



**ACCESS AND THE  
CULTURAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

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**CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE**

*Art, Culture & the National Agenda*

*Issue Paper*

## ART, CULTURE AND THE NATIONAL AGENDA

The Center for Arts and Culture is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to examining critical issues in cultural policy. In 2000, the Center initiated a project called Art, Culture and the National Agenda. With generous support from a number of foundations, the Center solicited background papers on arts and cultural issues from dozens of scholars and practitioners over an 18-month period. The aim of Art, Culture and the National Agenda is to explore a roster of cultural issues that affect the nation's well-being—issues that should be on the horizon of policymakers, public and private, and at national, state and local levels.

*Access and the Cultural Infrastructure* is the seventh and final paper in the Art, Culture and the National Agenda series. Written by Allison Brugg Bawden, formerly on staff at the Center, *Access and the Cultural Infrastructure* examines issues involving access to culture through public participation, traditional media, and new media, particularly the Internet. This issue paper, like others in the series, reflects the opinions and research of its author, who was informed by commissioned background papers and the assistance of the Center's Research Advisory Council. The paper does not necessarily represent the views of all those associated with the Center.

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**Additional information about the Center and the Art, Culture and the National Agenda project, as well as resources on cultural policy, can be found on the Center's web site at [www.culturalpolicy.org](http://www.culturalpolicy.org).**

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## POINTS OF ACCESS

The availability of resources in the cultural infrastructure staggers the imagination:

### Institutions

*Libraries*—nearly 9,000 public libraries and 10 times as many in schools.

*Museums*—150,000 museums and exhibition spaces, including 8,300 art museums.

*Institutions of Higher Learning*—4,064 institutions, 2,309 four-year colleges and universities.

*Sites*—46 percent of 199.8 million U.S. adult travelers include a cultural, arts, heritage or historic activity on vacation.

### Cultural “Products”

*Print*—each year, over 60,000 books and 1,200 magazines are published.

*Broadcast*—13,000 local radio stations and 1,700 television stations broadcast every hour of every day.

*Film*—some 37,000 screens in movie theaters show nearly 500 new American films each year.

*Recordings*—over 440 million units of recorded music are shipped out to retail outlets each year.

*Internet*—167.5 million people in North America are online at work or at home as of April 2002.

Additionally millions of Americans participate in arts and cultural activities at theaters, performing arts spaces, community centers, and informal settings.

## Access and the Cultural Infrastructure

### Introduction

As the repository for the collective history of creative endeavor and a source of inspiration for tomorrow’s thinkers and artists, the cultural infrastructure is a complex system of relationships among individuals and public, private, for-profit and not-for-profit institutions. This system provides for the transmission of culture from creators to audiences. There are literally millions of access points into the cultural infrastructure (see “Points of Access” facing page) – through museums, libraries, universities, historical societies, web sites, broadcasts, streaming video, magazines and live performances. The availability of ways to access cultural expressions is not an issue, for if, as Raymond Williams says, “culture is ordinary,”<sup>1</sup> then culture is everywhere. There is no shortage of cultural expression, but for many people, *getting at* that culture can be a real challenge.

There remain in this country wide gaps in individual economic, educational, and cultural resources and opportunities. The struggle continues to open up society to all citizens, regardless of race, gender, or creed and economic, educational, or cultural background. If equal access to cultural experiences is a democratic ideal, it can only be achieved with a full understanding of the core social divides in America, and the socio-economic disparities in education and material living conditions that affect the daily lives of millions. Going to a live performance or getting a high-speed Internet connection are less likely priorities for those Americans who struggle to find childcare or who cannot afford bus fare.

Dr. Marc Miringoff of Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Sciences conducted a survey on social indicators which will demonstrate the correlation between household income and participation in the arts. Miringoff says, "When we saw results of our national study regarding arts and culture participation, we were quite surprised. The difference between those with little financial means and those with much with regard to their participation in arts and culture, outside of the house, was enormous. If you are a poor child in America, whatever benefits come from such participation, you are not receiving them."

After years of progress in establishing cultural organizations, encouraging full participation, and multiplying the number of offerings in communities, policy makers and advocates still need to think about the ways that citizens participate. As Lawrence Lessig observed in *Wired*, access to culture and cultural information is critical to "the world's intellectual history," and to the ability to produce, innovate and create.<sup>2</sup> The cultural infrastructure transmits our identities and heritages, provides the materials for imagination and innovation, and educates us to participate as creative citizens. Jim Bower, formerly of the Getty Information Institute, maintains that "If one assumes that the arts are a cornerstone of 'civil society,' then access to information about the broadest spectrum of those arts is essential."

It is undeniable that communities that have overcome social inequality contribute meaningfully to the cultural infrastructure, informing the cultural ethos of the nation and over time changing Americans' conceptions of who we are and what we believe. New forms of cultural expression introduced by these communities into the public realm challenge assumptions and influence the status quo.

It is for these reasons that in America there is strength in our diversity. Lowering barriers to access helps keep a steady stream of new influences flowing into the cultural infrastructure, ensuring that we continually renew our creative output. Just take one example: jazz was once so marginalized that it was actually banned in at least 60 communities in the 1920s and by many college and university music education programs up to the 1950s. Today, jazz is so much a part of the cultural matrix of contemporary life that it is seen by some as the quintessential American music, expressing our idealized vision of a democracy built on individualism and compromise, independence and cooperation.

Truly equal access to cultural experiences may be a dream, but *equitable* access can be seen as a civil right. Individuals and organizations in the public and private (for-profit and not-for-profit) sectors have roles to play in the formulation of the policies that shape the cultural infrastructure and the means of access and exchange of cultural expressions. To enable fuller participation in the cultural life of the nation and to foster creative citizenship, barriers to it must be lowered. Policies must not only promote availability but be paired with strong cultural literacy education – in schools and in cultural organizations and groups themselves. I define "cultural literacy" as the ability to understand and use creative expression to enhance our understanding of each other, to create new ideas and art, and to pass on cultural traditions. Improved cultural literacy is a public good, and it is in part a public responsibility to achieve it. Just as society has attempted to provide ways for most people to learn to read or to care for the environment, or to educate themselves about keeping healthy, so, too, should society insist upon open access to understanding cultures and their significance to our individual and common lives.

This issue paper focuses on three major ways people generally experience culture—through personal attendance, traditional media, and new media—and five barriers to participation—lack of adequate funding, disability, geographic remoteness, inadequate literacy, and some of the policies that shape access to the Internet and other media. The paper discusses current policies and programs that lower barriers to access and then recommends that the federal government make further efforts to lower barriers to access—through direct investment, enforcing current regulations, and encouraging an open cultural infrastructure.

## Means of Access

People produce, receive, and exchange cultural experiences with one another in many different ways and forms. There are three primary means of access:<sup>3</sup>

*Physical attendance at, or personal participation in, a live cultural performance or experience (including exhibitions, festivals, and movies in theaters).*

*Production or reception of cultural experiences through traditional media such as printed published materials, recorded music and video, and television and radio.*

*Production or reception of cultural experiences through new media such as the World Wide Web, video/audio streaming, file-swapping, and e-mail.*

## Physical Access

This type of access is the most transparent. One experiences culture at a particular place, such as a library, lecture hall, museum, theater, concert hall, other performance venue, or historical society. Other less obvious places might include local “arts spaces” and public parks or town greens. Certain forms of cultural expression take place in the most ordinary spaces—a fiddler in the family living room, a band in the garage, a poetry reading at a local bistro, a folkdance in the basement of the local Rotary Club. Physical access simply means going to a place to participate in a cultural experience.

## Access Through Traditional Media

Traditional media include: print communication such as books, newspapers, and magazines; recorded music and video; television and radio broadcasting; and cable/satellite transmission. Cultural exchange through traditional media is the most accessible if it can be done from the comfort of one’s home and does not require the ability to read. Traditional media are also relatively inexpensive. One can buy a CD player and a television for \$100-200. Production for these means is, however, very expensive for creators and producers. As Cheryl Leanza of the Media Access Project points out, because the government does not limit individual rights to publish does not mean we can all be publishers. Publishing and broadcasting are capital intensive and often require special skills or licenses. The traditional media sector is the one most substantially controlled by large enterprises. On the other hand, the traditional media are regulated in the public interest, which is also served through public broadcasting and local community efforts.

### *Access Through New Media*

New media include the information technologies that are quickly becoming pervasive throughout society – the World Wide Web, video and audio streaming, online searchable archives, and broadband connectivity. While new media and information technologies are often touted as great levelers for exchanges among audiences and producers, Monroe Price, the Danciger Professor of Law at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University, explains, “new technologies have the appearance of broadening access, but some applications may have quite the opposite effect.”

Cultural differences, physical disabilities, and economic inequalities may be exacerbated by the divide between those with new media access and those without. And, new media production, like traditional media production, requires many special skills (including cultural and media literacy).

### **Barriers to Access**

This paper focuses on five cross-cutting barriers to access that affect people, communities and organizations.<sup>4</sup> These five barriers are inadequate funding; disability; geographic remoteness; inadequate literacy; and certain policies that shape how people access the Internet and other media.

