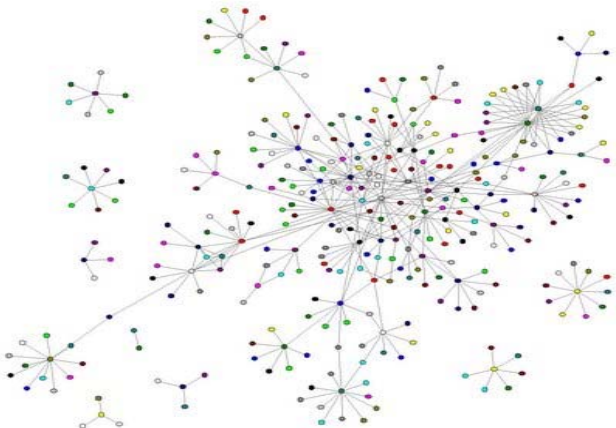




Weaving Smart Networks: Building Capacity for Positive Change in Organizations and Communities

OCTOBER 12-13, 2006
HOSTED BY THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
ONE DUPONT CIRCLE
WASHINGTON, DC



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Plexus Institute

Weaving Smart Networks: Building Capacity for Positive Change in Organizations and Communities

Aspen Institute – One Dupont Circle
Washington, DC
October 12- 13, 2006

OPENING THOUGHTS



Network maps courtesy of Valdis Krebs

Networks are big news: maps of Al Qaeda networks have hit the front pages of newspapers, online social networks such as MySpace have become big business and the use of network analysis to track our phone conversations has become a national controversy.

All networks are not the same. Some networks, such as “old boys” networks limit the benefits of their resources to a small group. Others, called deficit networks, actually drain energy and resources from participants. Instead of these, we need networks that help us innovate and solve problems, make complex systems work more effectively, speed learning and help people work together more effectively. We call such networks Smart Networks and people who nurture them Network Weavers.

Smart Networks—networks that embrace diversity and encourage quality relationships in such a way that innovation and collaboration blossom—are emerging throughout the world, as people cross traditional divides to create healthier communities. Smart Networks have helped Appalachian entrepreneurs move out of poverty, Boston arts organizations provide after school options for inner city children, West African leaders join together on innovative solar energy projects, and Cleveland’s environmental businesses find creative ways of working together. Smart Networks have the potential to help hospitals diffuse innovative practices and to help health care systems work with families and communities on new approaches to providing vital health services. Smart Networks can help large corporations enhance the productivity and innovation of their internal networks and build peer-based relationships with their customers.

Weaving Quality Connections for Innovation and Impact

The Plexus Institute invites you to join with Smart Network practitioners June Holley, Lisa Kimball, Valdis Krebs, and Jack Ricchiuto to learn more about this exciting new approach to creating networks that are good for all of us.

The Smart Networks Conference will offer participants a chance to learn more about the creation of Smart Networks and the role of Network Weavers—people who love to meet new people and connect people to each other. Conference faculty will draw on case studies from a number of rural and urban networks, national communities of practice, and regional innovation networks to illustrate Smart Networks in action.

Through interactive sessions using examples drawn from the participants' actual work environments, participants will go through the four steps in establishing Smart Networks. Participants will leave the workshop with the basic tools for implementing Smart Networks to foster their goals at work and with an initial strategy for action.

The role of Network Weaver is critical to the emergence of Smart Networks. Workshop leaders will help participants identify their strengths as networks weavers, and describe how they—and others in their networks—can expand their network weaving repertoire.

Network weavers encourage people to form a sizable core of others with whom they collaborate on a regular basis, and a much larger periphery of people, often from outside their organization or region, that help them access innovations and new resources. Techniques will be introduced that facilitate the development of quality connections and encourage relationships that take root and flourish despite the formidable barriers that often isolate us from others. Strategies to improve the generation and diffusion of innovation will be explored as well.

Social network mapping, often using mapping software, is a wonderful way to enable people to visualize their networks. Such maps also give people concrete information about where they can enhance those networks. Workshop leaders will introduce the use of mapping software and a set of measures—adapted from traditional social network metrics—specifically for communities. These measures include:

- ❖ *Awareness*: How likely is it that you know what is going on far from the core?
- ❖ *Influence*: Who are people “going to” for know-how or collaboration?
- ❖ *Diversity*: How much are people interacting with those who are different?
- ❖ *Resilience*: How dependent is the network on a few individuals?
- ❖ *Integration*: Who are network leaders? How healthy is the network?
- ❖ *Connector*: Who are the individuals who are connecting those who wouldn't otherwise be connected?

