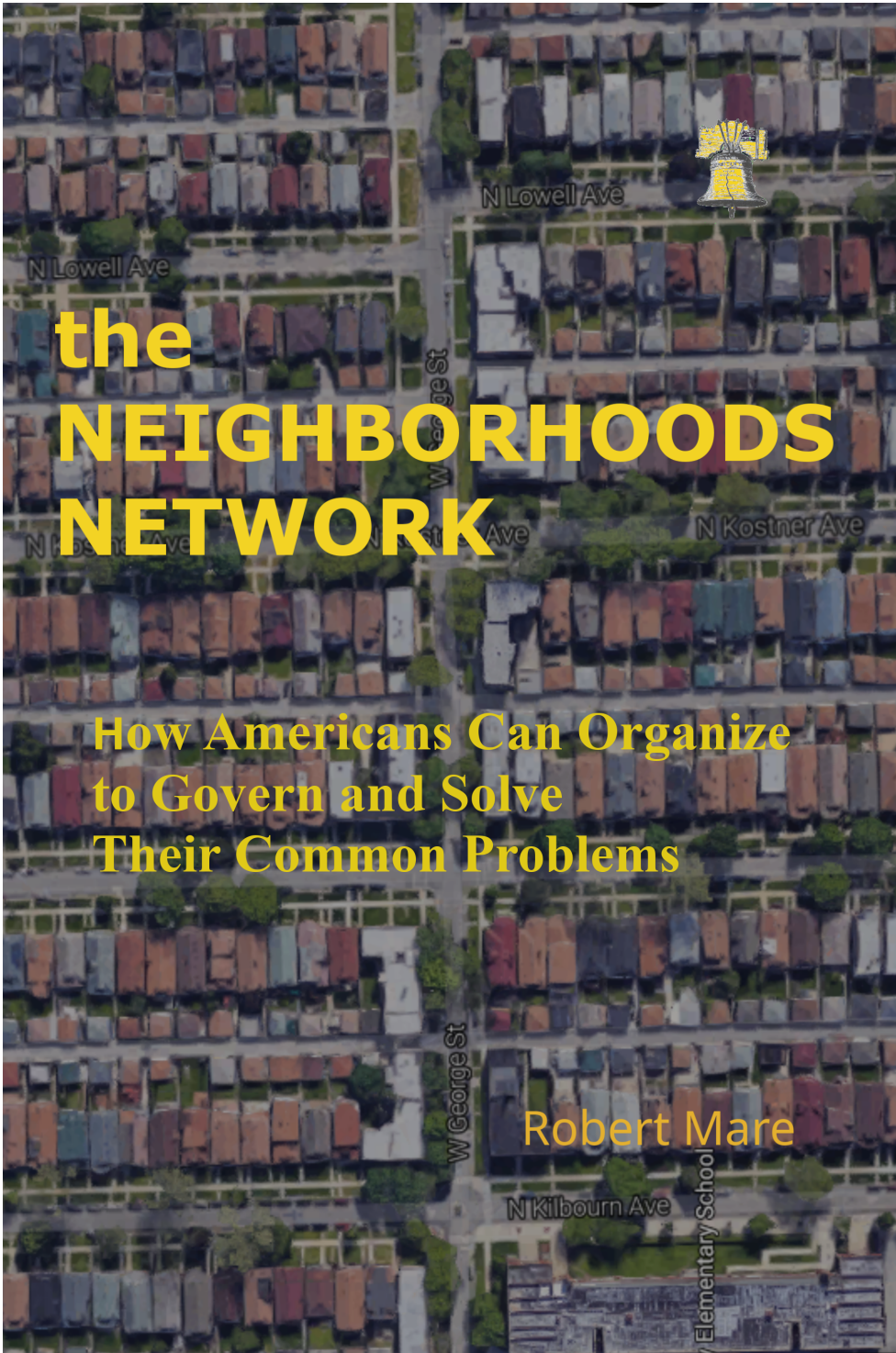




the NEIGHBORHOODS NETWORK

How Americans Can Organize
to Govern and Solve
Their Common Problems

Robert Mare



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In memory of Grandparents Frank and Mary Petrovic.
May the goodness of their hearts and lives become the
spirit and blessing of all humanity – for all time to come.

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PREFACE

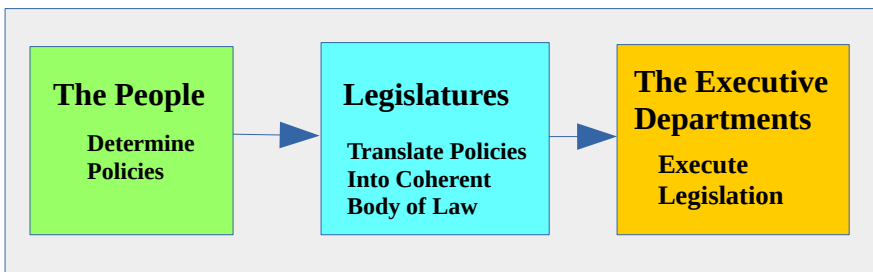
The Neighborhoods Network was conceived, and this book was written, because America is in very serious need of genuine democracy.

The problems confronting Americans (and the world America dominates) will not be resolved until Americans get down to their real business — which is effective participation in self-governance.

Because of the tremendous problems caused by the dominance of what Americans sometimes call “the special interests” over essentially all institutional life in America — we have no choice as honest and well-meaning citizens but to stiffen up and accept our personal responsibility to activate government “of, by and for the people.”

However, this book is not the place to document our specific economic and other problems. The bibliography lists a number of references that do that. But this book does seriously address what we can and should do to organize in order to play our proper role in governance. I believe that democratic governance will then correct the public policies that have led us to grief.

The American system as envisioned by the better of America’s Founding Fathers can be represented in a simple diagram:



I base this on the language used in the **U.S. Constitution**. There is no ‘parliament’ wherein elected politicians parlay, bargain, argue, and ‘decide what’s best for the people.’ Rather the legislatures get their marching orders from the citizenry. They are required to translate policy into coherent, consistent, unambiguous, laws, directives and instructions — for delivery to the executive departments, there to be administrated into actual functioning of government and society.

This is the diagram of a genuine representative democracy. The people do indeed rule because they determine the policies which the legislatures and executive departments of government must then transform into reality.

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However, the U.S. Constitution is not perfect, nor was it intended to be by many of the Founding Fathers. Many of them feared the people and built-in biases allowing those of power to influence elections. The large size of voting districts, and the electoral college, are among those biases.

Thomas Jefferson, in a letter on August 10, 1824 to Henry Lee, had this to say about democracy and its detractors:

Men by their constitutions are naturally divided into two parties: 1. Those who fear and distrust the people, and wish to draw all powers from them into the hands of the higher classes. 2. Those who identify themselves with the people, have confidence in them, cherish and consider them as the most honest and safe, although not the most wise, depository of the public interests. In every country these parties exist, and in every one where they are free to think, speak, and write, they will declare themselves. Call them, therefore, liberals and serviles, Jacobins and ultras, whigs and Tories, republicans and federalists, aristocrats and democrats, or by whatever name you please, they are the same parties still, and pursue the same object. The last appellation of aristocrats and democrats is the true one expressing the essence of all.¹

But, historically speaking, the biggest impact upon governance in America has been due to technical progress (in metallurgy, electricity, chemistry, and engines), and industrialization (building of factories, railroads, the telegraph, and the McCormick reaper). With industrialization, and the military needs of the Civil War, large corporations became critically useful and produced both fortunes and political power for their owners — people who had little use for democracy.

During the Civil War, in order to support the Army of the Potomac, the federal government was forced to give great freedom and massive subsidies to industrialists and investors. In particular, railroad speculators were given huge loan guarantees and vast handouts of federal land to develop the railroads. The book: ***The Robber Barons*** gives the flavor of that build-up of corporate America.²

The following is contained in correspondence from Abraham Lincoln to a Col. William F. Elkins dated November 21, 1864:

I see in the future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in high places will follow. The money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working on the prejudices of the people until all the wealth is aggregated into a few hands and the republic will be destroyed.³

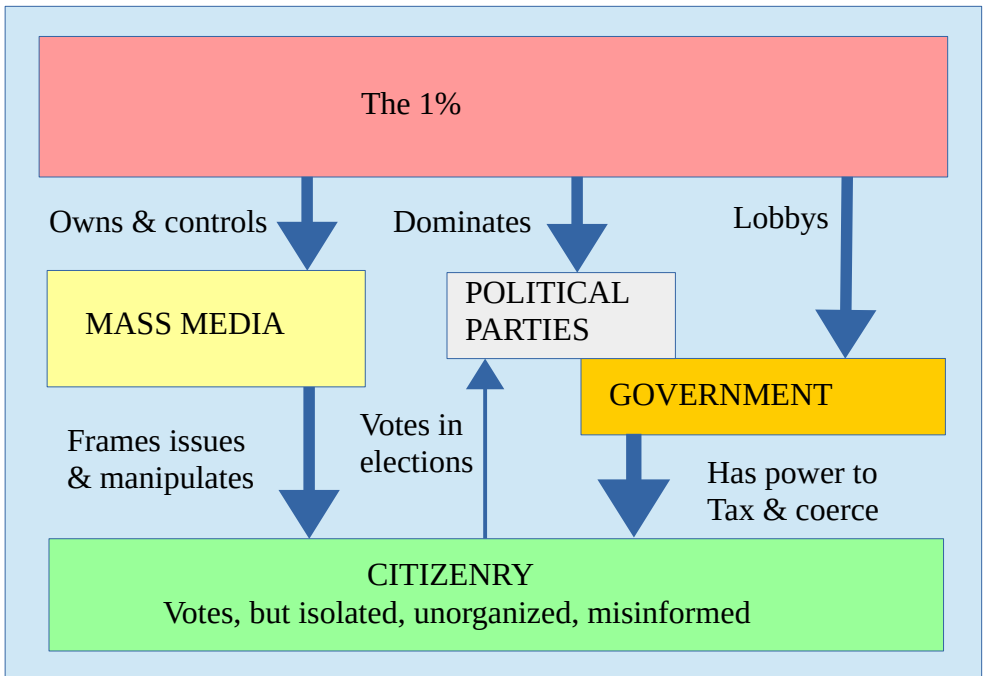
1 Martin A. Larson, *The Essence of Jefferson*, (Washington-New York: Joseph J. Binns, Publisher, 1977, p.54)

2 Matthew Josephson, *The Robber Barons*, (New York, Harvest Book, 1934, 1962)

3 Part of a letter from Abraham Lincoln to Col. William F. Elkins on Nov. 21, 1864 as quoted in: Emanuel Hertz, *Abraham Lincoln: A New Portrait* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1931), p954. [Note: there is serious contention concerning the authorship of the letter. Do some searching on the Internet to pick-up the various claims. Verifiable or not, I believe it expresses Lincoln's sentiments.]

Migration of the citizenry from the rural, farm areas into the industrializing cities, and immigration from abroad, coincided with control of big city politics and governance by industrialists, merchants, bankers and Wall Street.

With automobile manufacture, WW1, development of radio, WW2, and the post WW2 development of the TV dominated mass media, the diagram shown earlier became the following diagram (arrows indicate direction and degree of influence):



Imperial ambitions, masked by the “cold war” with the Soviet Union, further coalesced the political power of the elite of power and wealth. The following text is a portion of President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Military-Industrial-Complex Speech in 1961:

... We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence — economic, political, even spiritual — is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

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In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial-military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades. ...⁴

This military-industrial-complex became one of the players in the U.S. power structure.⁵ Other principle players were and are: Wall Street speculators, wealthy investors, mass media moguls, and the owners and top level managers of: the ‘oil patch,’ the East and West coast technology corporations, pharmaceutical manufacturers, the insurance and medical conglomerates, and other multi-national corporations. These constitute the American ruling class.

The politicians running for office promise to represent the people. To get elected they appeal to the peoples’ prejudices and try to make voters afraid of whoever opposes them on the ballot. Virtually all, when they achieve office, go diligently to work serving the aforementioned power players.