#### *Funding*

Cost has long been recognized as a barrier to participation in some aspects of the cultural infrastructure. As production costs rise, particularly for performing arts that require many performers and large venues, ticket prices invariably rise. Two landmark studies, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund’s *The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects* (1965) and William Baumol and William Bowen’s report for the Twentieth Century Fund, *Performing Arts—The Economic Dilemma* (1966), both point out that, absent subsidies, rising costs would require prohibitive increases in the price of individual tickets. As part of the solution, the United States encourages more affordable access through government funding, tax policies that stimulate philanthropy, universal public education, and regulation of the media. These cultural policies help diversify audiences and producers.

Many argue that culture has never been available at lower cost than today – turn on your radio or television, log-on to the Internet, visit the library, go to a museum on a day when admissions fees are waived, attend a free afternoon performance at a performing arts center. Others argue that culture has never been more expensive. High ticket prices, and childcare and transportation costs persist.

The 1997 *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA)*<sup>5</sup> revealed that 18.6% of ticket or subscription purchases, the highest single percentage, cost \$50 or more. According to the *SPPA* analysis, some forms of cultural expression, particularly the live performing arts, remain cost prohibitive for many (indeed, 53.2 percent of the respondents listed “tickets are too expensive” as a barrier to attendance at arts events).

For audiences, traditional media—books, recorded music, and so forth—are relatively affordable. Yet some of this kind of exchange requires a level of educational and cultural literacy that prevents some people from buying certain kinds of books, or listening to particular recordings, or watching particular television programs. Other forms, such as access to culture via the Internet, present their own cost problems. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, nearly 80% of the highest level income families (\$75,000 and above) were using the Internet in 2001 compared to only 25% of American families earning less than \$15,000/year. But the increase over the period 1998-2001 of lowest income families using the Internet has been at a rate over double that of highest income households.<sup>6</sup>

For many individuals and not-for-profit producers, the financial barriers can be staggering. Broadcast licensing, broadband technologies, and the training required to attain sophisticated production values of commercial content providers all pose financial barriers to cultural exchange. From the point of view of audiences, the Federal Communications Commission has indicated that high-speed telecommunications service is being taken up across the country, but that “certain factors—such as population density and income—continue to be highly correlated with the availability of high-speed services at this time” (*Third Report (2002)* on Section 706 of the

Telecommunications Act concerning timely deployment of advanced telecommunications capabilities to all Americans).

Of course, the United States has a strong tradition of amateur/informal participation that is community-centered and culturally-specific. Forms such as community theater, local concerts, free lectures, storytelling, crafts, and community cable are important dimensions of the cultural infrastructure and will continue to play a vital role in community life. Costs here remain low, but organizational reach to others outside a traditional base of participants is severely limited.

### *Disability*

In 1997, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that “About 1 in 5 Americans have some kind of disability, and 1 in 10 have a severe disability.” James Modrick of *VSA arts* explains that the cultural sector often defines access as audience development, or as basic availability.

It is this limited understanding and application of access, rather than the principle of access, that highlights a gap in public and private policies in the arts and provides the issue for a national agenda for the arts and culture... So long as a limited context and differing definitions of access persist, the significant issue of accessibility of the arts and culture for people with disabilities will not be addressed adequately.

Access for people with disabilities is the law. The Americans with Disabilities Act passed in 1990 (and its precursor, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

“requires accessibility by all recipients of federal funds.” Yet Modrick contends that “in terms of policy relating to access, the conventional wisdom within the arts and cultural enterprise is to enact the least amount of effort that would be required to comply with the law.”

For the disabled community, increasing the general availability of opportunity for cultural exchange does not necessarily lower barriers to participation. Venues and means for participation must change to better anticipate the needs of the disabled. The fact that increased availability is not synonymous with increased access is an important point with far more relevance than for the disabled community alone. Eliminating the false sense that “availability is access” will go a long way with policymakers toward addressing the root causes of inequalities in the cultural infrastructure.

Additional tools are required to make access more equitable through physical, traditional media, and new media means. More than 10% of respondents to the 1997 SPPA indicated that a “health problem or disability” was a barrier to attendance. While advocates for the disabled take issue with the survey’s terminology equating disabilities with health problems, the point is that a significant percentage of Americans find disabilities a barrier to participation. More alarming, as part of its update to *Falling Through the Net*, the Department of Commerce measured that in 1999 71.6% of Americans with disabilities had no Internet access as compared to 43.3% of those without disabilities. The same report notes that almost 60% of persons with disabilities have never used a computer, compared to 25% without disabilities.

### Geography

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 24.8% of Americans live in rural places, with populations of fewer than 2,500 people.<sup>7</sup> Jim Bower writes:

Access to the arts and to information about them has always been hindered by the ‘tyranny of geography’—the need to go physically to the performance or exhibition venue, or to the library where the information could be found. Distribution channels reflecting market forces have historically determined whether and when this obstacle would be overcome, so that a dance troupe might tour the country, an orchestra’s recorded performance might receive international distribution, or an exhibition would be documented in a scholarly catalogue. However, many of the nation’s artistic and cultural resources are aggregated in urban areas and are therefore inaccessible to much of the populace, whether for reasons of geography or social status. In California, for example, fully half the state’s population lives more than 50 miles from a major city. Within cities themselves, issues of socio-economic class and race may act as barriers to participation in cultural activities or travel to arts institutions.

The 1997 SPPA indicated that 46.5% of respondents found inconvenient location a barrier to participation. Another 10.3% responded that they might feel uncomfortable in a particular cultural venue. It is not surprising that the survey concluded “people living in highly populated states and metro areas had more opportunities to attend live arts performances.”

Telecommunications technologies have helped bridge geographic and social barriers, making cultural resources more broadly available to diverse audiences. While these technologies can never truly duplicate live performance, exhibition, or direct physical participation, the media provide a platform for new cultural experiences and allow millions a door into the cultural infrastructure. But new media technologies face their own barriers.

*Bringing a Nation Online: the Importance of Federal Leadership*, a report released in July 2002 by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund and the Benton Foundation, evaluates, from their perspective, the reports that have been released continuously since the late 1990s by the Department of Commerce (such as *Falling Through the Net* and *A Nation Online*) to reconcile statistical changes in American Internet connectivity.

While some of the data clearly shows that there are increasing numbers of Americans connected to the Internet and computers, the same data also shows how specific segments of society -- particularly underserved communities -- continue to lag behind and that the digital divide remains a persistent problem. Significant divides still exist between high and low income households, among different racial groups, between northern and southern states, and urban and rural households. High-speed Internet access is rapidly increasing in urban areas. In central city (22%) and urban (21.2%) Internet households, high-speed access increased 10% from 2000-2001. However, in rural areas access increased less than 5% from 7.3% in 2000 to 12.2% in 2001. Not only do the rural regions remain behind, growth of high-speed access is not keeping pace with urban areas.

On the other hand, the U.S. Department of Commerce's 2002 report, *A Nation Online: How Americans Are Expanding Their Use of the Internet*, shows that rural Internet use (dialup and broadband) was, as of September 2001, 52.9% versus 53.9% for all people (49.1% for central cities and 57.4% for urban not central city areas). Internet use by people living in rural areas increased at an average annual rate of 24% (1998-2001). The 2002 FCC Section 706 report shows that rural broadband subscriptions (at least one in each relevant zip code) increased from 65% in 1999 to 86% in 2001 in small town zip codes and from 20% to 27% in sparsely populated outlying areas. Having said this, it is worth noting that fewer than 40% of the most sparsely populated zip codes have a least one subscriber whereas more than 90% of the most densely populated zip codes have at least one subscriber. Nonetheless, the Internet trends (for broadband as well as dialup) in rural areas would appear to be in the right direction.

Finally, from a cultural point of view, it is important to note that the vast majority of people in rural areas have access and are subscribers to satellite television and radio (with similar choices as to channels as are available in urban areas). These choices include public television and radio as well as a variety of special channels. It is also worth noting that the primary use of the Internet is for email (22-24% of Internet time) and only 2-5% of time is spent for entertainment information or downloading music, the only cultural items tracked (UCLA Center for Communications Policy Internet Report 2001: *Surveying the Digital Future Year Two*).

## Literacy

Cultural literacy – the ability to understand and use creative expression to enhance our understanding of each other, to create new ideas and art, and to pass on cultural traditions and cultural expressions – is essential to civil society. While cultural literacy is dependent in part on formal education, it is also a matter of cognitive and expressive abilities drawn from the experiences and knowledge built up over time outside classrooms. Monroe Price suggests that:

For a strong democracy to exist, especially as the issues with which the electorate must deal become more and more complex, citizen literacy must be enhanced. The challenge in an information society is its capacity, and the capacity of its citizens, to integrate the new, to bring values to bear on technology, to adjust to a society in which transformation is breathtakingly rapid. Cultural richness can help sharpen these capacities and thereby render more productive the processes of change.

Cultural advocates have long asserted that children socialized to appreciate the arts, either as part of their family value system, personal interest, or through formal arts education, reap personal benefits and sow societal ones.<sup>8</sup> Education through the arts and humanities is a cornerstone of cultural literacy. But as arts and liberal arts education budgets are not taken seriously around the country, humanities education is de-emphasized in favor of math and science, and cultural institutions struggle to bring in new, younger audiences, advocates for cultural literacy and others believe we are facing a national problem.