Network Analysis through the Lens of Complexity Science

The understanding of Smart Networks draws from new insights of complexity science that reveal how living systems self-organize, evolve and adapt as a result of emergent and nonlinear interactive processes. Smart Networks are self-organizing networks. People in Smart Networks

identify an opportunity then bring together others who can help turn that opportunity into a collaborative experiment. Whether the project succeeds or fails, the collaborators share what they have learned with others in the network. In this way, a healthy community quickly emerges.

The Smart Network Approach also incorporates the concept of emergence. Outcomes in Smart Networks are not predictable. The transformations they encourage emerge from the creative activities of ongoing collaborations.

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

This workshop is for people who are already engaged in change and innovation or are addressing some challenging issue—whether in hospitals, corporations, social service agencies or non-profits—but who want to increase the impact or scale of their efforts using network strategies. The workshop will benefit national organizations that want to network their members, corporations interested in new relationships with customers, government agencies interested in linking grantees, economic development staff interested in creating commercialization ecosystems, and hospitals interested in the diffusion of innovative practices.

Participants will actively work on their own initiatives during the workshop. Participants will also have opportunities to learn about work-in-progress from other participants. Projects people are planning to bring to the workshop include:

- ❖ A foundation searching for better ways to connect grantees to grantees
- ❖ A corporation seeking a way to expand markets, co-develop products, and expand customer knowledge
- ❖ A community building grassroots connections among parents of truant children
- ❖ A global health organization seeking to boost knowledge sharing regarding the spread of life-saving innovations

DATES, TIMES AND LOCATION

The workshop will be October 12 –13, 2006 at:

**Aspen Institute
One Dupont Circle
Washington, DC**

The workshop will be run from 9:00 am to 5:00 on Thursday and on Friday, 9:00 am to noon with an optional afternoon session from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.

MAIN WORKSHOP AGENDA

October 12 – Morning

Introduction and Agenda Review
Network Weaving Activity
Overview of Smart Networks Approach
Identification of Examples

Lunch – On your own at your choice of wonderful local restaurants

October 12 – Afternoon

Surveys, Mapping and Analysis
Small Group Application
Network Weaving Basics
Small Group Application

October 13 – Morning

Weaving for Innovation and Innovation Diffusion
Small Group Application
Wrap-up and Next Steps

October 13 – Afternoon (optional)

Individuals have the opportunity to meet with workshop leaders and explore how they might apply these concepts and practices to their situation

WORKSHOP FACULTY

JUNE HOLLEY



June Holley provides consulting, training and mentoring to a wide range of organizations around the world who are interested in creating healthier communities through a better understanding of networks, collaboration, innovation and learning. For more than 20 years, June was the President/CEO of the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet), a regional entrepreneurship organization in southeastern Ohio committed to building a healthy and sustainable regional economy based on economic justice, self-determination, and respect for diversity. With the ACEnet staff, she pioneered in the implementation of many innovative economic development strategies including business networks, sectoral incubators, a regional youth entrepreneurship initiative, technology-based workforce development programs and a regional entrepreneurship network. In 1991, she was selected by Governor Voinovich to be inducted into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame. An avid researcher on complexity and organizations, she has co-authored over 30 papers, articles, and books on various aspects of economic and community networking. She has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Ohio Magazine*, *Entrepreneur*, *In Business* and many other publications.

LISA KIMBALL



Lisa Kimball is the founder and president of Group Jazz. Group Jazz works as a production company to support the work of purposeful groups - teams, communities, task forces, organizations - whether they meet face-to-face or online or both. Group Jazz brings together the best tools, technologies, media, consultants, cast members and practitioners to create great group experiences that support action. Lisa is a specialist in applications of electronic networking and the design of virtual spaces for organizations, teams, and online communities. She has deep experience in facilitating online groups and training moderators on multiple networks using most of the software environments available today. In addition to her work with corporate and other large organizations, Lisa consults with technology companies to design and implement applications. Clients have included GroupServe, Third Voice, and Virtualteams.com. Lisa also coaches facilitators and team leaders who are working with groups virtually.