And what has this privileged class been up to? It has misused the resources of the nation: the energy and productivity of the American people, the economy, the government, and the military — to intimidate and attempt to dictate to all peoples and nations. This with the ultimate intent to do who knows what?⁶

As part of that grandiose impulse to global empire, we have now been subjected to “corporate globalization.” For us, individually, we are required to compete with the most talented people everywhere in the world and against massive numbers of workers who are paid far less than what is a subsistence wage in the US.

And yes, the Internet – with its promise of world-wide person to person communication with its email, and the means for anyone to establish a web-site of their own making – has also been politically neutered – with the population distracted and herded into corporation managed and otherwise controlled entities such as Twitter, Instagram, Face-time, and the like – where everything said, displayed and referenced can be monitored and stored for advertising use and government surveillance.

4 *Public Papers of the Presidents*, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960, p. 1035 – 1040.

5 To really understand this, read: Senator J. William Fulbright, *The Pentagon Propaganda Machine*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1971).

6 I speculate about that in another book ‘The CLEANSING,’ under my pen name Robert Mare.

Yet to come, but coming fast, is industrial, agricultural, and other automation — owned by a self-centered few for their use as they please — and which will displace most non-wealthy people out of any means of earning a living.

The degree to which Americans have been removed from political power was simply stated as fact by prior U.S. President Jimmy Carter:

We've become now an oligarchy instead of a democracy. And I think that's been the worst damage to the basic moral and ethical standards of the American political system that I've ever seen in my life. ...

There's no way now for you to get the Democratic or Republican nomination without being able to raise two or three hundred million dollars, or more, and I would not be inclined to do that. And I would not be capable of doing it. ...⁷

Enough is enough. The ruling privileged class in America has shown its true character. It is time to take back control of public affairs. The effective way to do that is to organize for real democracy. That's what this book is all about.

I have put my heart and soul into it. I think you will not be disappointed with what I suggest, and I believe you will find ideas and concepts here that you have not read nor heard elsewhere.

The flow of the book is as follows. This preface states the reason the book is important. Next follows an overview that should put the proposed organization into perspective and should give a glimmer of its important parts. Detailed examination of its parts then follows. The final chapters present my ideas on growing tNN to maturity and how to protect it.

Chapter 1, *The tNN in PERSPECTIVE*, presents the overview. It places tNN in the societal framework, and it describes its architecture — its overall structure and functioning.

Chapters 2, *NEIGHBORHOODS*, discusses the basic unit of organization, the neighborhood, and does so in some detail. Neighborhoods are where issues important to ordinary members of each neighborhood are introduced, considered, and processed.

Chapter 3, *WORK GROUPS* discusses the primary work units of tNN — the generic investigative and execution instruments of each neighborhood.

Chapter 4, *STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE*, shows how small but statistically significant subsets of neighborhoods can produce tentative policy items of the 'public will' which are likely acceptable to the general population.

⁷ From an interview with Oprah Winfrey. See mic.com/articles/125813/jimmy-carter-tells-oprah-america-is-no-longer-a-democracy-now-an-oligarchy#.6D5GoF3pM.

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Chapter 5, NETWORKING, considers the primary networking activities of the neighborhoods. These include collaboration and statistical polling needed to build the public common ground.

Chapter 6, REGISTERS, discusses the lists of neighborhoods needed for communication and collaboration.

Chapter 7, RELAYS explores the relay system useful for sending messages to large numbers of neighborhoods and for delivery of Policy Directives to government.

Chapter 8, The NIN, discusses a Neighborhood Information Network, the NIN-LIBs or library, which contains the information treasure of the tNN.

Chapter 9, BUILDING CONSENSUS, is intended to help guide tNN activity to effectively build the public will.

Chapter 10, GOVERNING, addresses needed changes in the structure and operation of Congress, and some guidelines for formulating and establishing public policy.

Chapter 11, GROWING tNN, indicates how tNN can quickly, but carefully, expand to where it is effective. This includes some suggestions for development of PC and web software to expedite the networking and other tasks of tNN.

Chapter 12, PROTECTING tNN, describes the need to defend tNN from denigration and attack, and suggests stratagems to do so.

Thus, I intend this volume to be a handbook putting forth one way that Americans (and others) can organize to establish real democracy.

Chapter 1 – tNN in PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of **the Neighborhoods Network (tNN)** is to permit Americans to establish genuine “government of, by and for the people” – that is, genuine democracy.

Democracy, “rule by the people,” means that the people produce the policies by which their locales, their regions, and their nation function. These policies concern:

- The laws, the policing, and the adjudication regulating the relationships between people and between people and organizations.
- The conduct of the economy: how goods and services are produced and the nature of the markets.
- The relationship of the nation to other nations — foreign policy and the structure and use of the military.
- The general welfare of the population and the integrity of the nation.

Therefore, tNN must provide the organizational structure for the citizenry to establish the “public will” — the set of legislative and executive policies, at every level of government, which are to be implemented into public reality. That organizational structure must also be used to elect true representatives to government and ensure that the public will is implemented.

Let’s begin by identifying what it is we need to be able to do to actually govern — but currently cannot because we are not organized to do so.

What We Currently Cannot Do

We Have No Way to Discuss Issues

First, we Americans have no mechanism by which we can regularly and thoroughly discuss the broad panoply of public issues with one another. We have been taught that bringing up “politics” at parties, at work, or with neighbors — is uncouth, impolite, and something people just don’t do. A mechanism for public discussion is missing, yet it is absolutely necessary for self-governance.

We Can’t Find Our Current Common Ground

Second, for effective collaboration with other citizens, people need to know the real political and social inclinations of their fellow citizenry. The mass media would like each of us to think everyone else holds the opinions and world view expressed on that media

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— but that is not true. For democratic discourse, we need to know what other people really think.

We Can't Collaborate to Investigate

Third, we don't have a regular mechanism for taking the issues and concerns we seem to hold in common, and then exploring and carrying them further — investigating them in detail, collaborating with others, and finding solutions. Without a regular means to do so, we are impotent; we have no way to translate our concerns (the issues we bring forth), into solutions and policies — the currency of democracy.

We Can't Propose Solutions to Our Fellow Citizens

Fourth, even if we could deeply investigate issues and formulate sensible solutions, we have no regular, tried and true means to place them before appropriate (and often large) groups of citizens for approval, modification or rejection.

We Can't Deliver Solutions to Representatives in Government

Fifth, even if solutions we might come up with were agreeable to us as a whole, we have no way to deliver them, as mandates, to fully legitimate representatives in government — there to be implemented.

We Can't Monitor and Discipline the Public Servants

Sixth, even if policies produced by us were delivered to representatives in government, we have not sufficient means to monitor what those representatives actually do — to determine their compliance.

We Don't Select the Representatives

Seventh, we have no effective, reliable means to both select and elect representatives to government. Here we have left the elective process, conveyed to us by the Founding Fathers, to be controlled by selfish, powerful, and well connected others who have only contempt for us, who fear our political potential should we be aroused, and who resist any real control by us to govern.

Where's the Information?

Eighth and last, we don't have information of the kind needed for governance — that is, the kind of information needed to establish meaningful public policy.

Obtaining pertinent information, even with the internet, requires a good deal of expertise and a tremendous amount of time. The mass media is of little help — it manipulates us more than it informs us. Pertinent books, such as those listed in the bibliography, contain good information — but their existence is completely unknown to the vast majority of

Americans, and we, as citizens, have not the time to read them. We lack a source of information suitable for democratic purposes — one that contains masses of pertinent, accurate, and complete data, and is well-organized and easily searchable.

In Short

In short, the organizational means for self-governance does not exist. But it should. The remainder of this book describes how it could.

the Neighborhoods Network

The Neighborhoods Network (tNN) is designed to provide the mechanisms that the above list shows are currently lacking in the U.S. Its principal features are:

1. It is **neighborhood based**. The neighborhood is its primary unit of organization. All other structures of the tNN are built into this organizational unit. Normally, only members of a geographically defined neighborhood can belong to that neighborhood unit. The neighborhood unit can call itself whatever it wishes, but ‘neighborhood unit’ or NU is suggested as the type of entity it is. (I’ve thought of NGU – Neighborhood Governing Unit, and GNU – Governing Neighborhood Unit, and Democracy Workshop, as alternatives, but NU is simpler and adequate.)
2. Participation is completely **voluntary**. Persons in the neighborhood can join if and as they wish. The only requirements are that participants deal with all others with respect, and that they do not hinder the work of the neighborhood unit.
3. The people of each neighborhood **meet periodically** in a general meeting (once a month is suggested) to conduct their business, discuss issues, launch work groups, obtain reports from their work groups, hear presentations given by invited experts, and so on. Prior to each general meeting, the people of the neighborhood suggest issues for discussion, then prioritize them before the meeting is held.
4. The neighborhoods **use work groups** extensively. Web sites, collaboration with other neighborhoods, spawning other neighborhoods, investigating issues in great detail, pursuing solutions to issues of high priority, ensuring the integrity of the network, and so on — are among the kinds of work done by work groups.
5. There is **no hierarchy**. There are no ‘central committees,’ no top-down structures to coerce the neighborhoods or which could be used to dominate or subvert them. Neighborhoods are ‘equal’ and relate to one another as equals.
6. Networking among neighborhood units is accomplished using a **statistical technique** (described in chapter 4) through the use of ‘registries’ and ‘relays’ which are capabilities supplied by volunteer neighborhoods. Consensus is pursued on each issue through collaboration with neighborhoods within electoral districts appropriate to the issue. Finally, evident solutions (those having statistically determined approval by the neighborhoods in the relevant electoral districts) become directives to the corresponding elected officials.

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7. A **knowledge base** is gradually built — consisting of the reports of the work groups and references to the better of the information sources they encounter. These are stored on the web, and search engines are programmed to efficiently access them. We call this distributed data base system the Neighborhood Information Network (NIN), the tNN library composed of NIN_LIBs.
8. The **governing power** of tNN is indirect and per the election process specified by the U.S. Constitution. Only as the network is able to build consensus on issues among substantial portions of the citizenry, can control of government behavior occur. Moreover, that control only operates by putting persons on the election ballots who are willing to pursue the policies (called mandates or policy directives) issued by the network — then voting those persons into office.
9. The **overall operating strategy** is to build the public common ground through polling our citizenry for issues, discussion of those issues, investigation by work groups, and identification of solutions and policies acceptable to the general population — yet compliant with the U.S. Constitution. With time, all substantive public issues should be dealt with.

Implications of Such a Network

First of all, an organization constructed per items 1 through 9 directly above corrects all eight deficiencies listed at the beginning of the chapter:

1. Every citizen can participate in the general meeting of his or her neighborhood. And every citizen can make suggestions to be considered in that general meeting. This removes the first deficiency listed at the beginning of the chapter — the lack of a means whereby citizens can discuss issues.
2. The kinds of issues suggested for the general meetings, and the priorities given to those suggestions by members of the neighborhood, convey a great deal of insight as to what are our collective concerns and opinions. So do the discussions in the general meetings and the collaboration and statistical polling requests from other neighborhoods. These remove the second deficiency — the lack of a way to identify our current common concerns.
3. Work groups — to investigate issues in great detail and to put forth potentially effective solutions for collaboration — remove the third deficiency.
4. The ability to collaborate with other neighborhoods, then seek approval of the pertinent neighborhoods (no matter how many), removes the fourth deficiency — the need to gain acceptance of suggested solutions from appropriate populations of our citizenry.
5. By providing a regular, step-by-step process (described in Chapter 5) to deliver mandates to the elected representatives — we resolve the fifth deficiency: the inability to deliver policy directives to the appropriate elected representatives.

6. By establishing work groups to monitor elected representatives, then reporting evident performance failures to the neighborhoods — faithful compliance can be assured. This removes the sixth deficiency.
7. Similarly, work groups can address the issue of selection and election of genuine representatives and executive officials to all levels of government. This deals with the seventh deficiency.
8. Finally, the lack of a source of reliable, pertinent information (the eighth listed deficiency) can be removed by construction of a neighborhood information network (NIN). This is addressed in chapter 8.

All in all, tNN is a solution to our democracy deficit.