Murray Horwitz, former Vice President for Cultural Programming at National Public Radio, laments the state of American cultural literacy. “The idea of our nation has partly to do with government by the consent of the governed, to which end a well-educated, well-informed electorate continues to be a most desirable public good. For most of the 20th century, broadcasting helped us toward it,” by providing a common understanding of our cultures. But, Horwitz explains, the continuing splintering of the American people into more and more niches provides diverse content but also serves to diminish Americans’ levels of cultural connectedness. “It is likely that a greater proportion of Americans knew about Chubby Checker and *The Twist* in 1961, than knew about *Savage Garden* and *Truly Madly Deeply* in 1988 (although both of these historic hits were on *Billboard’s Top 40* for about the same length of time).” Study after study bemoans the lack of understanding among Americans about iconic aspects of our history and culture. With a smaller set of shared experiences upon which to draw, the fare of the cultural infrastructure will be the poorer.

In the United States, we do not want for cultural experiences, but for the means to participate in and exchange them equitably. While shared experience may be diminishing, diverse cultural experiences and information are perhaps more readily available than ever before. This “info-chaos” has implications for literacy and for education. Monroe Price cautions that, even for those who have access to cultural information through media and physical exposure, “there is another potential divide: between those whose capacity for citizenship and literacy are enhanced, and those who are overwhelmed with trivia.” This is especially so as access to the Internet becomes more universal. Cultural and media literacy take on new importance in this context, as the ability to filter and

process cultural information from different sources through different media is quickly and increasingly becoming a necessary part of American life. Without these skills, people are less able to participate not only in the cultural infrastructure, but in the democratic process as well.

#### *Access to the Internet and New Media*

Because there are so many ways to “get your culture” and so many communities producing cultural information, the fact that the contours of the system can limit the availability of information is often unrecognized. “Cultural policy in the United States cannot be separated from the great changes in the mode of distributing images throughout the world. At the moment, the process of carving up the new domains is taking place,” says Price. The policies governing these modes of distribution, including how copyright law constricts access to certain cultural expression, should be cultural sector concerns.<sup>9</sup>

Consolidation and integration of media companies have sparked a debate in the cultural sector: does concentrated ownership limit choice and creative expression or does it allow for the provision of niche content? Does it commercialize information? Does it make public interest information harder to find or produce?

Another important issue is open access to the Internet. Cultural organizations—from museums to libraries—have mobilized around issues involving First Amendment freedoms and protection of children. The courts have continuously upheld First Amendment challenges to laws and regulations that seek to protect children by limiting access to potentially harmful content.

In November 2001, the Supreme Court struck down significant portions of the Child Online Protection Act, finding that Internet filters block content that is protected under the First Amendment. In March 2002, the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia took up the constitutionality of the Children’s Internet Protection Act, and ruled in favor of broad First Amendment rights. But tensions over the scope of First Amendment protection only tell part of the open access story.

In its 2002 white paper, “No Competition: How Monopoly Control of the Broadband Internet Threatens Free Speech,” the American Civil Liberties Union looked at the means by which people access the Web and found that:

With dialup, Internet access is provided over a medium that provides open, equal access to all: the telephone system. But with the shift to cable, Internet access must be adapted to a medium that has been far more subject to centralized control. The danger is that the Internet will come under private control. Core American liberties such as freedom of speech are of no value if the forums where such rights are commonly exercised are not themselves free.<sup>10</sup>

Patricia Aufderheide of American University contends that in the case of cable broadband access, under the current regulatory regime, “new developments in commerce, politics and the arts can happen as the providers permit.”

It is unrealistic to imagine that in the United States, or anywhere, income inequalities will cease to exist altogether, that people with physical disabilities will have equal access under all circumstances, and that those living in rural communities will have all the same opportunities to

explore cultural expression as those in more populated areas. However, public policies should aim to lower barriers where they exist, because American democracy is in part dependent upon the full cultural participation of all its citizens.

America's economic and social well-being are dependent upon our citizens' abilities to adapt to the changes brought about by and through new media. Creativity will become a greater social value as many Americans are enabled to become creators and participants in the system of cultural exchange. Moving America forward in the 21st century requires creative responses to persistent problems as well as innovative approaches to the problems we have yet to encounter.

## **Lowering Barriers to Access: Current Policies and Programs**

Generally, the U.S. government has sought to design and implement policies that create positive rights that provide opportunities and expand freedoms rather than limit rights or freedoms. Policies concerning access, including those born from civil rights movements, have served to both reverse negative policies and assert the positive rights of groups systematically denied access. However, it should come as a shock to no one that socioeconomic inequalities exist and limit all kinds of access—to education, to health care, to the justice system and to the cultural infrastructure.

### ***Lowering Barriers to Physical Access***

A variety of public policies attempt to lower barriers to physical access, and facilitate attendance at cultural venues and live participation in cultural experiences. As the *SPPA* found, when people are asked why they do not go to performances or art museums as often as they would like, the major barriers are limited time, insufficient offerings, expense, and inconvenient location.

Cultural institutions have tried a number of different solutions to solve some of these problems. Public and private philanthropy helps control the costs of tickets in not-for-profit institutions, and some organizations take this a step further by offering free or low-cost performances. In 1997, as part of the Performing Arts for Everyone Initiative, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts created Pay-What-You-Can Tickets for selected performances of the National Symphony Orchestra and other producers of the performing arts.

The Kennedy Center and other cultural institutions know the value of supporting their audiences, and continue programs like these even when they hit rough economic times. The availability of transportation to a cultural venue is another constraint. Programs for school children, senior citizens, and others are often designed to accommodate transportation schedules and needs, but all of the bargain matinees and student rush tickets are not going to overcome fully the lack of physical accessibility.

Because financial constraints cause producers to limit their cultural productions, another unanticipated access problem arises. Less funding means fewer performances, smaller productions, smaller venues, less publicity—all of which serve to limit the diversity and availability of cultural experiences. Many cultural venues are expensive, and not every American community can afford to sustain them. Major cultural institutions like the Smithsonian can support programs such as the Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service that make it possible for cultural materials to move around the country. Most of the Smithsonian's museums are in Washington, DC, but with partner institutions, affiliates and touring exhibitions, its reach is much broader.

For smaller museums, the cost of mounting travelling exhibits can be prohibitively expensive. For example, the Davenport Museum of Art in Davenport, Iowa is the Smithsonian's only affiliate museum in the state. It had an income in 2000 of about \$1.4 million. Affiliation with the Smithsonian allows the Davenport Museum of Art to access the Smithsonian's collections and bring them to Iowa for substantially less cost. It is therefore more affordable for people in Iowa to access Smithsonian collections this way than it would be if travel to Washington, DC were required. The Smithsonian affiliates program

operates to lower two barriers—financial and geographic.

While affiliating with large institutions is an option that may increase the diversity of public programming, many cultural venues believe these kinds of partnerships compromise their ability to serve directly a local constituency. Access is not simply a question of cultural imports. There is also the need to strengthen local institutions and their ability to diversify programming.

States and localities differ from one another in their prioritization of cultural support and investment, and in the types of experiences they would support for local communities. The diversity of the nation makes it difficult for the federal government to employ standard policies for national subsidy programs. National investment through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has evolved over the years to encompass programs that reach out to geographically diverse audiences.

Each of the state arts and humanities councils receives annual grants from the NEA and NEH for state specific cultural programming. In 1999, for example, the NEA gave almost \$34 million in grants to state partners, 40% of the agency's total budget, to fund 27,000 projects in 5,600 communities. In 1998, the NEH made \$29 million available in state grants, 31.4% of its budget.

Public cultural agencies see equitable access as part of their missions. The NEA administers *Challenge America*, which in 2002 will disburse \$10 million in congressional appropriations, nearly one-tenth of the agency's budget. "Developing and integrating the arts fully into the life of communities nationwide is central to the Endowment's

*Challenge America* initiative,” according to the NEA. In 2002, the program will award 400 grants of \$5,000 or \$10,000 each for projects that serve rural areas or underserved communities. Also in 2002, the NEH will launch its *Special Initiative for Local History*, part of its Challenge Grants program. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$100,000. The program is designed in part to “build opportunities for research, education and public programs in local history, especially in communities underserved by humanities activities.” Both the NEA’s *Challenge America* and the NEH’s Challenge Grants require financial matching, a further effort to spur cultural activity and support in communities across the country.

The IMLS grant programs are the nation’s largest direct federal cultural funding support. IMLS invests federal funding in public or private not-for-profit museums and libraries to ensure broad community access to cultural and educational institutions. Grants to museums and libraries support their operations, help them bring resources to underserved communities, increase support for care of their collections, and fund partnerships among museums, libraries and other community organizations. In 2001, IMLS made 972 grant awards to museums and libraries totaling \$36.75 million; it also awarded an additional \$149 million through 57 grants to State Library Agencies of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.

These programs are important to the cultural sector, as the projects they fund bear a federal stamp of approval and catalyze private community investment. Not only is the actual dollar figure low relative to the federal budget, but it is stretched geographically. To meet the mandate of democracy which “demands wisdom and vision in its citizens,” the direct grant programs of all three federal

cultural agencies should be increased, at least to their historically high figures, adjusted for inflation.

While nothing can replace live presentation and direct participation, the federal government supports the use of radio, television, and the new media to distribute live performance. This helps to lower financial and geographic barriers as well as provide accessible content for many disabled Americans. Public broadcasting and streaming media have opened doors for people who otherwise might not even approximately experience live performance. The 1997 SPPA, which sampled 12,349 people throughout the nation from June through October 1997, indicated that 45% of adults that year watched visual arts television programming and more than 80 million Americans listened to classical music radio broadcasts. In 1997, for example, the Kennedy Center inaugurated the Millennium Stage, an ongoing series of free daily performances. Since 1998, people with an Internet connection can receive Millennium Stage performances live through the Kennedy Center’s web site.