VALDIS KREBS



Valdis Krebs is an internationally recognized expert in applying social network mapping and analysis in a variety of businesses, organizations and communities. He is also the developer of software and training allowing others to participate in this process. Over the nearly 20 years in doing organizational and community network projects Valdis' clients have included, IBM, TRW, Boeing, CapitalOne, Target, Booz Allen Hamilton, KPMG, Deloitte Touche, PricewaterhouseCoopers, CDC, ACEnet, MacArthur Foundation, Barr Foundation, Annie E Casey Foundation and hundreds of consultants and other organizations.

JACK RICCHIUTO



Jack Ricchiuto has provided coaching to corporate executives, civic leaders, project teams, entrepreneurs, and physicians for over 30 years. He provides development for

leaders across the US and globally and facilitates complex community engagement processes for economic and community development projects. Jack is a respected conference speaker on the groundbreaking topics introduced in his books and work with organizations across more than 20 industries, from Fortune 500 companies to start-ups, non-profits, and community agencies. His client list includes MCI, American Greetings, Parker Hannifin, Viacom, American Institute Of Banking, University Hospitals, Progressive Insurance, and the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks. Jack is author of *Collaborative Creativity*, *Accidental Conversations*, *Project Zen*, and *Appreciative Leadership*. He has two new books due out this year: *Dream Space: The Power & Path of Dreaming in Community* and *Mountain Paths: An Appreciative Guide on the Journey toward Discovering our Potential*. He has written for national publications including *Projects@Work* and local publications like *Smart Business Magazine*.

LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS

To reserve a room, contact the hotel by October 2, 2006 and request the Plexus Institute conference room rate \$119-single.

Windsor Inn
1842 16th Street NW
Washington, DC, 20009 US
202-667-0300 or 800-423-9111

REGISTRATION AND CANCELLATION POLICY

To register, complete the attached registration form and return by mail or fax. The registration fee of \$250 covers tuition, materials, continental breakfasts, and break refreshments. Enrollment is limited, and early registration is advised. A confirmation will be sent upon receipt of payment and completed registration form. For those who cannot afford the full registration fee, several scholarships are being offered.

Your registration fee, less a \$50 administrative fee, will be refunded when Plexus Institute receives written notification at least 14 days prior to the conference. No refunds will be made after that time.

ABOUT PLEXUS INSTITUTE

Plexus Institute is a community of diverse people – scientists, business executives, nurses, artists, educators, journalists, researchers, physicians, university students, and community leaders. Its members, by learning with one another, are making progress on significant issues facing society and organizations. The Institute's mission is to foster the health of individuals, families, communities, organizations and our natural environment by helping people use concepts emerging from the new science of complexity. To learn more about Plexus Institute, visit www.PlexusInstitute.org.

**The world is full of gates, all opportunities,
strings of tension waiting to be struck.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Plexus Workshop Registration

Weaving Smart Networks: Building Capacity for Positive Change in Organizations and Communities October 12 – 13, 2006

Mail or FAX your form and payment to:

Plexus Institute
PO Box 395
Allentown, NJ 08501

Telephone: (609) 208-2930
Fax: (609) 208-2934
E-Mail: june@networkweaving.com
Curt@PlexusInstitute.org

(Please print or type all information. You may duplicate this form for multiple registrations.)

Name _____
 First Name _____ Middle name or Initial _____ Last Name _____

Organizational Title _____

Institution _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____ FAX () _____

E-mail address _____



Please check if you have special accommodation or dietary needs and indicate specific need(s):

Weaving Smart Networks: Building Capacity for Positive Change in Organizations and Communities

- Standard Registration (\$250)** \$ _____
- Organizational Plexus Member Registration (\$0 US) * \$ _____

Total Payment Enclosed \$ _____

Payment Method

Check Enclosed *(make checks payable to **Plexus Institute**)*
 Credit Card: Visa MasterCard

Card Number _____ Expires (Month/Year) ____/____

Cardholder Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

* Organizational members can send two individuals for free; additional attendees pay the Standard Registration fee.
 ** For those applicants who cannot afford the full registration fee, **scholarships** are being offered. Please contact us if you wish to discuss your need for the scholarship. Plexus Institute seeks to be an inclusive organization that welcomes a wide variety of people and organizations to its community. Through the generosity of Henri Lipmanowicz, chair, Plexus Institute, funds are available to support partial conference scholarships for those without the financial resources to cover full registration fees. Priority for **Lipmanowicz Scholarships** will be given to young people.