There is another set of implications to the existence of a network of neighborhoods — implications for ourselves as individual persons:

- We change our status as human beings. Rather than being subjects at the beck and call of institutions controlled by others, we become full-fledged citizens. By gaining knowledge of public realities and having power to determine our national and human futures — we gain self-respect, and the respect of others. These were lost as industrialization, consumerism, and mass media manipulation were imposed upon us.
- The relationships of community, existing for millennia, return. The freedom, integrity and personal dignity which we learn about in such works as Laura Ingalls Wilders ***Little House on the Prairie*** series of books, can again characterize us — even though we will be part of a highly integrated, technological civilization.
- For most of us, meeting with others as equals to consider serious, important issues will be a new experience. This is quite a change from passively viewing a movie, taking orders from a boss while at work, watching a spectator sports event, or attending a meeting where the object is to influence us to accept some kind of decree or new arrangement desired by investors, managers, or politicians.
- For virtually all of us, participation in work groups will be an adventure. The satisfaction of doing detective work, and the sense of accomplishment from planning and executing matters of importance — will be tremendous!
- The respect for one another that comes from working together to do something important and constructive, as equals, is something that should be a normal part of our everyday lives. So is the self-respect we gain by becoming full-fledged participants in a truly just and prosperous society.

Perspective Wrap-Up

The body of this book delves into the details of what I describe above. There are many aspects of the entities and functions that make up the neighborhoods network concept: neighborhoods, conduct of the general meetings, work groups, the statistical mechanism that makes tNN feasible, registries, the relay function, collaboration, and the information archiving function (the NIN-LIBs). Also, aspects of tNN growth and integrity (security) are considered.

All are important, and there is a great deal to examine concerning each.

Chapter 2 — NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods are the basic and highest unit of organization in the neighborhoods network. All of the various functions of tNN are performed by neighborhoods or collaborating sets of neighborhoods.

What Is a Neighborhood?

If you look up the word ‘neighborhood’ in a dictionary, you get descriptions like: ‘a place or region nearby,’ or ‘the people living nearby,’ or ‘a section lived in by neighbors and usually having distinguishing characteristics.’

In Chicago, where I grew up, an area served by an elementary school district would hold many hundreds of residences, each typically with three or four occupants — all within walking distance from one another. Such a set of people usually thought of themselves as belonging to the same neighborhood. Most of the city was divided up in like fashion.

Yet other areas in which people reside are similarly evident neighborhoods:

- High rise apartment buildings.
- College dormitories.
- Retirement homes.
- Condominium complexes.
- Mobile home parks.
- Small farm towns.
- Portions of Indian reservations.
- Prison blocks.
- Military barracks.

Pretty much any geographically small area where humans reside — is a potential neighborhood (or cluster of neighborhoods). These often very different types of places have the following characteristics in common:

1. The people are in close proximity (walking or elevator distance) from one another. It is easy for neighbors to meet, talk, and do things together.
2. The people usually have some social factors in common: income level, type of work they do, number of generations the family has lived in the US., ethnic similarity, lifestyle, and sometimes religious affiliation.

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Neighborhoods as just described ought to cover almost all of the American citizenry, but some small percentage of people might not fit into the above, nice, straight forward partition. Such people either do not have a fixed residence, or have a situation making neighborhood membership impractical. Persons living in the Alaska wilderness might be an example. But even under such a not typical residence arrangement, there might be a way such people could organize to gain connection to the network this book describes.

tNN Neighborhoods

For tNN purposes, the above notion of neighborhood has to be adjusted to accommodate some practical requirements.

To begin with, tNN neighborhoods should be defined so that they don't overlap. That is, each persons is in only one NU. This is to assure fair and equal participation.

Secondly, in order that the normal functions of a tNN neighborhood be carried out, the NU must contain a reasonable number of inhabitants. Persons belonging to a tNN neighborhood will submit issues for consideration, will discuss and vote in the general meetings, and will become members of the NUs work groups. If the general meeting (GM) can function effectively with some fifty people attending, and one in ten people in the neighborhood attend a typical meeting, then the optimal neighborhood size is on the order of five hundred or so persons. If the neighborhood has only one hundred people in it and seventy show up for the GM — and yet the meetings go well — then that is just fine. Likewise, if the neighborhood has six hundred people where only twenty attend but everyone is happy and work gets done, that too is good.

On the other hand, if a neighborhood unit finds a hundred people or more are showing up at the GMs and the meetings are unwieldy, it might consider splitting into two neighborhoods. Or if a neighborhood is getting a GM attendance of only ten or twenty people and have little to do, perhaps it should become part of another, adjacent neighborhood.

The important point: tNN works best if neighborhoods are of good size to reasonably function. It is up to the NUs themselves to adjust their boundaries, as they need, to operate efficiently.

The General Meeting

The general meeting (or GM for short) is the functioning heart of the neighborhood unit. It is where the people of the neighborhood:

1. Discuss — as time permits — the public issues they consider very important.

2. Decide which issues submitted to them by other neighborhoods are worth collaboration.
3. Listen to presentations given by visiting experts they've invited.
4. Launch Work Groups, from among themselves (and when useful, from members of other NUs), to pursue priority items identified during the GMs.
5. Vote on tentative policy directives to government officials which are submitted by other neighborhoods and neighborhood clusters.
6. Review and discuss reports and requests from elected representatives.
7. Judge whether elected representatives are performing satisfactorily.
8. Determine whether mandates being legislated and implemented are proceeding satisfactorily — or are encountering difficulties, especially if those are due to inadequate formulation of the policies themselves.
9. Receive progress reports from the Work Groups they've set in motion.
10. Supervise the various work groups they've set in motion, and monitor those that are inherent parts of the network. The latter are the Registries and the relay function work groups which process information dispatches (IDs) and policy mandates (PMs).

The people of a neighborhood can schedule the GM periodically however they wish, but most will probably meet at least once a month.

Neighborhood Officers

Officers are needed to facilitate each general meeting and perform necessary NU business. That is, some small set of people need to be responsible for:

1. Reserving the meeting place, ensuring that tables and chairs are in place, arranging for coffee and refreshments, providing a projection screen and laptop computer compatible projector, placing signs indicating where the meeting room is, and so forth.
2. Posting the necessary meeting room information on the neighborhood web site and on pamphlets placed on neighborhood door knobs.
3. Arranging for any visiting expert to be met, greeted, brought to the meeting, and otherwise accommodated.
4. Distributing program sheets (at the beginning of the meeting) listing the business and discussion items comprising the meeting.
5. Guiding the meeting through its necessary phases.
6. Arranging for room clean-up after the meeting.
7. Paying for the meeting room and refreshments (from participant donations).

These officers might be called: Meeting Lead (or Moderator), Colead, and Treasurer. They should be rotated often, and should be continually in contact with one another so

they can substitute for one another should one become unable to function in his or her assigned role. The NU might want to consider these officers to be a work group (see Chapter 3) — one where the members are chosen by the NU but who are rotated often. Another official role in the NU, the web master role, should probably be given over to a work group dedicated to that purpose early in the neighborhood unit's establishment.

Preparation for the General Meeting

The effectiveness of each general meeting depends upon how well it is prepared for.

Determining what is to be discussed

Discussion of issues and supervision of the work groups are the most important functions of the GM. To make the most of the very limited amount of time (generally only an hour or two), the attendees must come prepared. This implies that issues for discussion, and any work group reports, must be submitted prior to the GM for the members of the neighborhood to examine.

Once the neighborhood is established as a working entity, it will have a web site where issues are submitted by members of the neighborhood. Prior to each GM and after a cut-off date for suggestions arrives, members of the neighborhood must vote, on that same web site, to determine the priority in which those issues are to be considered. Most often, the general meeting will only have time for one of the work group reports and only one or two issues that have the highest priority for that session.

Previously discussed, but unfinished, issues have to be submitted again ahead of every GM period. They must still 'compete' with other issues for attention. Members of the neighborhood must decide, before each and every GM, what are their priorities.

New neighborhoods (considered in chapter 11) will have to 'grow' into an efficient mode as they choose their GM officers, begin investigating issues, form their web sites, and gain experience.

Issue legitimacy

All submissions put forth by neighbors in order to raise genuine public concerns and suggest solutions are 'legitimate.'

But those put forth deliberately and maliciously to: slander or embarrass persons, distract the NU from its work, or introduce material designed to bring litigation against tNN — are not. Neighbors voting to prioritize submissions should mark these as unacceptable. The web-master might be given authority to move blatant mischief from the issues pages of the web-site over to another page (perhaps labeled 'spurious material') for inspection by members of the neighborhood and perhaps to be dealt with in a subsequent GM.

Urgent Business Matters

If a new officer needs to be chosen, this should be indicated on the web site so the neighborhood can come to the GM with replacement candidates in mind. Any emergency situation to be dealt with: money shortfall, a threat to the neighborhood unit, and the like, should be announced and described on the web site.

The next several GM meeting places and times should also be indicated.

Collaboration Decisions

These concern requests to collaborate which have been received from other neighborhoods. Request dossiers, if any, should be placed on the neighborhood web site for examination prior the GM. GM participants should have familiarized themselves with them and be prepared to thoughtfully discuss their content during the meeting.

There are several types of collaboration request. One type will be to participate in creating a policy directive, another to screen an information directive for broadcast, and yet another to examine a submitted mandate delivery action (see chapter 5) for validity.

Coordination of the General Meeting

An effective General Meeting goes cleanly and energetically through a progression:

1. A call to order.
2. Settlement of urgent neighborhood business and other business matters.
3. Introduction of any invited expert guest, then letting him or her proceed.
4. If there is no invited expert, the selected Work Group gives a report.
5. The highest priority issue or issues suggested for this GM are discussed — and are moderated by the GM Lead or Colead.
6. Ending the meeting.

The call to order should be given at the designated meeting time. People need to learn the GM starts when stated, and that it is a serious, no nonsense meeting. There is real work to be done. Quite literally, since matters of foreign policy, health care, the general welfare of the nation, and more are being determined, lives depend upon what is done here.

Matters of NU business need to be settled and gotten out of the way.

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If any invited visiting expert is to give a presentation, he or she needs to be introduced, given any needed presentation aid, then allowed to proceed.

If there is no visiting expert presentation, one or more Work Group leads should give a report on the Work Group progress. Since the report should be on the web site, this should normally be a short progress report followed by an intensive question and answer period.

Next, the highest priority issue for the meeting is discussed. If the GM participants so decide, a work group may be launched to follow up on the issue.

If time remains, the next highest priority issue is begun.

As the meeting ends, neighbors can congregate to discuss whatever they care to with one another. Work Group members can meet to schedule their upcoming work.

NUs Encourage Suggestions

Issues, ideas, and proposals must come forth from our neighborhoods. Some just emerge spontaneously from the troubles we suffer. Others percolate into our consciousness as we interact with other people and experience events:

- Current events suggest issues.
- Lectures, by subject matter experts, provoke thought.
- Our GMs will become bee hives of issue discussions which suggest all kinds of previously unconsidered but important new issues.
- Work groups, while intensely addressing one issue, stumble upon other issues.
- Formal debates germinate still more claims requiring investigation.
- Meetings with people and groups outside of tNN generate more viewpoints and more issues still.
- Books open up gateways to vast new panoplies of issues.
- The discussions we have while meeting with neighbors on our front lawns generate ideas for consideration.
- Most any activity that puts our faces into the nitty-gritty of real, everyday life produces insights, raises questions, and suggests action.
- The NIN (see Chapter 8) can be perused — especially when it grows to a large size.

Filtering Suggestions

For democracy to function, raw ideas — generated as described above — must be scrutinized and dealt with in a reasoned manner. We start to do that scrutiny when we vote on issues submitted prior to each GM. But each issue that makes it to the GM must then be subject to a comprehensive process of consideration by the members of the neighborhood:

1. After some preliminary discussion in the GM, does it still “resonate” with the people of the neighborhood? If it doesn’t, it should be dropped. It’s not part of our common ground.
2. If it resonates, then is it actionable? If the idea is merely a value judgment, what can be done with it? If the idea can lead to some constructive action, including legislation — it is “actionable” and might be further considered.
3. Is there some other similar idea or issue that is currently under consideration by tNN? If so, the new idea should possibly be given over to the work groups dealing with that other idea. (It may be a relevant variation.)
4. In comparison to other issues currently under consideration, how important is it? As new issues are brought forth, the issues currently under investigation need to be re-prioritized along with the new so the most important receive the most attention.
5. The effort in pursuing any new idea will have to be coordinated with all the other efforts of the network of neighborhoods. Will it be possible to do that with this new issue?