Lowering barriers to physical access for the disabled is a concern for cultural institutions. In 1992 the American Association of Museums, National Endowment for the Arts, and Institute of Museum Services (part of IMLS) published *Accessible Museum*, a guide to model accessibility programs. The preface acknowledges that “By directly addressing the specific issues of accessibility for museum audiences, the NEA and AAM endorse what we know to be at the core of all museums: they are for everyone.”

Since the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990, awareness about best practices to increase accessibility for the disabled has increased. And yet, some complain that not enough has been done. James Modrick of

VSA arts contends:

The only apparent policy requirement given to cultural organizations is that they need to provide evidence of a plan, or an explanation of their 'good-faith effort,' to comply with ADA and accessibility provisions. Unfortunately, because of a lack of information regarding progress or implementation to plan, the arts and culture enterprise knows little about its audience as it related to people with disabilities. While the summer of 2000 celebrated the 10th anniversary of the ADA and the 27th for Section 504 [its precursor], it is not known how specific accessibility efforts have been effective, what the potential economy or audience of people with disabilities might be, nor is there any baseline information on the potential of making physical and programmatic access to the arts and culture more consistent.

Cultural institutions should find ways to monitor ADA compliance and collect data on the relative success of implemented accessibility plans.

Exposure to the arts, humanities and other cultural experiences—and much of the research, scholarship and production that informs and supports them—occurs at the nation's colleges and universities. Colleges and universities train and educate the nation's labor force while improving cultural literacy. Exposure to diverse inquiry and experiences prepares the creative thinkers of tomorrow. While NEA, NEH and IMLS grants often support the cultural programs of the institutions themselves, The Pell Grant Program works directly to lower barriers to access for students who might otherwise be unable to afford the costs of higher education. For these reasons, The Pell

Grant Program is perhaps the nation's broadest-based vehicle of cultural literacy support.

College participation rates are increasing across socioeconomic groups. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) reports in *Financing State Colleges and Universities: What Is Happening to the "Public" in Public Higher Education?* that from 1992 to 1998 college participation rates for students from low-income families increased 7.5% and income for these families has risen 10 percentage points since 1990. However, tuition costs continue to rise at rates greater than inflation. According to the Department of Education, from 1986 to 2001 average tuition costs and fees for both public and private institutions doubled. In October 2001, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced that record numbers of students had received federal aid for college attendance and job training. This included 4 million students (47.6 percent of whom attended public and private four-year institutions)<sup>11</sup> who received \$9 billion in Pell Grants. President Bush requested a supplemental appropriation of \$1 billion more for the program in FY 02 which Congress later approved.

However, the AASCU reports that "between 1989-90 and 1999-2000, the constant (inflation-adjusted) dollar value of the maximum Pell Grant increased only \$27. The purchasing power of the maximum Pell award therefore decreased from 49.2 percent to 38.6 percent of the average annual cost of attendance at a public four-year institution, according to The College Board."<sup>12</sup>

A two or four-year college education does not guarantee cultural literacy. Nor is a college education necessary to achieve a cultural education, although it can provide access to a broad array of performances, exhibitions,

literature and other experiences. Exposure and access to the arts and humanities and the cultural infrastructure begins much earlier—at home and through elementary and secondary school. The 1997 *SPPA* shows that exposure to the arts through formal lessons, education or family introduction significantly increases participation later in life. Cultural education issues are addressed systematically in *Creativity, Culture, Education and the Workforce* by Ann Galligan, professor at Northeastern University (another issue paper in the Center for Arts and Culture’s *Art, Culture and the National Agenda Series*).<sup>13</sup>

Libraries, museums, colleges and universities, and presenting venues are the backbone of the cultural infrastructure for live cultural exchanges. Barriers to physical access could be lowered by increasing public funding for the arts and humanities, so that those institutions can continue to hold down costs for participation. Government support for culture is certainly not the only financial mechanism. The U.S. system for cultural investment is a mix of public funding, private investment through philanthropy (encouraged by tax deductibility), and direct sponsorship. Policies which encourage private investment in culture (see the Center’s *National Investment in the Arts* issue paper) could work to improve physical access to culture. The contributions of individuals, foundations, and corporations are a vital means of support for the cultural infrastructure, and without this system of grants, volunteerism, and in-kind donations, cultural organizations would be hard-pressed to make the arts and humanities available to millions of Americans.

### ***Lowering Barriers to Access through Traditional Media***

Americans experience many forms of cultural expressions through radio and television, audio and video recordings, and through print materials. In some cases, Americans watch and/or listen to performances through these media more frequently than they attend them. For many, these media are their only means of readily available cultural access because they are less expensive, more convenient, or more readily available.

Federal agencies—primarily the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), NEH, NEA, and IMLS—provide direct subsidies for access through television and radio, print materials and recordings. Many federal agencies—from the National Parks Service to the Library of Congress—have a vital role to play in the preservation of, and access to, historic objects, buildings, sites and archives.<sup>14</sup> The primary federal role in broadcast, cable, and broadband Internet access is regulatory. While the government provides limited direct support, it also takes great pains to devise a system of public broadcasting that does not centralize control over programming. Outside financial support for public television and radio, the government’s role is to regulate the system of distribution in the public interest.

The U.S. government has never handed out or subsidized televisions or radios. Nonetheless, according to the 1998 UNESCO *World Culture Report*, in 1995 there were 2,093 radios per thousand people in the United States (more than two per person). The National Association of Broadcasters reports that today 98% of American households have one television and 75% have two or more. TV Basics reports that those households have the television on for 7 hours and 35 minutes every day.<sup>15</sup> Many radio

stations broadcast television programming and similarly television stations often broadcast radio programming. The government has supported closed captioning programs and Secondary Audio Programming, increasing accessibility for those with certain disabilities. Radio and television access is near universal. For radio and network television broadcasting, the access costs lie predominantly with producers rather than with audiences. Radio and television producers use advertising and underwriting revenues to finance the costs of programming.

Are there barriers to access affecting traditional media audiences (radio listeners, television viewers, and readers)? There are those who believe that, particularly in television, whole communities are under-represented, adding to what they consider a cycle of exclusion that perpetuates cultural illiteracy. Critics argue that positive and nuanced depictions of whole communities are rarely seen. While entertainment conglomerates and advertisers generally govern scheduling and program development, communities with complaints about representative programming have some recourse through local advocacy and the Federal Communications Commission.

The concept is that the American people own the airwaves, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licenses local television and radio stations to broadcast. These licenses are free. Some, like Mark Lloyd, president of People for Better TV, have called this licensing “the continued gift of billions of dollars of public property to local broadcasters.” Broadcasters are obliged to “broadcast in the public interest,” and the FCC is intended to be the watchdog for the public interest.

Since the 1920s when this system of licensing, regulation and oversight was established, broadcasters and the

public alike have struggled to define what is meant by the “public interest.” Lloyd believes “operating in the public interest must mean *program* service to the local community, and *all* segments of the local community, men and women, minority and majority, urban and rural. Collecting toys or canned goods and distributing them to shelters is good corporate citizenship, but it is not using the public spectrum in the public interest.” It is a reasonable assumption that the broadcast of diverse cultural content is in the interest of our diverse public.

Some are concerned that media consolidation and vertical integration will diminish community and cultural representation in programming. In December 2001, the FCC began reviewing media ownership rules, thus spawning a civic debate over the meaning of ownership. Does consolidated ownership mean more centralized programming decisions and the homogenization of expression? If so, could this further marginalize communities that already feel underrepresented in the media?

Monroe Price suggests that consolidation may have, in fact, had the opposite outcome:

The antitrust laws, and other tools for implementing corporate governance, have rarely been thought to have either a direct or an indirect impact on the arts; even if they did, their substantial independent purpose has made cultural impact a minor consideration to lawmakers. Antitrust laws or principles, however, may be one line of defense against a potential stifling and homogenization of culture through vertical integration of content providers and conduit providers. If a huge percentage of the culture that reaches audiences passes through the filters of a

single corporation, it is possible that the antitrust laws should have something to say about it. Concentration in the industries that directly affect the arts poses a conceptually distinct set of questions, but one also amenable to antitrust analysis. Just as there can be anticompetitive practices that penalize consumers and reduce production in automobiles or light bulbs, there can be anticompetitive practices that limit the production of art.

Such limitations would not be a necessary outcome of concentration in the media industry, however. In some ways, a monopoly provider is more likely to furnish art to marginal viewers. With aggregated financial resources, some media conglomerates might invest more in niche programming as a way to expand overall market share. Nonetheless, because the airwaves are a public good, broadcasters carry special public interest obligations. Policymakers should keep a close eye on the effects on diverse programming caused by media consolidation.

Since the mid-1940s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has advocated diversity in television programming, and in 2001 released *Out of Focus Out of Sync*, a critical look at African American involvement in commercial television. The NAACP has repeatedly called for boycotts of commercial networks until the pledges networks made at the end of 1999 and in early 2000 to improve corporate and prime time diversity are met. According to an August 15, 2001 NAACP press release, several major networks have made progress in their representation of minority communities in their programs. The networks have begun to communicate better with NAACP on their efforts, which is a positive step.

