Agenda

8:45 – 8:50 AM	<b>Welcome! Groundrules</b>
8:50 – 9 AM	<b>Icebreaker – Ball throw</b>
9 – 9:05 AM	<b>Introduction</b>
9:05 – 9:25 AM	<b>Technology &amp; Social Justice Inventory</b>
	 Hands-on issue mapping
9:25 – 9:40 AM	<b>Identify confrontable issues</b>
	 Discussion
9:40 – 9:45 AM	<b>The “Big 5”</b>
	 Break into content groups
9:45 – 10:10 AM	<b>Power inventory</b>
10:10 – 10:15 AM	<b>Wrap up, Evaluation</b>

# About Our Knowledge, Our Power (OKOP)

**Our Knowledge, Our Power** draws on values of respect, local expertise, grassroots process and true democracy to make real, meaningful change in the terribly unfair and exploitative system of public assistance in New York State, which keeps people dependent and poor.

We try to counteract the alienation and lack of respect that public assistance "beneficiaries" often encounter by sharing information and resources to bridge the gap between public assistance recipients and workers/politicians/the general public.

We believe we can bridge this gap by drawing on our collective power to:

- Empower people most directly impacted by the social service system;
- Enlighten people about their rights in the system;
- Provide tools for navigating the system;
- Help with the application process;
- Facilitate knowledge sharing; and
- Share our needs, challenges and aspirations with other members of the community.

**OKOP runs entirely on donations, small grants and volunteer labor. If you can donate time, money or supplies to help people struggling to meet their basic needs claim their economic human rights, please contact Virginia at (518) 892-6697.**

## About the Facilitators

**Virginia Eubanks** joined the Department of Women's Studies at the University at Albany, SUNY in 2004 after completing her Ph.D. in Science and Technology Studies at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Eubanks came to her research on technology, women's poverty and citizenship in the United States through a history of activism in community media, technology center, and anti-poverty movements. She is currently working on a book entitled *Technologies of Citizenship: Women, Inequality and the Information Age*. Eubanks also co-founded the "Popular Technology Workshops," which serve as a place for people struggling to meet their basic needs to come together in order to define their problems and develop their own solutions. The workshops are grounded in the idea that people closest to problems have the most information about them and are most investing in creating smart solutions. More information about her is available at <http://www.populartechnology.org/Virginia/>.

**Christine Nealon** calls upon her more than 15 years of experience with various non-profits including the YWCA, Catholic Charities, and Equinox to fuel her passion for popular education and grass roots organizing. She continues to blend the academic world and attainment for human rights in the local, national, and global arenas while teaching the WORLD courses at Russell Sage College in Troy, NY, engaging in research with Virginia Eubanks, Ph.D. and completing her graduate work at the State University of New York at Albany in the Women's Studies Department.

# Power Inventory

This three-part power inventory is used to take stock of the kinds of power available to your group when undertaking a technology and social justice project. The Inventory asks us to consider:

Does your group have some forms of power?

Where and in what fields do you have the most power?

How can you use that power to achieve social and economic justice:

- ⇒ Within the organization?
- ⇒ Within the specific field / issue?
- ⇒ In our communities?

## Part I: Name the Change You Want to Make

We want to

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What's the relationship between your technological issue and the work you (and your organization) already do?

How does this technological issue impact the people you serve? Directly? Indirectly?

What are the barriers to successfully confronting this issue? Who benefits from this issue existing?

## Part II: Identify resources you have to make that change

Adapted from Hope & Timmel (1999). *Training for Transformation*. ITG Publishing.

	Financial Resources Money, property, capital	Power Influence, elected office, votes, community base	People Personnel, Stakeholders, Employees	Skills Organizing, New ideas and actions, Bilingual, Typing	Other
Organizations					
Businesses					
Your job					
Friends and Family					
Community/ Neighborhood					
Politics					
Other					

### **III. Identify your limitations, develop strategies to fill gaps**

Adapted from INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (2006). *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

1) Discuss: Where does your funding come from? Are there ways that your funding source impacts your goals or methods? How much time do you spend responding to the needs of your funders rather than the needs of the people you serve?

⇒ Write STRATEGIES for strengthening ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

2) Discuss: How well do you work with existing community leaders? Does your organization help foster leadership among the people it serves? Are there ways that your organization may be diminishing the growth of grassroots organizing/leadership?

⇒ Write STRATEGIES for strengthening INCLUSIVITY and SHARING POWER

3) Discuss: In what ways are the staff of your organization separated from the people you serve because of the following: the status and pay of staff; the professionalization of the work; the role of your organization in the community; the interdependence of your work with governmental agencies, businesses, foundations, or other non-profit organizations?

⇒ Write STRATEGIES for strengthening DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

4) Discuss: In what ways have your ties to governmental and community agencies separated you from the people you serve? In what ways have those ties limited your ability to be 'contentious' – to challenge the roots of violence and undemocratic and abusive practices?

⇒ Write STRATEGIES for strengthening COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL CHANGE