This scrutiny can not usually be done by the GM when the issue is first encountered. But if and as a work group is set in motion, these are questions to be answered.

Some Rules for NU Operation

Because we have been denied genuine participation in self-governance, we have a great deal to learn. That learning will be painful at times. But there are rules of conduct that can help us keep our attention focused on the real work to be done:

Avoid Value Judgments

The first rule that might be put before ourselves while participating in neighborhood based governance — is to keep a firm focus on tangible issues and their practical solution. We will never find a consensus judgment on the Ronald Reagans and Ted Kennedys of the world of politics. And neither left, nor right, is correct. Both outlooks contain useful insights and nasty shortcomings. Neither provides the necessary overall

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framework for public decision making. To be successful, we must focus on the practical and we must respect one another regardless of our differing political views. Value judgments are a good way to divide us. At best they are a distraction, and at worst they prevent us from finding our common ground.

Deal With Issues As They Really Exist

As issues are raised and pass our initial filtering, we should then establish their reality. When initially raised, an issue will often contain biases, presumptions, falsehoods and misrepresentations that cannot withstand close and impartial examination. Even if biased, the issue as originally claimed may still be important and deserving of investigation. The point is: the factual basis for issues must be established.

Therefore it is necessary to examine the issue in detail. This will likely become a work group effort. Those who most consider the issue important should become part of the work group. If the facts support the character and significance of the issue, a case, a dossier, for the issue should be built. That case should normally include two parts: (1) an accurate anecdotal description — that is, the personal implications and experiences of the people who are impacted by the issue, and (2) the numerical or statistical characterization of the issue — that is, how many people are affected, what is the cost, and what are the trends for the future.

After such an examination, the issue should be reevaluated by the neighborhood. If it is still important, a solution should be sought.

Resolve Real Issues

As genuine issues are identified as such, we should seek to resolve them, either by effort within our own NU or together with other NUs.

Potential solutions should be evaluated in their entirety: the likelihood of each to solve the issue, the costs, the risks, and the wider implications and consequences. General principles can guide decision making, but caution is advised. When rules of thumb based on the trades or professional practice are used, the results are often good. Political ideology, posing as “moral principle,” or “good sense,” or as useful “rule of thumb” often produces terrible results.

Examination of potential solutions, conducted through a diligent search for information, and an open, unbiased consideration of all alternative solutions, usually results in optimal outcomes. Those who dig deeply into issues quickly find out that thoroughness is difficult and time-consuming. But those who persist in proceeding honestly and diligently find that in subsequent examinations of other issues, they get better and better at it. Each issue is an opportunity to learn how to analyze better, faster, and easier.

Respect Others, Respect Ourselves, But Don't Tolerate Disruption

In relating to one another in the NU, we will often find ourselves in little quandaries: should we say something; should we just ignore what someone just said; should we help someone say something that he or she is a bit hesitant about; and so on. Perhaps the following list of thoughts is helpful.

1. We should raise all issues that are important — even if they offend some people. We all have to learn that all issues of importance have to be considered. That is part of effective rulership. We are here to govern.
2. We need to expect that people prepare for each meeting. Work Group reports should be available on the Web prior to the GM. Issue suggestions should be published and prioritized on the Web before the GM. It is a waste of valuable GM time to explain to a participant what he or she should have read on the Web and understood before the meeting. Some reprimand, albeit tactful, is in order.
3. Where GM or work group participants disagree on the facts, the facts should be determined by investigation through a relevant work group and reported at a future GM. Open vitriol, without the facts, is not OK.
4. Where there is disagreement on suggested courses of action (potential solutions), some way should be sought to clarify the potential consequences of the conflicting solutions. Work groups and/or experts can help.
5. We should object to ideas we think destructive, but not to the people having such ideas. If ideas are honestly held, the holder has cause to hold them. The GM and work groups will dig deep to find the probable truth on issues that the neighborhood deems important.
6. Each of us will, at least sometimes, find, after close examination by the GM and its work groups, that our personal view of an issue is indeed wrong, or at least seriously flawed. That kind of experience gnaws at our insides — to be sure. But as mature adults we have to integrate that newly acquired knowledge into our thinking. This is the painful part of our building common ground. However, we cannot self-govern without doing this.
7. There may be other times when a NU or work group effort, although seemingly thorough and correct, is wrong. If we honestly and strongly feel this is so, and the issue is important, we have the responsibility to dig into the issue ourselves and bring out facts sufficient to convince the NU to examine the issue further.
8. If discussion becomes 'bogged down' on some aspect of an issue, the GM must decide on how to continue. If the item cannot quickly be resolved, then the work group, if one exists, needs to deal with it outside of the GM. For efficiency, the GM must move on. When such a situation occurs, someone should call for the attending neighbors to make a decision.
9. If someone deliberately interferes in the GM with the intent to disable the meeting, they must be asked to immediately desist — and if they do not they need to be dismissed from the meeting.

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10. Governance is serious business. It is not impolite to insist, at a GM or in a work group, that a speaker quickly ‘get to the point.’ This has to be done — politely, yes, but firmly. Blabbering cannot be tolerated.
11. Creation of good policy takes time. Many important issues are not going to be settled in a few meetings. Solutions will often take months to develop — sometimes years. But without this work by the citizenry, good solutions will not happen.
12. The NU is the manager, supervisor and responsible agent. The GM is the mechanism by which the NU exercises its responsibilities. As President Truman was known to say: “The buck stops here.”
13. It is not a bad idea to walk into a GM presuming you bear the heavy responsibility of a military general knowing that every mistake you make — out of laziness, ignorance, or prejudice — can have dire consequences.

Overall Facilitation Function of the NUs

The NUs provide both a ‘filtering’ of opinions and ideas, and a ‘convergence’ mechanism.

People are inclined to dismiss new or different ideas as too radical or as mere mouthings of unbalanced individuals. And sometimes that judgment is correct. Yet we want NUs to become an attractant for all sorts of notions because we want a wide range of ideas from which to choose. Many ideas that are truly crazy will quickly be put down during member conversations and especially at general meetings. Fact finding by work groups will ferret out misrepresented issues for all to witness as such. Those claims that are discussed and accepted will have “struck a cord” with the local membership. Thus they will have been filtered (like wheat from the chaff) and likely will be receptively received by the people of other NUs as well. Ideas and suggestions surviving the give and take of even a few (but representative) neighborhoods are likely to be accepted by the general population in the election district for which the issue is relevant.

Most ideas as initially proposed are not ready for action. Most good proposals need to be considered, corrected, and molded (converged if you will) into a form congruent with the overall body of needs and wants of our citizenry. They must be possible to implement and be compatible with the overall body of public law before becoming truly actionable and part of our common ground.⁸ The flow of work through the NUs should accomplish this convergence.

⁸ Of course, where that body of past legislated law seriously contradicts the public will, it must be repealed.

Issues Will Change as tNN Evolves

As the number of NUs grows and the NUs gain experience, the kinds of issues they will address will change.

In the beginning, issues at all levels of governance will be considered — and facts and potential solutions will be found. But without sufficient numbers of NUs to elect legislators at state and federal levels — implementation at those levels of governance will not be possible. However, growth in the number of NUs in locales should be rapid, and it should be possible to deal with many local issues effectively.

Matters of:

- transparency of local government (access to records),
- city services,
- schools,
- zoning,
- building codes,
- local taxation,
- policing

should quickly come under the scrutiny of the citizenry in many locales.

With time, and the spread of tNN into significant portions of the big cities, tNN will become a significant force in both state and federal governance. Regional and national issues — such as:

- economic imbalances and injustice,
- infrastructure,
- federal taxation,
- the influence of special interests,
- the supply of money,
- trade,
- fairly sharing the benefits of automation,
- foreign policy, and
- the appropriate role of the military

should come under both scrutiny and control by the citizenry.

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Thus, as tNN matures further and the ‘common ground’ becomes significant at the national level, the focus of many neighborhoods will shift from local issues to those regional and national in scope.

As the full set of governance policies become reshaped and mandated in the public interest, at every level of governance, there will be a shift of effort to ensure the effective implementation of those policies.

We should expect we will sometimes have to modify policies, which we have previously established, to correct our mistakes. Moreover, we will need to monitor government on a permanent basis.

Chapter Wrap-Up

All in all, the goal of each and every neighborhood must be to build the common ground in our locales and in the nation. The day-to-day work should be to pursue the most important issues as identified by the citizenry, investigate them, then find the best solutions.

As our common ground grows and tNN proliferates throughout our communities and nation, we must work to select and elect representatives to the legislatures and officers to the executive branches of government. These persons will then implement the policies that constitute our common ground.

Finally, we must monitor the implementation of that public will, and make corrections where necessary — in the policies we have created, and in the choices of persons we have put into government.

This is what is meant by ‘self-governance.’ This is what the Founding Fathers sought for us as they pledged “our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor” in America’s **Declaration of Independence.**

Chapter 3 — WORK GROUPS

Work Groups⁹ (WGs) do the tough, dirty work of tNN. They shed the blood, tears and sweat to do the detailed detective work, to find real solutions to public issues, and to do the other, sometimes tedious, work of the neighborhood unit and the network.

Those who have participated in work groups in large organizations realize the potential for quickly accomplishing tasks that are far beyond the expertise and capability of any one individual. To brain storm past problems, to leverage the different skills of many people, and to work in parallel — sharing the burden of a large amount of work among many individuals — is normal for effective work groups.

What is a tNN Work Group?

Typically, it is a group of people from within a neighborhood, interested in and able to pursue a task for the NU. A work group can vary in size, but might usually be between two and a dozen individuals. Membership is voluntary, and neighbors join primarily because they have a significant interest in the topic for which the work group is chartered. Different NUs, familiar with one other, can form a shared task force. This not only expands the pool of expert resources, but aids in cross-communication between NUs.

How is a Work Group Formed?

Typically, a work group is formed when the general membership of one or more NUs determines that it needs to investigate something or perform some action requiring significant study or preparation — work beyond the scope and capability of GMs.

When a neighborhood decides to form a work group, the persons most interested in the task or issue involved produce a tentative charter. This charter is placed on the neighborhood web site and discussed at a forthcoming general meeting. The work group is authorized into existence when the charter is approved by the general meeting. The charter is a clear cut mandate to do some unit of work.

People in an originating NU volunteer to participate. And they seek additional expertise in other NUs as they feel necessary and as their GM approves. Members of the resulting task force choose a lead and a co-lead who must coordinate activity among the group and who will report progress and results to the sponsoring set of NUs.

9 Also called: Task Forces.

The first task of the work group will often be to further understand and refine the charter — and get it reapproved in a subsequent GM. Periodic redefinition of a charter can make sense — for instance, if investigation reveals aspects of the issue which were unknown when the work group was established.

How does a Work Group Function?

Within the work group, a group leader and co-leader are chosen by the group's members. The co-leader takes the place of the group leader when the latter is absent for whatever reason.

Ultimately, the work group is responsible to the general meeting. The work group exists only so long as the GM so decides.

Activity within the work group is conducted as its members determine. Those members with experience in such efforts give guidance and instruction to those who are new. Since participation is voluntary, and since different members will have different amounts of expertise, effort, and time to contribute — contributions will vary greatly.

Probably, most teams will start-out 'loose' — meaning members may do their detective work in different directions as they themselves desire. With time and consolidation of acquired information, the work group, as a whole, may sense the need to coordinate and support activity needed to resolve remaining unknowns and consolidate findings into a final report.

There is a helpful method for conducting meetings — it's called "Six Thinking Hats."¹⁰ The hats correspond to different ways of addressing a topic: discussion of the evident facts, expression of participant feelings about anything related to the topic, solicitation of new ideas, and so on.