Organizations, such as Children Now, maintain that discussion of the public interest should include consideration of children's special needs and vulnerabilities. Most of today's debate concerns the protection of children from potentially harmful content. There is relatively little attention paid to high quality children's educational and informational programming. Jim Bower believes "the nation should be concerned that its children receive adequate education in the arts, since it is through arts and culture that children learn creativity and problem-solving skills, teamwork, and visual literacy—essential skills for a workforce that must meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive global marketplace."

In 1990, Congress passed The Children's Television Act (CTA) and said "as part of their obligation to serve the public interest, television station operators and licensees should provide programming that serves the special needs of children." CTA limits advertising during children's programming. While regulatory amendments to the act have been made such as the Three-Hour Rule (a minimum of three hours per week of children's broadcasting), Children Now says that parents remain concerned with the quality of programming.

Children Now anticipates further concerns arising in the coming digital television environment. For example, not only will there be even more channels and choices for families in the future, but a range of interactive services that will create both opportunities and challenges. Is interactive digital television the right medium for children, or are books and radio better? Is there opportunity for real learning? Will the content design be age appropriate and understandable? Will it be safe?

Many of the questions about the future of television have antecedents in the lessons drawn from the past, particularly the advent of public television. The establishment of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) in 1969 represented a federal commitment to deal with the market failures of commercial broadcasting: the lack of regular civic, cultural and educational programming. Yet as Kevin Mulcahy of Louisiana State University points out:

Fears of inordinate government influence on broadcasting were quick to air and have continued unabated. While some of these concerns may be attributable to ideological opponents of all public policies, proponents of public broadcasting have also expressed concern about a system dominated by the national government. 'Localism' was proposed as the administrative foundation upon which to build American public broadcasting precisely, if unsuccessfully, to allay fears of centralized control over programming content and station management... There is national commitment to a public policy and some degree of financial support, but local agencies are responsible for program administration and share funding responsibility.

In April 1998, the Benton Foundation and the Media Access Project released a joint report, *What's Local About Local Broadcasting*, in which they analyzed commercial broadcasting in five markets over a two-week period. They found that during that time a total of only 0.35% of broadcast hours (across all five markets and 40 broadcasters) was dedicated to local public affairs. In this environment, the local programming that should characterize public broadcasting is all the more critical.

The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), National Public Radio (NPR) and the nation's public television and radio stations provide the country's premier arts and cultural programming, and CPB supports them in this endeavor. PBS's current roster of arts and cultural programming includes more than 70 programs and specials in architecture, dance, drama, film, fine art, literature, music, photography, and pop and folk art. NPR programs have included classical music, opera, jazz, and extensive public affairs programming including the arts, humanities and culture. NPR, however, has recently announced a complete overhaul of its cultural programming to "appeal to an audience it perceives as more interested in news and talk shows than in classical music and jazz."<sup>16</sup> The disappearance of some of these arts, humanities and cultural programs from a prominent place on the NPR schedule will only decrease access and opportunities for exposure.

Localism in public broadcasting is not the perfect solution to the market failures of commercial network broadcasting. As Cheryl Leanza observes, public broadcasts are not always mainstream. Some communities are better able financially to support their public stations than others. Most stations purchase their programming from others. Only a handful of public broadcasting stations are producing stations, and these produce primarily for national PBS audiences. Mulcahy advises that some of this programming, appearing to come right out of a college catalogue, may be appealing only to the educated cultural community. Others argue that PBS programming is today only slightly different than that of the commercial networks.

More alarming, perhaps, is an intentional shift in public broadcasting toward national programming. In April 1991, the Boston Consulting Group released a report that

suggested that public television stations' local programming budgets might be better spent on stronger, national programs which might compete with cable programming. A 1993 Twentieth Century Fund study concurred. Numbers from *Current*, public television's biweekly newspaper, show that from 1974 to 1996 the percentage of broadcast hours produced locally declined for both television and radio—dramatically for television from 11.4% in 1974 to 4.9% in 1996.<sup>17</sup>

Support for public broadcasting needs to be constructed efficiently from the bottom up and with a comprehensive programming schedule that includes a broad array of quality genres appealing to a multiplicity of tastes and a diversity of cultures. Some communities feel as underrepresented in public broadcasting as in commercial broadcasting.

While there are clearly more communities that have expressed concern about access to representative cultural experiences than those highlighted above, crafting a federal response presents a number of policy challenges. Children's advocacy has been the most successful in terms of energizing a federal response (think of the voluntary family hour and the V-Chip), and the CTA contains valuable regulation that stations must implement, like the Three-Hour Rule.

Many communities, unhappy with television not reflecting their values and culture, have turned to cable access stations where local governments have mandated "set-asides." According to the National Cable and Telecommunications Association, as of February 2002, nearly 70 percent of American households had access to at least basic cable. Local cable franchising authorities may require cable operators to set aside "PEG" channels for

public, educational, and/or government use. The Alliance for Community Media estimates that there are 1,200 PEG channels nationwide.

According to the FCC, PEG channels are not required by the federal government, but the Supreme Court has ruled that if a local cable authority sets aside PEG channels, the cable operator cannot prohibit the use of a PEG channel for sexually explicit programming. Because the FCC has little authority over PEG channels, and once designated, local cable authorities have little control over their content, a disincentive may be in place—some local communities may feel that PEG set-asides are too great a risk.

Leanza argues that set-asides are often marginalized in the larger scheme of broadcasting.

Set-asides suffer from several problems. Their most critical flaw is that they are 'set aside.' Whether they be cable access channels or public television, they are separated out from more popular mainstream programming. Many viewers never see this programming. They turn to popular commercial programming first, and never find their way to either public broadcast stations or cable access channels. Thus, few members of the society benefit from the programming or ideas discussed in it.

Others argue that many viewers have no real interest in this specialized programming, and that potential viewers are never realized because of poor production quality.

In radio, the equivalent to the cable public access station is perhaps Low Power Radio (LPFM). The FCC approved licensure of LPFM in January 2000, but not without

lengthy debate among already licensed radio broadcasters. LPFM licenses are available to organizations and individuals, and the broadcasts are not centrally programmed as in commercial radio. The broadcasts will generally carry in a 1-3 mile radius (low power). Many broadcasters licensed prior to approval of LPFM, as represented by the National Association of Broadcasters and National Public Radio, challenged the new licenses, arguing that their frequencies could interfere with those belonging to existing licensees and result in a loss of listeners. The Media Access Project (MAP) worked extensively on behalf of LPFM, arguing that low power broadcasters would better represent the public interest and local community expression. MAP's advocates argue that "the possibilities are limited only by the creativity of using and listening to lower power stations."

It has been more than two years since the FCC approved Low Power Radio, and in that time, the FCC has issued 100 licenses for 100-watt broadcast, and more than 3,100 applications are still pending. Some of these applications concern cultural programming, such as the station applications submitted by the Payson Council for the Musical Arts in Payson, Arizona and Cedar Valley Art Support in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Of the first stations to launch in October 2001, Lake County Community Radio in Lakeport, California, began broadcasting programs such as "Jazz by the Lake," folk and blues music, and a music program called "Lake County Indian Time."

The FCC also has oversight over public broadcasting and other non-commercial educational licensing. New developments in digital television blur lines between traditional and new media and complicate public interest concerns in broadcasting. In the past, the FCC issued analog licenses for no charge to television and radio. Today, the FCC

continues to issue digital licenses to digital broadcasters for free. Many argue that it is not in the public interest to give away digital licenses to commercial broadcasters.

In *A Digital Gift to the Nation: Fulfilling the Promise of the Digital and Internet Age*, the Digital Promise Project recommends the creation of a multi-billion dollar "Digital Opportunity Investment Trust" (DO IT), the funding of which would come from revenues earned through the auction of the electromagnetic spectrum. Authors Lawrence Grossman and Newton Minow call this initiative, "the 21st century equivalent of the nation's public lands of an earlier time," held in trust to establish land-grant colleges.

The Trust would serve as a venture capital fund for our nation's nonprofit educational and public service. It would be dedicated to innovation, experimentation, and research in using new telecommunications technologies to deliver public information and education in its broadest sense to all Americans throughout their lifetimes. It would enable schools, community colleges, universities, libraries, museums, civic organizations, and cultural, arts, and humanities centers to take advantage of new information technologies to reach outside their walls and into homes, schools, and the workplace.<sup>18</sup>

### *Lowering Barriers to Access Through New Media*

The new media (particularly the Internet and the World Wide Web) can lower the costs of production and increase the possibilities of access to art and culture. Virtual cultural venues—providing access to museums, libraries and archives, classrooms and movie theaters—exist on the World Wide Web. But many of the same kinds of barriers found for physical access and access through the traditional media—funding, geography, disability, and literacy—also present policy problems in the new media environment. According to Monroe Price:

Technology alters entire industries in terms of the distribution of information. How classical music is delivered to consumers is in the process of transformation, and altered modes of distribution will have an impact on modes of production. Perhaps not since Gutenberg, and certainly not since broadcasting, has there been so substantial a transformation in the way words, books, pictures, ideas and ideologies are reproduced and transmitted across boundaries of place and culture. New technologies have the appearance of broadening access, but some applications may have quite the opposite effect.