As tNN matures, the experience of many work groups — over a long period of time — will provide good guidelines for those work groups that follow.

Intrinsic tNN Work Groups

A number of work groups are intrinsic to the normal functioning of a neighborhood:

1. A 'general meeting' work group. This group arranges the meeting place for the next general meeting, issues information about it on the NU's web-site, sets-up chairs and tables, arranges for screen projector and screen, provides treats, conducts the meeting,

10 Edward De Bono, *SIX THINKING HATS*, (New York: Back Books, 1999)

and cleans-up afterwards. This is one way of thinking about the set of ‘officers’ of the NU as discussed in chapter 2.

2. A ‘web site’ work group. This group serves as ‘web master’ for the neighborhood. It must establish and maintain the neighborhoods web site.
3. A ‘collaboration interface’ work group. This WG receives requests from other neighborhoods regarding possible collaboration. It examines such requests, posts them onto the neighborhood web site where they can be reviewed before the general meeting, and represents those requests at the general meeting. It also sends collaboration inquiries to other NUs when this NU initiates collaboration. (Note however, once collaboration is arranged, communications between the collaborating parties proceeds directly between the pertinent work groups.)
4. A ‘contact’ work group. This group handles inquiries about the neighborhood for which information on the web site is not adequate.
5. A ‘tNN growth’ work group. This group encourages people in neighborhoods who currently are not part of tNN to form NUs of their own. These neighborhoods can be near or distant.
6. A ‘tNN integrity’ work group. These seek to verify correct operation of Registries, Relays, and other tNN entities (which are discussed in later chapters).

Other Work Groups

Each NU creates work groups for whatever purposes it wishes. Any particular NU has only limited resources in terms of time and people to examine issues. In addition to the ‘intrinsic’ work groups described above, some NUs might want to set up work groups to:

1. Understand, detail, and catalog, for all public offices: the eligibility requirements (age, birthplace, etc.) or how appointed; disclosures required of the candidate; the conferred powers, authority and limitations of the position; the legal obligations of the office holder; the remuneration; provision for expenses; where the office is located; points of contact with other officials; and recall procedure, if any.
2. Examine and monitor the election systems: equipment, procedures, selection and training of election personnel, and fraud prevention. Determine the extent and nature of any gerrymandering, denial of voting, and deliberate miscounting of votes.
3. Find and propose candidates to run for public office.

Locally (towns & cities)

1. Make local government transparent. In considerable detail, understand, document, and monitor: the revenue sources, budgets, zoning and building codes, the school system, the fire and police departments, streets and parks system, the water and other utilities.

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Attend: city council meetings, zoning board meetings, and school board sessions.
Review: all laws and ordinances.

2. Poll the local public to investigate the status of the nearby citizenry: whether everyone's medical needs are being fully met; the purity, quality and availability of water and food; adequacy of housing; and adequacy of transportation.
3. Evaluate the public infrastructure: are there adequate public places for meetings, for recreation, and for entertainment? Is it easy and safe for all people to travel to: schools, medicine, work, shopping and to other places? Are the places where people access transportation convenient and safe?
4. Participate in local public planning. Study the economic "inputs/outputs" of the locale — showing the various "inputs" (labor, local natural resources, and investment) and all the various "outputs" (wages, salaries, profits, new capital, and payments to outside interests). Such detailed analysis can reveal economic injustice, long-term problems, and changes that should be made.
5. Expose any local wrong doing. Are there 'tax rebates' to large corporations to locate in the locale? Do students in small university towns have to rent at high prices from 'slum lords'? Are desirable small businesses destroyed by mega-outsiders? Are the zoning and other commissions occupied by people selected by those who benefit from bias in these?

Regionally (Nearby Counties and States)

1. Make regional government transparent: Study and continually monitor all legislative and departmental activity of the county and state governments: transportation (roads, mass transit, aviation), energy, water supplies, park systems, the judiciaries, and market regulation.
2. Conduct regional planning. Examine what County and State governments do. Does existing planning address possible disasters: earthquakes, flooding, mud slides, forest fires, tornadoes? Do all high speed roadways have separation and barriers between opposing lanes? Ensure that special interests provide information for that planning, but do not have undue influence.
3. Examine regional monitoring of the environment. Is it thorough and accurate? What is necessary to ensure clean air and water, and healthy, sustainable agriculture?
4. Is the energy system being properly managed? Are investment and other funds moving from fossil fuels over to the solar and wind generation, transmission, and storage needed for EV charging and increased residential and industrial use of electricity?
5. Consider the building of a region-wise telecommunications system similar to the tier 1, tier 2 automobile and trucking highway system. (Each Region of the U.S. would provide the fiber-optic backbone, and the commercial marketplace would provide the terminal communication devices (telephones, internet ports) and applications.)

Federally

1. Understand how the U.S. Congress actually functions. Determine who initiates legislation, how legislation is influenced, and how it is processed into law.
2. Examine federal foreign policy and the use of the military. Is it to establish genuine democracies? Or merely to put in place regimes compliant with U.S. military strategy, as well as permit unbridled foreign investor access to their local markets, cheap labor, and natural resources? Determine what U.S. foreign policy should be.
3. Study the U.S. economy, and international trade and investment arrangements. What's the real relationship between investment, trade, prices, employment and wages. What macro management and regulations should there be? Is the "corporate veil" really necessary and fair? Are "holding companies" something that should be allowed? Do corporations really need to have "personhood" legally conferred upon them?
4. Determine how forthcoming industrial and other automation should be managed to benefit everyone.
5. What are the facts about 'global warming'? How should pollutants be regulated? Is there misuse of public lands by: coal and petroleum extractors, mining and forestry interests, and ranchers? What are the current Federal energy subsidies? Determine, at the Federal level, what role renewable energy sources should play and how they should become dominant.

Any tiny part of the above list would stress a single neighborhood. But a huge number of neighborhoods can do this work — often easily when the appropriate expertise exists within a communicating cluster of neighborhoods.

Let's examine one of the 'intrinsic' work groups, the 'web master.' At the end of the NETWORKING chapter 5, we'll refer to another potential work group, one dealing with a more intimidating task.

Example: Web Master Work Group

This is an intrinsic function that has to be performed in every NU. In order to operate efficiently, and to connect and collaborate with other NUs in a mature and far flung tNN, the internet (or something like it) has to be used.

Let's pretend we know of no other NUs. Perhaps we seem to be the very first NU to be established. Or perhaps, we want to get going as an effective NU before connecting-up with other NUs — and want to do so just because we want to 'get the feel' of operating by ourselves and to see how we can 'make things work' without outside help or examples. [This is a very good way to understand what you are doing when you do finally connect with others. You can compare how you do things with those you meet. You will be in a good position to adopt the methods of other NUs in a very discriminating way.]

We begin this example with the charter the NU might give to the Web Site Work Group:

Web Site Charter

The web site work group shall build and operate a publicly accessible web site for our neighborhood unit. It will display our name and indicate in which city, state, and neighborhood we are located. It will facilitate our tNN activities.

Immediate Requirements

The first stage web site will:

- 1) Identify the NU by name and location. Location will indicate our neighborhood boundaries and give the GPS coordinates of its approximate center.
- 2) Have the picture of the neighborhood garden on the root page and a smaller icon version of that picture on all other pages.
- 3) Indicate it is part of tNN.
- 4) Permit NU officers to post officer and work group member names and email addresses.
- 5) Permit the NU officers to post the meeting place, date, and time for the next GM.
- 6) Permit neighbors to submit issue suggestions (maximum of 250 characters each) and have these issue suggestions immediately accessible to anyone visiting the web site.
- 7) Permit priority voting on those suggestions (5 levels maximum of priority).
- 8) Permit officers to set the suggestion period for issues to be submitted.
- 9) Permit officers to set the voting period to prioritize the suggested issues.
- 10) Display the results of the priority voting on the suggested issues.
- 11) Permit work group members to post WG meeting places, times, and topic.
- 12) Show the E-mail address of the web master WG.
- 13) Show the E-mail address for the GM work group.

The GM requests a very short status report at each GM indicating the work performed during the last month, and indicating any new features then in operation. The GM is willing to fund up to a \$20 per month web site hosting fee maximum.

Future Requirements

When the above has been accomplished, and those capabilities become used in a regular and reliable fashion, the following will be pursued:

1. Historical database access (for reports, issue suggestions made in the past, voting results, work group results, etc.).
2. Access to Registries¹¹ (and optionally Registry operation and maintenance).
3. Access to relay functions, (and optionally relay operation and maintenance).

Reports to the NU

Reports from the Web Site Work Group to the GM might look like:

Report 1 (30 April 202x)

1. Jane Jones, Dave Deeve, and Matt Milner have joined the WG as volunteers.
2. We've decided to share the lead and colead responsibilities among ourselves.
3. Matt is not a NU member but will try to organize his dorm as a NU. He needs to check that this is not against Washington State University rules. He is a computer science undergraduate (3rd year) and wants to become more web proficient.
4. Jane has some ideas about images and artwork for the web pages and wants to use this as an opportunity to learn HTML and PHP [computer languages for composing web pages]. Matt has pointed her to the learning web site: www.w3schools.com/html/ and she has already learned to make simple web pages.
5. Dave is a newbie and wants to contribute by being the everyday contact point between the neighborhood and the team.

Report 2 (30 May 202x)

1. Dave has found a web site hosting service with a very good reputation: *asmallorange.com* to do the hosting. Our web site domain name is **www.xxxxxx.org** and was registered with: *namecheap.com* on 15 May 202x.
2. With Matt looking over her shoulder, Jane uploaded our initial home page to the host service. In minutes, we were able to access it from one of our laptop computers using both the Internet Explorer and Chrome browser apps.
3. By trying a few domain names with the words 'neighborhood' and 'network' on the internet, Dave found a site that must have something to do with tNN. It is: *www.theneighborhoodsnetwork.org*. At that site, Jane was able to examine the computer code for the pages devoted to issue submission and look-up. The code there uses PHP to access MySQL (a popular, free database), and is supported for free by our hosting service. We may be able to use this to allow our neighbors to issue suggestions and vote their priorities.

¹¹ Registries are described in Chapter 6, Relay Functions in Chapter 7.

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Report 3 (30 June 202x)

1. You can now submit issues over our web site! Just go to the ‘Current Issues’ page.
2. We are still learning how to make priority voting (on submitted issues) work properly. For the July 31 GM, just look over (after 15 July) the issues you all will have submitted. Then e-mail Dave with your top choices for consideration at the 30 July GM. He’ll compile the choices and Jane will post them before the July GM.
3. The ‘root page’ will imitate what we found at: www.theneighborhoodsnetwork.org:

The NETWORK of NEIGHBORHOODS

INTRODUCTION to the NETWORK

ABOUT INN

INN BOOK
CapdFile1

START	Problem Solution	Problem Solution	Core Concepts	Governance	Neighborhoods
Quick INTRO	The Problem	The Solution	Info Dispatcher	Policy Directs	Interconnection
Work Groups	Registries	Statistics	Info Dispatcher	Policy Directs	Interconnection
Broadcasts	Library	Shared Ground	Why Me?	Collaboration?	Differm?
OK Behavior	Threats	Integrity	INN growth	I.E.	Open Source

A PROTOTYPE NU Governing Unit

A PROTOTYPE NU Landmark

Green Energy

Security Direct

Current Issues

Item List

The NETWORK GATEWAY

NETWORK ACCESS

INN DATA BASE

Network Directories

Need to contact us concerning this site? Email us at: theneighborhoodsnetwork@gmail.com

END of root page

[the reports continue]

Chapter 4 — STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE

At first thought, tNN appears to be impossible. How can thousands and hundreds of thousands of neighborhoods possibly do anything together — especially agreeing on what are the important issues of the day, then agreeing on the substance of those issues — and finally agreeing on solutions to those issues?

Yet it is possible. This chapter shows how. By randomly contacting a small number of NUs in a population, we can collaborate effectively. Then, by sensible statistical polling of the portion of the general population affected by the issue, we can test whether a tentative solution produced by that collaboration is acceptable or not.

To begin with in this chapter, we consider some statistical concepts and show how to use what are called ‘sample size tables’ to find out how many NUs we need to poll or collaborate with. Then we’ll show how we can randomly choose small numbers of NUs with which to collaborate – in order to formulate solutions to issues. Finally we can determine, by statistical polling of high accuracy, whether the collaboration results are acceptable to the public.

Random Sampling

Imagine a contentious issue — one which is so across a population of 200 million adults. Let’s presume we think there are two widely held opinions about this issue: opinion A and opinion B — because virtually everyone we talk to expresses either A or B.

But also presume we need to know more. Presume:

1. We need to know what percentage of the population holds opinion A and what percentage holds opinion B.
2. We want to know if there are other opinions and approximately what percentage of the population holds those opinions.

We could try to contact all 200 million and ask them. We certainly will not do that — it’s impractical. Any sizable attempt would be too time consuming and too expensive.

What we will do is a ‘random sampling’ of only a tiny, tiny portion of that overall population. This means we might pick out perhaps 1000 people (statistically these are ‘samples’¹²), from all over the population, over all of the geographical extent the population occupies. By ‘random’ we mean that we will try to do so over every variation of background, wealth, education and other factors that we know of without any bias whatsoever in which persons we choose. In part, that means we will try to sample those various subsets in about the proportions those variations make up of the total population.

¹² That is: the objects (people, NUs, whatever) selected at random from a set (a population) of such – are considered, in statistical language, to be ‘samples’.

Also, to experiment, we might try to collect several different sample sets: one of 10,000 samples to see if that improves the results, and another two sets — one of size 100, another of size 5. We might come up with results that look like this:

Table 1: Variable Sampling Sizes

Sample Size from a population of 200 million	Number holding opinion A	Number holding opinion B	Number having another Opinion	Apparent Percentages
10,000	1,515	8,450	35	15.20% 84.5% 0.35%
1,000	148	847	5	14.8% 84.7% 0.5%
100	13	84	3	13% 84% 3%
5	3	2	0	60% 40% 0%
Approx. real percentage	15.0%	85%	0.3%	

The data rows with 10,000, 1,000, and 100 all pretty much give the percentages on the bottom row. I would conclude that 100 samples is sufficient to get a pretty good idea of what percentage of people hold opinions A and B, and I feel comfortable that those holding any other opinion are in a very small minority.

But note that at 5 samples, our confidence is gone. The proportion of those holding opinions A and B are very iffy — a shift of even one data point (one sample) would drastically alter the percentages we would calculate. Any notion of whether other opinions are held, is absent.

Unless we get some tens of samples, at minimum, for each major opinion category, our survey could be in serious error.

However, the results for other sample sizes is quite amazing! In fact, by measuring the opinions of only 100 persons in a population of 200 million people, we can gain a pretty good estimate of what percentage of that two hundred million people hold a specific opinion!

A Caution

But what if we made a mistake in sampling? For instance, what if we had done the above survey on the American population, but decided to carry it out by selecting, at random, 20 persons from each State. There are 50 states, so that we would get 1000 (50 x 20) samples. That seems reasonable, doesn't it? If we did, we might get the following result:

Table 2: sample size 1000

Opinion:	A	B	Other
Number holding that opinion:	573	423	4
Percentage	57%	42%	< 1%

What happened? The percentages don't come close to our previous results. But we did a random sampling — didn't we? The answer is no! Even though we randomly sampled within each State, we didn't randomly sample the entire national population.

Here's what happened: We biased the outcome to give proportionately more samples to states like: Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada — which have relatively small populations — compared to the coastal and mid-western states like: California, New York, and Illinois, which have huge populations and who have opinions quite in contrast to those of the mountain and other predominantly rural states. We needed to randomly sample the entire population, but didn't. Inadvertently, we gerrymandered the poll!

The lesson: we need to be careful with our sampling — it's easy to get it wrong.

Determining Sample Sizes

The above gets our toes wet in the business of statistical thinking. But it begs a good question: how many samples do we need to get a reliable measure of how a population feels about an issue? And how do you go about selecting those samples?

As you might imagine, statistics is a very well developed and practical subject which is well used in business, the sciences, and in government. There are tables, spread-sheets, and online apps to determine the number of samples needed.

The following table tells us how many samples you need, but you have to supply some numbers, some parameter inputs:

1. How big is the population being sampled?
2. What likely percentage error in the results can you tolerate?
3. How confident in the answer do you need to be? That is, what percentage of the times you do this kind of poll or random selection do you have to have the result be inside the error range shown in the table?

To use the table, first pick the row appropriate to the size of the population over which you want to conduct a survey. For example, if the number of people or NUs is 750, then

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pick the row for population size 1,000. (Of the population sizes listed in the table, this is the smallest population size which is greater than or equal to our population size.)

Next, decide what survey accuracy you want. For example, if you can work with an error of plus or minus 5% in the tallies you obtain, then choose the 5% columns (there are two such columns).

Finally, if you feel you need to be within the selected margin of error a high percentage of the time you do this kind of sampling (say 99 times out of 100), then choose the 99% columns on the right one-half of the table. If 4 out of 5 times is sufficient, choose the 80% columns on the left.

In our example, if being within the margin of error 80% of the time you do such a survey is satisfactory, you will see the number 141 where the 1,000 population size row intersects the 5% margin of error column in the left block of the table.

You can use this number, 141, as the number of samples to take, but it is a little bit of ‘overkill’ since 1000 is more than our population size of 750. To make the sample size more reasonable, you can do a little estimation here by noticing that 750 is half-way between the Table 3 rows for 500 and 1000 population size. So whatever is half-way between 124 (for the 500 row) and the 141 (for the 1000 row) would be a better sampling number. That is 132 or 133.

Table 3: Required Sample Sizes¹³

Pop. size	To be within the following percentage margins of error 80% of the time you do a survey.				To be within the following percentage margins of error 99% of the time you do a survey:			
	20%	10%	5%	2%	20%	10%	5%	2%
10	6	9	10	10	9	10	10	10
50	9	23	39	48	23	39	47	50
100	10	30	63	92	30	63	88	98
500	11	38	124	337	39	126	286	447
1,000	11	40	141	507	40	143	400	807
5,000	11	41	159	851	42	162	588	2,272
10,000	11	41	162	929	41	163	622	2,931
50,000	11	41	164	1,004	42	166	657	3,841
100,000	11	41	164	1,014	42	167	662	3,995
500,000	11	41	164	1,022	42	167	665	4,126
1,000,000	11	41	164	1,026	42	167	666	4,144
332,000,000	11	41	164	1,024	42	167	666	4,161

13 Using the Required Sample Size app at the web site: surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/

In this example, lets just use 141 samples to get our tabulations. Let’s say the statistical survey we make provides three choices, and yields the following tabulation:

Table 4: Example collection of samples

	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3
Number for each choice	39	99	3
Percentage of total	28%	70%	2%

The real values for the total population are likely in the ranges (with 80% likelihood, or ‘confidence’ of being so):

Table 5: Probable range of example tally percentages

	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3
Percentage range	23% to 33%	65% to 75%	0% to 7%

In general, when the NUs do statistical sampling, they should extrapolate on Table 3 as I suggest above, or better yet, just use the app at the web site: surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator.

Some Sample Sizes — U.S. Election Districts

To indicate the sort of sample sizes we will run into while polling and collaborating within the election districts we have in the U.S., I put together Table 6 below.

In the ‘Type of Election District’ column, I indicate the type of election district. Each row of the this column indicates a district type.

In the ‘The Total Population of District’ column I’ve put the largest and smallest instances I could find for each of the types of districts. In the State Governor’s row, for example, the 39M (39 million) is the population of the largest state (California), and the 590K (590 thousand) is for the state with the least population (Wyoming).

The next (3rd) column merely indicates a likely number of NUs in that district when tNN is fully developed.

The next column gives the required polling sample sizes for NUs for a 20% error tolerance at 80% level of confidence. These suggest the minimum number of collaboration partners NUs need.

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The next NU column is for a stringent 2% margin of error tolerance at a high 99% confidence level. This column gives an idea of the number of NUs that need to be polled to very reliably check that a collaboration was successful.

Similarly, the last two columns give the required sample sizes for polling the general populations. The 2% margin column suggests the population sample size that a politician receiving a Policy Mandate might want to poll to check the submission.

In all sample size entries I used the web site: [surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/) so that you and I could build and check Table 3 and this table.

Table 6: Reasonable Sample Sizes vs. Some Political Districts

Type of Election District	Total Population of District	Aprox. number of NUs in the District	Number NU Samples - 80% conf. 20% marg.	Number NUs Samples 99% conf 2% marg.	Number population Samples - 80% conf. 20% marg.	Number population Samples - 99% conf. 2% marg.
City Council LA Member PUL	250K	900	11	741	11	4093
	2.5K	8	5	8	11	1562
Mayor NYC PUL	8.5M	28K	11	3623	11	4159
	10K	33	8	33	11	2939
County Commissioner						
State Rep.	CA 490K	1600	11	1156	11	4126
	IL 110K	370	10	340	11	4009
	ID 46K	150	10	145		3816
State Senator	CA 1M	3300	11	1841	11	4144
	IL 218K	730	11	622	11	4083
	ID 46K	150	10	145	11	3816
State Governor	CA 39M	130K	11	4032	11	4160
	WY 590K	2K	11	1351		1200
U.S. House Rep.	700K	2.3K	11	1482	11	4136
U.S. Senator	CA 39M	130K	11	4032		4160
	WY 590K	2K	11	1351		4132
U.S. President	320M	1.1M	11	4145	11	4161

[Author's note: in this 2023 printing of this book, I've not updated the population numbers from 2017. The changes would not have affected the book concepts nor significantly changed the sample numbers.]

We'll make use of the sampling process in the sections and chapters ahead.

Getting Random Numbers

The following are methods for randomly picking numbers or indices — given that you know the size of the population (usually of NUs) from which the samples will be taken.

Via a Manual Process

This is tedious, and not recommended, but it can be done.

Mark up ten ping-pong balls. Use an indelible marker to put ‘0’ on one ball, ‘1’ on the next, and so on until you put ‘9’ on the tenth. Put all ten of them in a bucket or pan which is large enough to put your hand into and with a high enough wall so you can swish them around without knocking any out of the container.

It’s easiest to illustrate how to come up with a random number by using an example. Let’s say the size of the set (the population size) from which you need to choose samples is 576.

1. Put your hand into the bucket or pan. Look somewhere else and swish the balls around. Mix ‘em up good. Grab one and pull it out. If it’s 5 or less, write the number (digit) down on paper. It can be zero. If it’s 6 or more, throw it back in and try again.
2. If the first digit was 5, the next digit you use (picking by swishing and grabbing) must be 7 or less. If the first digit was 4 or less this next digit can be anything.
3. Finally, the last digit is picked by the same logic. If the first two digits are 57 then the third must be 6 or less, else can be any digit 0 through 9. But if the first two digits are 0, then the third and last digit must be at least 1.

If the balls are all the same (size, weight) then this process is very good. The number you get is truly random. But, the process is very time consuming. If you need some 4200 samples (needed for a population size of 1,000,000 in a high accuracy poll) — you will spend a huge amount of time! Clearly, we need a better, computer aided process to get random numbers.

Via a Web Connection

The web site: *random.org* is a web site where you can easily obtain a single random integer within a specified range. There, you can also get a set of random numbers by specifying how many of them you want within a specified range.

Via a PC

There may be a commercially available device that attaches to a PC and generates files of random numbers.

Even better than getting random numbers, however, would be to directly get random sets of NUs (i.e. their URLs or hyperlinks to their web sites). A way to do that is described in the Registries chapter 6 (p59 to p62).

Using Random Numbers to Select NUs

Once you find out how many NUs you need to sample to collaborate or conduct an acceptance test of some policy formulation, you need to actually pick the neighborhoods at random. How do you do that?

Each Registry from which you will pick neighborhoods will have the NUs enumerated (numbered in some order, indexed) and will indicate how many NUs are in the registry. When you have only one election district (or your set of districts corresponds to a larger district),¹⁴ you can use the process described in the **Determining Sample Sizes** section above (p35) or the *surveymonkey.com* web site to find your needed sample size — the number of NUs you should contact.