It is important to consider both sides of access to new media: access for audiences and access for producers. In many cases the barriers may be lowered for both through the same actions. For example, community technology centers benefit both audiences and producers. However, some barriers uniquely affect one group more than the other.

At the time of publication, there was no published study

of cultural information on the Internet or the rates at which people use the Internet as their means of exposure to cultural experiences.<sup>19</sup> There is no doubt, however, that web sites containing cultural information and opportunity for participation in them are ubiquitous on the web.

In November 2000, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the non-profit corporation that governs Internet protocols and domain name system management, created new top-level domain names (TLDs) to help distinguish different types of content. Until 2001, the majority of U.S.-based web sites used one of three TLDs, .com, .org or .net. In November 2000, among the new TLDs approved was .museum, a signal to the museum community that its content was important enough to warrant top-level treatment and that enough of its content already existed on the Web to support the domain name. Educational institutions have benefited, for example, from the .edu web suffix, which was recently expanded to include community colleges.

It should be noted, however, that many other organizations hoping to sponsor cultural TLDs did not receive approval of their applications. Among them were:

.art .film .movie .studios .artists .films .opera  
.theater .culture .history .productions  
.writer .design .jazz .radio .zine

While .lib is a TLD that has been proposed for libraries, it has never been formally sponsored.<sup>20</sup> The “.museum” TLD is an indication of the level and kind of museum activity and exchange online in that community.

Today, more and more Americans view Internet access as a standard means of accessing and exchanging cultural

information and experiences. The U.S. Department of Commerce report, *A Nation Online*, looked at the kinds of activities on which people spend time online, and found that 17.3 percent spend time in chat rooms and on list-servs; 18.8 percent watch television, movies and listen to the radio; and 24.8 percent do research to complete school assignments.

In June 2002, *Cyberatlas* noted that “19 percent of Americans over age 12 have downloaded music or MP3 files from an online file-sharing service, translating into over 40 million users given the current U.S. population.”<sup>21</sup> Additionally, a September 2001 *Cyberatlas* article cites a study by Arbitron Inc. and EdisonMedia Research that shows more than 50% of Internet users have tried streaming media.<sup>22</sup> *A Nation Online* showed that, particularly in terms of the slower dial-up connectivity, access levels are evening out across many groups of Americans regardless of income, race or ethnicity, location, age or gender.

If one has access to a computer and an Internet connection, the cost of information on the web is virtually nothing. Those who do charge for content are finding people unwilling to pay for it, even for information they would normally purchase if it were disseminated through traditional media. While access to information is cheap, barriers to information creation—i.e., posting information on the Web—are still high. Cheryl Leanza notes that “Potential publishers and information distributors still face the same income and resource disparities that plague them in everyday life.”

Federal programs, corporate contributions and non-profit partnerships continue to increase the number of public access points. However, education and literacy continue to limit the level at which people use the Internet, even when a connection is available.

The Benton Foundation explains that:

The technology gap is not simply a reflection of the choices made by an individual household; it reflects deeper problems—like access to infrastructure. While public attention is often focused on whether individuals can get a service, an equally important problem is lack of adequate telecommunications facilities, a reality that makes an area less attractive for businesses’ investment. This can feed a spiral where the lack of investment at the community level leads to fewer economic opportunities for people who live there. As a result, the poverty in the neighborhood makes it a less inviting target for investment, further aggravating the problem.

Several federal programs seek to address this problem. More than 800 community technology centers (CTCs) have been established through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Neighborhood Networks program in HUD’s multi-family housing units.<sup>23</sup> Launched in 1995, this program creates public/private partnerships at the community level. CTCs are multi-purpose—providing hardware, software, Internet access and computer training. Often volunteers and HUD employees teach classes to help train customers. In rural areas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture supports the development of community technology centers through programs like the Community Facilities Program of the Rural Housing Service and the Rural Enterprise Zone / Empowerment Community Program.

The Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) in the U.S. Department of Commerce has been one of the federal government’s most visible grant programs for telecommunications networking. TOP gives grants for model projects

that demonstrate creative uses of networking technology. To date, TOP has awarded \$192.5 million in grants for 530 projects. However, the Bush Administration recommended elimination of TOP in its FY '03 Budget request, stating that the program had fulfilled its mission.

That recommendation has proved controversial, prompting the release of *Bringing a Nation Online: The Importance of Federal Leadership* by the Digital Media Forum, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, and the Benton Foundation. This report examines Department of Commerce reports on federal strategies to increase citizen connection to the Internet, and it finds that despite significant gains, a substantial digital divide remains. Congress will determine the fate of the program. If TOP's budget is eliminated or substantially reduced, some of its functions may be assumed through an increasingly important grantmaking role in the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service, which in FY '02 launched a \$20 million pilot program for the provision of broadband service in rural America.

While the federal government supports the construction of access points, the "e-rate" program successfully discounts the cost of Internet access for public educational institutions. In May 1997, the FCC launched the Schools and Libraries program of the Universal Service Fund, also called the "e-rate" program, as mandated by Congress in the 1996 Telecommunications Act. The FCC originally made almost \$2.5 billion available annually to subsidize forms of telecommunications connectivity for all eligible educational institutions (including schools and libraries) and some rural health care providers. Discounts range from 20% to 90% of the connection cost, depending on community income level and geographic location. Between 1996 and 2000, the number of schools connected

to the Internet rose from 65% to 98%. As of October 2001, the "e-rate" program had committed more than \$2.1 billion to 26,334 organizations.

The "e-rate" is largely lauded, but the FCC faces criticism from education advocates. All public elementary and secondary schools, independent libraries, and most private schools are eligible to apply for discounts, but colleges and universities and their affiliated libraries are not. Child care centers and non-school based after-school programs are also ineligible. According to the Education and Libraries Networks Coalition (EdLinc), the FCC came under attack for cutting the program's budget by almost half even before making first year grants, despite the increasing numbers of applications for discounts which amounted to more than the original program budget. As it stands, the cumulative three-year grant totals equal less than the Congressionally appropriated maximum annual amount.<sup>24</sup> In April 2001, the FCC implemented the e-rate portion of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requiring schools and libraries (and future program applicants) receiving e-rate discounts to certify the use of filters to protect children from potentially harmful content.

Even so, schools, libraries, cultural institutions and non-profit organizations continue their struggle to assure equitable access to broadband. Broadband access is today more expensive than dial-up connectivity. Fast connections are required in order to take advantage of some of the Internet's more sophisticated technology—live video streaming, teleconferencing and high-end graphic animation that can facilitate cultural exchange in the form of sound, music, language, and movement. Broadband connections are also important for organizations with large networks to facilitate quick exchange of large files.

Rural accessibility presents unique policy challenges, especially for broadband. Once people in rural areas get on the Internet, the content is identical to that available to people in more densely populated areas. But not all access technologies are available to rural communities. Many Native American reservations,<sup>25</sup> for example, do not have universal telephony. Until the more recent development of broadband connectivity through satellite, cable, and wireless technologies, the Internet was inaccessible without a basic phone line.

The Telecommunications Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) maintains a Local Dial-Up Internet Access Grant Program, which may be utilized for acquisition, construction and installation of equipment, facilities and systems. In FY 2001, RUS began a \$100 million rural broadband pilot project to provide loans to carriers as encouragement to deploy rural service.

For its part, the cultural community runs the risk that its messages will be further marginalized if it cannot create dynamic content on a par with that produced by the commercial sector. For audiences, a dial-up connection in a broadband world may prevent access to dynamic content, not because it isn't available but because dial-up connectivity will effectively prevent highspeed dynamic interchange.

On June 23, 2002, the Pew Internet and American Life project released *The Broadband Difference: How Online Americans' Behavior Changes with High-Speed Connections at Home*.<sup>26</sup> This study showed that broadband users are twice as likely to be content creators than are their dial-up counterparts and that their online activity is much greater. Broadband is thus critical to the interactive use of the Internet for creative purposes.

In terms of general Internet usage, the Pew report notes:

Two-thirds (68%) of broadband users say that since they got a high-speed connection that they have looked more frequently for such things as addresses, recipes, local events information and other facts they need. Broadband connections are changing people's lifestyles. The Internet is the 'go to' tool for a variety of functions—paying a bill, updating photos on the family Web page, listening to music, sharing files with co-workers, or getting news. For these users, the Internet replaces multiple tools, such as telephone, TV, stereo, newspaper, fax machine, or pen, to carry out tasks.

Not-for-profit cultural institutions need to be part of this Internet world.

During the America On-Line and Time Warner merger, communications policy analysts began a mainstream media debate about "open access broadband." The open access debate centers around the difference between telephone company providers (with an obligation for universal service) and other providers (principally cable providers) without such an obligation. Telephone carriers cannot discriminate against individuals or the content of their communication when providing Internet service. Dial-up access to the Internet has no gatekeepers and any Internet Service Provider may provide Internet service through a telephone line (common carriage). The same holds true for Digital Subscriber Line service (DSL), the high-speed Internet connection technology available through telephone lines.

Other kinds of high-speed and broadband access are provided through lines owned by cable companies (such as AOL-Time Warner). While there is disagreement as to whether cable companies might be subject to common carrier regulation under Title II of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the FCC's current position is that they are not.<sup>27</sup> Some in the media policy community have expressed concern that cable companies could serve as gatekeepers for Internet content if they are not subject to common carriage provisions. Patricia Aufderheide explains:

If the platform is open to new users and new uses, then for the first time in the history of modern mass media, the problems of nurturing public life, cultural imagination and individual creativity are separated from the problem of access to distribution of electronic media. If access to the platform is decided by the company hosting it, then the American public returns to the *ancien regime* of mass media, in which public service is an occasional token of esteem for the public from the commercial provider, and public access is minimal.