When you know the number of NUs in your population (from Table 6 or searching on the internet),¹⁵ and the number of sample NUs you need, you proceed to obtain a set, of that sample size, of randomly derived indices or numbers.

After you get that list of random numbers or indices, each of which will be less than or equal to the number of NUs in the Registry, you will use the ‘FIND A NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT’ browser form,¹⁶ at the Registry web site, to find the neighborhood reference corresponding to each of your random integers.

This is the connection between the random numbers you will obtain, and the literal references to the actual NUs you will contact.

Application to tNN — The Core Idea

As said at the beginning of the chapter, we know that many hundreds or tens of thousands of neighborhoods cannot talk directly and continually to one another — much less successfully collaborate to produce policy acceptable to the general public.

However, here is how we, the public, can produce governance policy.

Raise an issue, study it, find a solution

Any one of us could raise an issue within our NU. That single NU or a small cluster of NUs (called an Initial Group), could thoroughly study the issue, carefully formulate a solution, then document its findings into a dossier.

14 For example, if your set of districts is all the State Representative districts in a State, then the Governor’s district contains the same population of NUs and people as does that set of districts.

15 When you have a number of election districts in your survey (for instance the State Congressional Representatives surrounding but not including a big city), it’s a bit more complicated. In the next chapters, NETWORKING and REGISTRIES, we’ll deal with that.

16 See the REGISTRIES chapter, p60.

Get a crude estimate of the public's opinion of it

Let's say that issue pertains to the entire nation and the solution would require federal legislative action. Our NU would need to make a small, random poll or sampling of NUs in the entire nation.

Were the nation entirely covered with NUs there might be some 1,000,000 of them — as indicated in Table 6 above for the U.S. President's election district entry. (That district, of course, covers the entire nation.) Presuming that a plus or minus 20% error margin in our poll is acceptable, and that we expect that accuracy 80% of the time we did this kind of poll — Table 6 tells us that we could poll 11 NUs to determine if our issue-solution resonates with the population.

We would send copies of the dossier to at least 11 randomly selected NUs in the nation¹⁷ — asking for their opinions on the issue. Together with the dossier, we include a request to vote on its contents: YES if the recipient NU approves it as is; NO if it outright rejects it; and suggestions for possible improvement if it considers it salvageable.

If it is rejected, drop it or redo it

If the issue itself is of no interest to a sizable percentage (say 70% or more) of the sampled NUs, you are likely not dealing with material in the current common ground. Drop it — after putting the dossier and all related material into the tNN database for reference. If you strongly believe people are just misinformed, you can try to educate the populace by producing a convincing argument for the issue, then communicating that argument far and wide using **Information Dispatches** (described in the NETWORKING chapter). But you don't have, at least yet, an item of the public will.

If it needs work, fix it

If the vast majority of responses (say 70% or so) are YES — or request sensible modifications — and the request responses desiring modification (1) are sufficient in number to likely gain a substantial consensus and (2) can be accommodated without abandoning the core issue and its solution — then ask a manageable set¹⁸ of those favorably responding NUs to collaborate.

That collaboration then works to correct defects in the issue-solution, to provide needed reference data, and ultimately to hammer it into a viable Policy Directive (see chapter 5) that can be sent to legislators and officials.

17 In practice, a larger number than 11 should initially be polled for collaboration, say 30 or 40. But only a smaller number should be selected to conduct actual collaboration.

18 If a 'manageable set' for collaboration for your NU to handle is quite small (maybe six or so in number), go use that lesser number than the statistical tables indicate, but understand that your collaboration results will be somewhat less likely to be acceptable to the general population.

If (and when) it's good, do a stringent test

If you get this far, and if your sampling was truly random, you've likely got a winner. But before you trouble the entire United States of America with your proposal, you'd better do a highly reliable statistical sampling.

For this, again determine the number of needed NU samples — but at the 99% confidence level, 2% error margin — for the relevant election district. For a nationwide issue, the NU polling sample size is about 4,145.

To the 4,145 NUs you randomly select from the national (the U.S. President's) District, send the dossier with a request to reply either: "we vote YES for this," or "we vote NO against this." Don't request suggestions for modification.

If the YES responses number more than 70% or so of the sample size, you have consensus. It's implementation time!

To Implement

Presuming the example issue-solution has passed the hurdles above, it is a mandate, a POLICY DIRECTIVE, for legislative action. U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives will have to receive notices of what has transpired.

Each legislator must check with his or her constituency (the voters in his or her election district) whether the mandate is acceptable to them. (Hopefully he or she has a process by which he or she mails or polls their constituency regarding suggested legislation.)

If the voters in his or her district approve, the legislator must:

Formulate the policy (together with other legislators having received and verified popular acceptance of the same policy mandate) into a bill or bills to be processed in Congress. Each such legislator must then pursue that legislation until it becomes law.

Also, those NUs which have volunteered to monitor elected legislators and officials must be requested to add the mandate to their portfolio of issues to be tracked.

Finally, the entire collection of data: the PD dossier, references to those NUs who were part of the process, the various voting data, and so forth — need to be archived in the NIN (see chapter 8).

That's how it is done! And this is the most difficult case since this issue example pertained to the entire nation. It's this hard and this simple.

In the next chapter we'll pin the policy generation process down in greater detail.

Chapter Summary

The suggestion of an issue by a single citizen of the U.S. can grow into a legitimate mandate to the government of the entire nation. The “Core Idea” section above indicates how it can be done.

The process is not quick — it will normally take months, and sometimes it will take years. Producing quality Policy Directives requires sober investigation and tempered judgment. Democracy is not about making quick decisions. It is to establish the best possible public policies. It is to provide effective governance.

Finally, this chapter does not tell the entire story. The above example exposes the core process by which our common ground of public policies can be formed. However, I’ve so far ignored complications due to:

- Simultaneous pursuit of essentially the same issue by other NUs.
- Public misunderstanding of the issue due to misinformation from the mass media or other sources.
- Really deep seated cultural differences among us.

These and other matters will be discussed further in the chapters devoted to networking and consensus formation.

Suffice it here to have shown how statistical thinking makes building the public common ground (and issuing policy mandates to the public servants) a feasible endeavor.

Chapter 5 — NETWORKING

Issues, and their solutions, are the currency of governance. They are problems, imbalances, or injustices of a public nature needing solution, needing constructive action. Issues can be local (town or city), regional (counties or states), or national in scope.

In the pursuit of democratic governance, tNN is a relentless machine. The people control it and use it to rule. tNN provides three processes, three methods, by which the people in the NU network do the work of governing.

First, where the people need to build their common ground on an issue, they study it and broadcast **Information Dispatches** (IDs) to their fellow citizens. Broad acceptance of the content of those IDs can then permit successful creation of a Policy Directive.

Second. Where the people have common ground on an issue, but that issue and its solution has not yet been delivered as a mandate to the pertinent government legislators and officials, they construct and send a **Policy Directive** (PD) to those legislators and executive department officials.

Third. Technical work groups, supervised by the citizenry, improve tNN web software, computers, and communications infrastructure according to needs identified by the citizenry. These improvements are tested, validated, and then issued through-out tNN via **Network Maintenance Instructions** (NMIs).

This chapter details these processes by which the NUs network.

tNN Information Dispatch (ID) Process

This process produces information dossiers. Each ID is prefaced with information about the NUs that produced it and why it was produced. The content of each ID ‘makes the case’ for some publicly relevant issue. As such it fully references the sources of data it uses, and it indicates how the data and conclusions can be checked.

Why are these Needed?

Sometimes an attempt by a cluster of NUs to produce a Policy Directive will fail when it is subject either to **Step2** ‘Testing and Collaboration’ or **Step 3** ‘Full Statistical Test’ described later in this chapter — and will so fail not because the underlying issue and its solution are not valid — but because the more general population does not have sufficient background to properly judge it. This will often occur where the mass media and current set of politicians have been manipulating the public on some issue — for example the need for a Universal Basic Income in the quickly forthcoming age of automation.

Here, an in-depth analysis is required to develop the public common ground that must exist as precursor and background for successful production of any legitimate directive.

A similar use of this kind of dispatch occurs when a NU or cluster of NUs simply discovers a huge discrepancy between what they've studied regarding some topic (regardless of whether or not they intend to produce a PD), and the apparent public view of that topic as revealed by polling or newsworthy incidents.

Yet another use is when work groups monitoring representatives in government discover a failure to implement a PD. These work groups then need to broadcast their findings to the relevant election districts.

As still another use of IDs, consider where a cluster of NU clusters wishes to conduct an opinion poll on some topic. In this case, the ID can take the form of a questionnaire. Here, the ID will indicate where recipients should send (email) their responses and should also indicate web site references where (1) the results will be posted (and when), and (2) where the results will be permanently archived and how they can be retrieved.

How are IDs Broadcast?

For local broadcasts, a NU or cluster of NUs might just email an ID to the totality of NUs in the district (for instance, of a city council member). This presumes a fairly small number of targeted NUs — perhaps no more than a few hundred. There is no problem with such a small broadcast since no more than a few such IDs are likely to be issued per month within a small district.

But when much larger populated areas, with many hundreds or more NUs, are targeted for broadcast — direct, unfiltered broadcasting becomes unacceptable. At the national level, if every one of 1,000,000 NUs has the capability of sending, without any filtering mechanism, anything it wished to all 1,000,000 NUs — any time it wished — we have an unworkable mess!

Therefore, for non-local broadcasts, there must be some way to test each submitted ID for likelihood that most NUs in the target districts would like to receive it. We look to some statistical mechanism to do this.

What we suggest is that IDs targeting more than a few hundred NUs be sent via a relay function (this can be a NU specializing in this process, or a network computer application, see p68 Chapter 7) for screening, and then, if passing that screening, be broadcast by that relay function to the target set of NUs.

For each submitted ID, the screening by the relay function should consist of selecting, at random, a modest set of NUs within the target area — then sending the ID to those chosen NUs for examination. If the majority of the screening set of NUs consider the ID to be worthy of wide distribution, then the relay function broadcasts it to the full targeted set of NUs. NUs asked to judge do not need to agree with the content — they merely

need to check that (1) it is relevant to the targeted broadcast population, (2) it contains no blatant falsification of facts, and (3) it has no libelous attacks on persons.

Comment on the ID Broadcast Process

First, recipients of broadcast IDs targeting large numbers of NUs should know that what they have received has been evaluated by the broadcast screening process. It is not junk, not commercial advertising. IDs coming into a NU should be examined by a standing WG (perhaps the Collaboration Interface WG) and made available for the neighborhood to read on the neighborhood web site. The ID will most often be both relevant to governance and also be the best information the citizenry is likely to receive on the topic addressed.

Second, any given neighborhood should receive only a small number of requests to screen a broadcast request. Where a large number of NUs is targeted, the screening will be requested of only a tiny portion of the targeted population. Where the entire nation is addressed, on an issue of national importance, a sampling set of dozens of NUs is but a tiny subset of the nations NUs. Where the target broadcast area is merely hundreds or a few thousands, the number of submissions for broadcast should only be a few per month — implying only a few evaluations per month need be requested in that geographical area.

The NUs of the tNN will have to learn, with time and experience, just how discriminating the NUs doing broadcast screening need to be. I'd speculate that initially the proportion of rejections will be low — but with experience, screening NUs will become more and more discriminating. It may become common for NUs asked to screen to attach comments as to why they reject a submission. In many cases rejection will occur because the information is already available elsewhere and will be accompanied by reference to that other source or sources. When rejected, the source of the ID needs to reconsider it.

With this ID mechanism, we have a way for the multitude of NUs to do the detective work to investigate the full panoply of public issues, document the facts, then publish their findings. With time, their work, distributed through IDs, and archived into the NIN-LIBs, will form the factual basis for public decision making on the important matters of governance.

tNN Policy Directive Process

This disciplined process forms an issue into a policy directive to be sent to elected representatives and government officials. It consists of four steps:

Step 1 - Formulation and Investigation by the Initial Group

1. A neighborhood, or cluster of neighborhoods, discovers an issue of high importance. That neighborhood or cluster is the **Initial Group** (or IG).