As media consolidation continues and broadband deployment becomes more widespread, the cultural sector should be concerned with open access and consider the impact on non-commercial content if broadband systems become restricted.

Financial barriers to accessing the cultural infrastructure through new media are lowered through the construction of more access points and the subsidizing of connectivity. The federal government supports programs to make geographic access to new media more equitable, with an eye

toward the nation's broadband future. Simultaneously, government and non-profit watchdogs are concerned with the private and public policies shaping the infrastructure itself. But "getting to" the cultural infrastructure through new media is only half the battle. As Bobby Austin of the Village Foundation says, multiple access points alone will not solve access problems—"Literacy is the key."

The Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA) defines media literacy in just this way:

Media literacy is an essential life skill for the 21st century. It is the process of applying literacy skills to media and technology messages, learning to skillfully interpret, analyze, and create messages. As communication technologies transform society, they impact our understanding of ourselves, our communities, and our diverse culture. Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound.

The United States has no comprehensive media or cultural literacy policy. The U.S. Department of Education's National Assessments of Adult Literacy in 1992 and 2002 define literacy as "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." "Prose literacy," "document literacy" and "quantitative literacy"—indicators of basic reading and comprehension—are measured, but media literacy is not. The AMLA recognizes that the United States has been slower to develop media literacy initiatives than have other countries. There are currently only a handful of U.S. projects in this area, and none with significant government involvement.

One example of how increased media literacy could benefit the cultural sector is a better public understanding of search engines. Jim Bower explains, “As the search engines used to find Internet content become increasingly revenue-driven, those organizations willing to pay for inclusion receive faster coverage and more prominent placement in search results. This makes it increasingly difficult for arts organizations to compete in the so-called “attention economy,” and threatens to leave much of the cultural sector’s material unindexed and thus unrepresented to the broad public.” With a better knowledge of meta language and other means of indexing content, the means through which search engines find and sort Web sites, cultural producers could ensure that their work is more widely available.

The Benton Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts sought to combat this problem on the production side with the creation of a joint program called *Open Studio: The Arts Online*. Benton and the NEA “recognized the opportunity for the not-for-profit arts community to assert itself in an online world increasingly dominated by commercial content, publishers, and producers. *Open Studio: The Arts Online* was a national initiative designed to help artists and nonprofit arts organizations use the new media to gather resources, strengthen ties with the communities they serve, and build new audiences for online cultural material.” From 1997 to 2001, *Open Studio* trained more than 1,000 artists and arts organizations in 28 states to use new media to “continually test the boundaries of communications tools and pioneer new uses of media that eventually shape the ‘common’ aural/visual language of these media over time.”

The NEA also provides support for media literacy through the AMLA. Media and cultural literacy should

be recognized in the United States as critical skills for the twenty-first century. More importantly, these skills empower tomorrow’s thinkers and innovators.

While federal programs do not exist explicitly to teach or train people in cultural literacy, federal agencies are developing strong programs to put cultural information online and to recognize the importance of cultural literacy to democracy. *FirstGov*, the Web portal for government information, prominently features a section on Arts and Culture including links to featured museums and libraries, grants assistance, and less publicized federal programs (like Art in Embassies, the National Capital Planning Commission, and National Archives Research). The NEA’s Federal Opportunities web portal searches across federal agencies for cultural funding opportunities. The Library of Congress web site provides visual affirmation of the wealth of the nation’s intellectual history.

Federal agencies are also capitalizing on new media technologies to host virtual exhibits and interact with American citizens. The Smithsonian Institution has a virtual tour of its museums including audio and animation, and photo collections from current exhibits. In July 2001, the Smithsonian launched *HistoryWired*, an online exhibition that allows visitors to look at digitized images of hundreds of selected historic artifacts from its collections. The Library of Congress creates online versions of the exhibits it physically shows at the Library, and through the CyberLC webcasts lectures and discussions. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts webcasts daily its free Millennium Stage performances. Providing innovative cultural opportunities like these brings people together from across the nation—helping to create broad shared cultural experiences while fostering diverse cultural forms, thus building cultural literacy. These programs lower geographic and financial barriers to access,

and provide opportunities for people with disabilities in accessing cultural information.

For people with disabilities, new media can be a great leveler, providing access to opportunities and experiences previously unavailable. Voice recognition helps people with spinal chord injuries access the Internet, screen readers and magnifiers assist the visually impaired, and adjustments to peripheral equipment (mice, keyboards and monitors) facilitate access. Disabled people face the same barriers that others do. However, Mary Lester, Executive Director and co-founder of the Alliance for Technology Access, writes that “The digital divide for people with disabilities is greater, deeper and more isolating than for any other community affected by it. Access to technology is the gateway into the 21st century to jobs, education and information for people with disabilities. Getting through that gateway takes accurate information on accessible technology, resources to purchase it, and training in how to use it. Without these supports, the technology tools that have the power to reduce the 67% unemployment rate among adults with disabilities will not have the life-changing impact that they could for millions of people.”<sup>28</sup>

Both anecdotal and statistical information confirms that the largest divide in the digital world is for people with disabilities. This is so despite terrific growth in the use of assistive technologies. In November 2001, *The Washington Post* reported that a Government Accounting Office report recommended that the legislative branch of the federal government become compliant with section 508 of the Workplace Incentives Act of 1998: “Currently, Congress mandates only that the executive and judicial branches provide electronic information accessible to the disabled.”<sup>29</sup> The legislative branch includes cultural institutions like the Library of Congress and the archives of the

Government Printing Office. This article goes on to reference work done at Brown University showing that only 54% of federal agencies offer disability access services. Federal programs seeking to lower barriers to new media access, like HUD’s Neighborhood Networks program, specifically address the barriers facing people with disabilities. However, much more could be done to this end.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

While federal policy will never be able to guarantee complete equal access to the cultural infrastructure, it should foster the creation of equitable conditions. Barriers to the cultural infrastructure have the tendency to be self-perpetuating. Opportunities to experience the cultures of other communities are essential. People with disabilities need more than limited participation. Rural communities need equitable access to the new media. Voices for culture need to be at the table when policies shaping the infrastructure are being discussed.

The recommendations that follow seek to enhance the capacity of federal policies and programs to the benefit of equitable access to art and culture. No less than the capacity of American citizens to create, imagine and wonder is at stake when access to the cultural infrastructure is limited. If democracy demands wisdom and vision of its citizens, equitable and open access to the cultural infrastructure is critical.

## Subsidy and Research

### ***1. Increase the Grant Budgets of Federal Cultural Agencies.***

FY 2002 was hailed as a banner year for the National Endowment for the Arts because of a \$10 million budget increase for the Challenge America program. This increase amounted to less than a \$200,000 investment for arts programming in each state and territory. Supporting access to cultural programming throughout the United States, making it accessible to people with disabilities, and inspiring tomorrow's leaders to give shape to their own creativity and understand the subject matter of the humanities are national investments in the country's future. If the endowments are to be returned to their 1992 levels in real terms, at least a 100 percent budget increase is required.

### ***2. Increase Support for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.***

Increased federal support for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting would allow for television and radio station strategic planning that would enable local stations to evaluate their missions in consultation with the community and develop programming representative of the community and its values. In 2001, the CPB received a \$340 million appropriation, of which only \$18.6 million was invested in its Television and Radio Futures Fund which supports "station and system projects that lead to new information, and methodologies and/or practices that strengthen stations and public television as a whole as we move into the 21st century." Congress should increase overall funding for CPB, and CPB should double its investment in the Futures Fund with an eye toward strengthening stations' capacity to produce local cultural programming.

Alternatively, Congress might explore a system of more direct support of programming organizations, the providers of content, to make them consumers of time on arts related channels. Price suggests “an arts channel where the content is not determined by the channel manager but by the arts institutions. The function of the channel manager would be to clear time and to set a price for its availability. The institutions (museums, film societies, and individual artists) would be responsible for content, much as is true of public access channels today.” This approach might ensure community-specific cultural programming.

### **3. Create the Digital Opportunity Investment Trust.**

In their book, *A Digital Gift to the Nation*, Lawrence Grossman and Newton Minow recommend the creation of a Digital Opportunity Investment Trust (DO IT) with assets earned through FCC auctions of the electromagnetic spectrum. The DO IT would be empowered to “commission grants and enter into contracts that stimulate innovative and experimental ideas and techniques to enhance learning; broaden knowledge; encourage an informed citizenry and self-government; make available to all Americans the best of the nation’s arts, humanities, and culture; and teach the skills and disciplines needed in this information economy.”<sup>30</sup>

DO IT would also provide capital to local and regional libraries, museums, school systems, community colleges, universities, arts and cultural centers, and public broadcasting that need to be able to use advanced technologies if they are to continue to serve essential public interest purposes. A version of this recommendation was offered as House Resolution 4641 on May 2, 2002, as the Wireless Technology Investment and Digital Dividends Act of 2002. The bill would establish a Digital Dividends Trust

Fund that would focus, to some extent, on educational institutions such as libraries and museums, but falls far short of the critical cultural investment of DO IT.

### **4. Maintain Funding for the Technology Opportunities Program.**

The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Technology Opportunities Program budget should be maintained, rather than eliminated. Its granting policies should ensure: 1) support and encouragement of dissemination of good models; 2) funding of more creative approaches to fostering public life using new communications technologies; and 3) analysis and dissemination of analysis of the implications for democracy, public life and education of the models that have been funded and tested.

### **5. Support a National Endowment for the Humanities Survey of Public Participation in the Humanities.**

Unlike the arts community, the humanities community has very little statistical data on which to base its policy formulation relating to equitable access. There is little quantitative research and analysis of these issues in the humanities, folklife, or preservation. Because federal support for culture is often equated with federal support of the arts, the reality of national cultural support is artificially narrowed and marginalized. A *Survey of Public Participation in the Humanities* would provide a sounder basis for federal cultural policy decisions.<sup>31</sup>

## Regulation

### **1. Support Cultural Organizations' Full Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

The dearth of information on cultural organizations' ADA compliance prevents accurate measurements of the Act's effectiveness. Additional federal funds should be appropriated to cultural agencies for a special category of grants that supports access to cultural institutions and through the media. Additional funds should be appropriated to study ADA effectiveness in cultural organizations. Legislative branch cultural agencies should not be exempted from full compliance with the ADA and related legislation pertaining to access for people with disabilities.

### **2. Support Expansion of the E-Rate Program.**

The "e-rate" program has been highly successful in connecting public educational institutions to the Internet and supports the FCC's mandate to provide universal service. Program eligibility criteria should be expanded to include community colleges and vocational schools as well as certified non-school based after-school and day care programs. These institutions are critical educators, often serving those without connectivity at home or at the workplace. Community colleges and vocational programs in particular serve communities that face socioeconomic accessibility barriers. An evaluation should be undertaken to assess the need for an increase in the program's maximum annual budget allocation.

### **3. The FCC Should Require Open Access to Broadband.**

The FCC should require open access to broadband services across platforms, and establish rules of business practice similar in kind to that which the FCC has already done to facilitate competitive phone service. Similarly, the

FCC should monitor Internet Service Providers to ensure that, as gatekeepers, they do not arbitrarily exclude content from their distribution systems. Congress should nullify the FCC's categorization of broadband Internet access through cable as an "information service," as fundamentally un-competitive and contrary to the broad thrust of telecommunications common carrier regulation.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," (1959) reprinted in *The Politics of Culture*, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Karlin Linllington, "When Copyright Laws Hurt," *Wired*. November 27, 2001. ([www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,48625,00.html](http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,48625,00.html)).

<sup>3</sup> These means include one-to-many communications, but exclude one-to-one communication.

<sup>4</sup> Some of these barriers disproportionately affect specific racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups. However, across the nation, these barriers affect no group *exclusively*.

<sup>5</sup> The 1997 *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts: Summary Report*, (National Endowment for the Arts), p. 26. This survey, which relies on 1997 data, is the most recently published SPPA by the NEA.

<sup>6</sup> See *A Nation OnLine* (February, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau is reviewing its criteria for defining urban and rural areas. As of August, 2002, the Census 2000 figures, updating the 1990 percentages of Americans living in rural and urban areas, were not available.

<sup>8</sup> See *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, a compendium that summarizes and discusses 62 research studies that examine the effects of arts learning on students' social and academic skills. Arts Education Partnership, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Copyright and the cultural infrastructure was treated by Michael Shapiro in the first issue paper in the *Art, Culture and the National Agenda* series. *Copyright as Cultural Policy* is available for download at [www.culturalpolicy.org/pubs/shapiro.pdf](http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pubs/shapiro.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> "No Competition: How Monopoly Control of the Broadband Internet Threatens Free Speech" is available via the ACLU website at <http://www.aclu.org/issues/cyber/NoCompetition.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Education's Digest of Educational Statistics shows that of the 19.4 million students enrolled in postsecondary education, roughly 4 million (or 20 percent) are majoring in the humanities, arts, and related fields. Using the same ratio of Pell recipients to overall enrollment, approximately 20 percent – or roughly 800,000 students – who are studying arts, humanities and related fields may be Pell grantees. Or to put a monetary estimate on the value, about 20 percent of the \$9 billion in Pell Grants (about \$1.8 billion) may go to humanities and arts students. This does not count the obvious general benefit to all students of access and exposure to cultural experiences by simply being in culturally rich environments such as colleges and universities.

<sup>12</sup> *Financing State Colleges and Universities: What is Happening to the "public" in Public Higher Education?* American Association of State Colleges and Universities. May 1991. p 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Creativity, Culture, Education and the Workforce* is available at [www.culturalpolicy.org/pubs/education.pdf](http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pubs/education.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> *Preserving Our Heritage* is available for download at [www.culturalpolicy.org/pubs/preservation.pdf](http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pubs/preservation.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Statistics from the Television Bureau of Advertisers "Television Facts - TV Basics." <http://www.tvb.org/tvfacts/index.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> *The Washington Post*, April 12, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> "Producers Defy the Trend Against Home-Brewed Local Shows," in *Current*, 11/29/01. Available online at <http://www.current.org/local/index.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> *A Digital Gift to the Nation: Fulfilling the Promise of the Digital and Internet Age*, The Century Foundation, 2001, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Paul DiMaggio, research director of the Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, and Eszter Hargittai, a graduate affiliate of the Center, are working with John Robinson and colleagues at the University of Maryland on a project to examine the social impact of the new technologies. The project, entitled “The Social, Political and Cultural Impact of New Technologies: Insights from Surveys on Contemporary Patterns of Internet Use” will use survey data collected from the Year 2000 General Social Survey, to examine the impact of the Internet on social inequality, democracy and cultural choice. Researchers are interested in several orienting questions - 1) To what extent does the Internet make knowledge more widely available and to what extent does it provide privileged access for high-status persons, thereby exacerbating social inequalities? 2) To what extent does the Internet promote civility, social capital and democratic participation versus increased opinion polarization, political alienation and extremism? And, 3) To what extent does Web usage expose people to diverse and wide-ranging cultural sites and artistic forms; and, to what extent do Internet users gravitate to a few major sites that offer mainstream news and entertainment? The project is supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

<sup>20</sup> State libraries can register secondary level domain names through their state using the “.us” system. For example, the library of the state of Connecticut could register at “.lib.ct.us”.

<sup>21</sup> “Making Money on Free Music,” by Robyn Greenspan, June 12, 2002. ([http://cyberatlas.internet.com/big\\_picture/applications/article/0,,1301\\_1365161.00.html](http://cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/applications/article/0,,1301_1365161.00.html)).

<sup>22</sup> “Streaming Media Beginning to Take Some Steps,” by Cyberatlas staff, September 06, 2001. ([http://cyberatlas.internet.com/big\\_picture/applications/article/0,,01\\_879901.00.html](http://cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/applications/article/0,,01_879901.00.html)).

<sup>23</sup> The Bush Administration’s FY 2003 budget significantly reduces funding for CTCs and for Department of Commerce grant programs.

<sup>24</sup> Education and Libraries Networks Coalition. [www.edlinc.org/erate/](http://www.edlinc.org/erate/).

<sup>25</sup> See *Native Networking: Telecommunications & Information Technology in Indian Country*. Benton Foundation. May 1999.

<sup>26</sup> *The Broadband Difference: How Online Americans’ Behavior Changes with High-speed Connections at Home*, Pew Internet and American Life Project is available online at [http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/pdfs/PIP\\_Broadband\\_Report.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/pdfs/PIP_Broadband_Report.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> A March 2002 FCC decision that cable modem service is an “information service” with no separate “telecommunications service” has heightened the debate. Pro-regulation advocates expect that both the courts and the Congress will review the FCC’s ruling.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Lester, Russ Holland and Sue Brown, Alliance for Technology Access. “Q&A: The Internet and People with Disabilities, Part 1.” Digital Divide Network. [www.digitaldividenetwork.org/content/stories/index.cfm?key=202](http://www.digitaldividenetwork.org/content/stories/index.cfm?key=202).

<sup>29</sup> Miller, Jason. “Report Urges Congress to Make Legislative Branch Compliant with Section 508.” [www.washtech.com/news/regulation/13864-1.html](http://www.washtech.com/news/regulation/13864-1.html).

<sup>30</sup> *A Digital Gift to the Nation: Fulfilling the Promise of the Digital and Internet Age*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> In “Let’s Quantify the Humanities,” (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 19, 2002), Robert Solow suggested that the American Academy of Arts and Sciences should develop a set of humanities indicators to address “the lack of public understanding and support for the humanities.”

## CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

The Center for Arts and Culture is an independent think tank that seeks to improve the environment in which art and culture is created, distributed, and experienced. Founded in 1994, the Center began its work by establishing the Cultural Policy Network, a confederation of scholars working on cultural policy research at 28 colleges and universities.

Through its cultural policy reader, *The Politics of Culture* (The New Press, 2000), the Center set out to provide the foundation for issues in cultural policy. The Center's second full-length set of essays, *Crossroads: Art and Religion* (The New Press, 2001), provides the context for understanding the relation of religion and the arts in the United States.

A public series, *Calling the Question*, examines the intersection of cultural and other national public policy areas. Through its Web site and Cultural Policy Listserv, the Center provides news, information, and ideas about art and culture to a wide public.

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