2. The IG gets to work. It charters and establishes a work group to deal with the issue. The registries containing a reference to this set of NUs are informed of this effort and those registries post a notice of that effort.
3. The WG digs into the issue, gets the facts, dispels misinformation concerning the issue, and determines the true content, if any. It places the issue into real perspective — so further handling can be decided by the IG.
4. If the IG, at their general meetings, decides to proceed with it — the WG charter is modified as appropriate and the WG gets down to detailed, comprehensive work. In a thorough way it anecdotally exposes the public and human consequences of the issue, then presents the numeric data/statistics showing the magnitude of the issue, its costs and its likely extended consequences. A possible solution is indicated. A check of the Registries and the NIN is made to determine whether the issue has been or is being investigated by others. A substantive report is produced (a dossier) which could become the basis for whatever collaboration is required to effectively produce a potential Policy Mandate.
5. If the IG believes the issue is still important, is actionable, and remains of sufficient priority to involve tNN — it enters the collaboration phase.

At this point the issue may only be known to only a single neighborhood or a small, associating cluster of neighborhoods. It is possible the overall applicable population has not the slightest interest in it. Therefore, at the next step, it is necessary to ask a reasonable sample of the relevant networked neighborhoods to examine the work in progress — to judge it and perhaps develop it further.

Step 2 - Testing and Collaboration

In this step the IG reaches out to a small, randomly selected and more representative set of NUs in the election district or districts which would be impacted by any solution to the issue. If polling of this set indicates a high interest in the issue and proposed solution, a subset of this set is chosen to collaborate with the IG in forming a potential Policy Directive — one fully ready for stringent statistical testing:

6. The relevant political district or districts are identified, if they have not already been so, and the number of NUs they contain determined. (Each district has at least one Registry listing the NUs in that political district, and each Registry states how many NUs are in its district.)
7. We can find the number of NUs to poll using Table 3 or 6 in chapter 4 or the app at *surveymonkey.com*. In this use of the tables or app, both ‘population size’ and ‘sample sizes’ refer to the number of NUs. The ‘80% confidence, 20% margin’ values are used to determine the number of sample NUs required. This confidence level and margin of error is chosen as a compromise. This chosen error margin (20%) is small enough to generally determine public acceptance of the issue-solution (we should seek acceptance levels of 70 to 100%). The

confidence level (80%) means that four-fifths of the time we do such a survey, the results should be within the error margin. And yet the number of NUs we need to contact for this polling (and then collaboration) is very reasonable. Note the sample sizes in Table 6 on page 38 (the sister table for Table 3) for all rows in this column are 11 or less. IGs can easily deal with this kind of compromise between obtaining a representative set of NUs with which to poll for likely acceptance and then to collaborate, yet not having to deal with a huge number of NUs.

8. The required number of neighborhoods in the election districts are randomly chosen from the appropriate Registry. The neighborhoods in that set are presented with the issue and solution — along with a request to examine it and respond with either: an AGREE, DISAGREE, or NEEDS MODIFICATION. If the latter is marked, a statement describing the modification is expected.
9. If a good majority of the contacted neighborhoods reply positively (either agree or suggest reasonable modification) — collaboration begins with a manageable number of these neighborhoods.¹⁹ A ‘manageable number’ of NUs has to be determined by the IG. Each IG has to anticipate, based on its experience, just what number of NUs it can effectively work with. Each of the invited and willing neighborhoods allocates a work group to work with the WGs belonging to the IG and the other work groups in the collaboration set.
10. Intensive collaboration proceeds. With time, either a consensus regarding the issue and a solution is achieved and documented, or the set of neighborhoods fails to do that.
11. If the collaborating group of neighborhoods fails to produce a detailed package of issue and solution acceptable to itself and suitable for delivery to the wider network — the effort is dropped. The work produced enters the tNN database (the NIN) and is cataloged for future reference.

Otherwise, the issue-solution is ready for a stringent statistical test. It is not yet a mandate to be delivered to the elected representatives, but it is very promising.

Step 3 - Full Statistical Test

12. Again, the information contained in **Determining Sample Sizes** in chapter 4, is used. This time the 99% confidence and 2% error margin values are chosen, and the sample size for the relevant election district is obtained. This sample size is much larger than the one used in Step 2.
13. The Registry or Registries are accessed again and a sample size number of NUs is randomly selected for the survey. The issue-solution dossier is sent to these NUs for a simple yes or no response.

¹⁹ The small proportion of NUs responding negatively will likely never agree to the issue-solution. It is best to by-pass them. Consensus does not mean satisfying every small part of the population. Attempts to do so will likely destroy collaboration.

If there is an overwhelming yes response (let's say 75% or more of the contacted NUs), then we have the consensus we need. It is time to implement the PD.

Step 4 - Implementation (Mandate Delivery Action)

With consensus approval in the full set of relevant neighborhoods, the issue package has become a mandate to the relevant elected representatives and officials. Among the vast majority of the NUs in the election districts to which the issue pertains, there is agreement on it, and it is therefore now part of the public common ground.

14. The IG sends a Mandate Delivery Action (MDA for short) package (which contains the PD and all related process data) to a Relay in each relevant electoral district.
15. Each contacted Relay randomly selects a set of NUs to validate the package. Each validation NU checks every aspect it deems of importance in the MDA package — then reports its results back to the Relay.
16. If the results determined by the validation group indicate the MDA is legitimate, the Relay delivers the MDA package to the government representative. (See the flow chart two pages down.)
17. Each elected representative conducts a poll to verify that the voters in his or her district agree on the content of the mandate.²⁰ Representatives can efficiently do this by composing, each month, a questionnaire containing abstracts of and references to, all MDAs he or she receives, then sending it to a high confidence (again chapter 4) sample of constituents in the district.
18. Each relevant Relay receives the polling results of the questionnaire from the representative. If a census level majority of those polled indicate approval, the relay posts a reference to the MDA in the **Outstanding Mandates** category of the appropriate Registry's **Posting Board**. The representative proceeds to implement the PD, and the Relay stores all MDA related data into the NIN database.
19. Work groups, established expressly to monitor mandate implementation by elected officials, are given notification of the mandate. Its implementation is added to the set of mandates tracked.

The diagram on the next page summarizes the groups of people, the IG, the CG, and the relevant general population involved.

The page following summarizes the **Mandate Delivery Action** described above.

20 This proves to the legislator or official that the Policy Directive is genuine and that he or she must pursue it. Note that even with a very high consensus obtained in Step 3, there can be districts which vigorously disagree with the policy mandate. The representatives of such districts will, of course, disregard or vote against the PD.

Sets of NUs Participating in Policy Directive Construction

Initial Group (IG)

A Policy Directive always originates with an IG — a single NU or a few NUs.

It begins when a neighbor puts forth an issue for consideration which strongly resonates with the NU and IG.

A work group is chartered and produces a dossier containing the detailed substance of the issue and its apparent solution(s).

If, after thorough investigation, the dossier is still enthusiastically endorsed by the initial group of NUs — it is ready for testing by a small but representative sample of the population that would be impacted by the solution.

Collaboration Group (CG)

This is where the issue and proposed solution (content of the dossier produced by the IG) is tested against a small but randomly selected sample of NUs in the relevant election districts.

If the sample set is enthusiastic about the issue-solution, the IG selects some of this set of NUs to form a collaboration group.

The CG hammers-out a fully formed ‘tentative Policy Directive.’

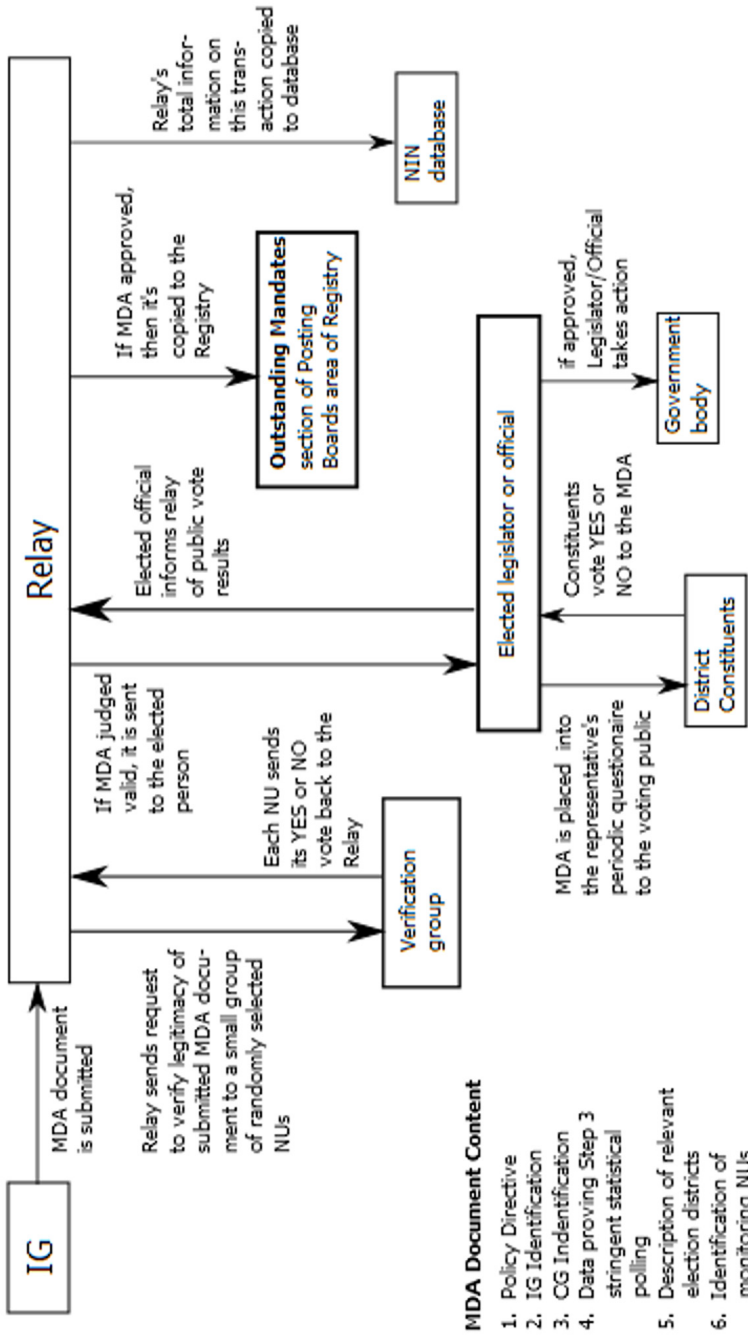
Relevant Population

This is the set of NUs (and the full set of people) in the election districts which would be impacted by the proposed solution.

If the CG succeeds in forming an agreeable tentative Policy Directive, a polling of a ‘statistically significant’ subset of NUs in the population is conducted.

If the results (at the 99% confidence level) are overwhelming positive (say 75% or more agree with the tentative Policy Directive), it becomes part of the public’s common ground. The tentative PD becomes an official PD — a Mandate Delivery Action to the pertinent government legislator(s) and official(s) is pursued.

Summary: MANDATE DELIVERY ACTION



Comments on the PD Process

If the issue leading to a Policy Directive is local — for instance concerns only an elementary school district or some local infrastructure issue, then steps 3 and 4 may be abbreviated. The number of neighborhoods involved will be small, and the issue likely concerns only City Council members or other local officials. A simplified step 2 process of directly consulting with the relevant neighborhoods and officials might be sufficient. Fact finding and tentative solutions can easily be communicated between all parties to establish consensus. From such informal collaboration, agreement on the substance of the issue, any solution, and delivery of a mandate should be possible and efficient.

Given the detailed process above of how ‘genuine democracy’ really works, it is quite evident that democracy is not “mob rule” nor a “tyranny of the majority” as detractors proclaim. The process is deliberate, requires careful investigation, and normally takes months to progress to action. Effective progress requires that neighborhoods representative of the population cooperate closely with one another. Action via the mechanism described in this chapter can only occur when there is informed consensus among the general population. This is not your cowboy movie stereotype where some troublemaker accuses an innocent man of horse stealing and an angry, provoked crowd then hangs him.

tNN Network Maintenance Instructions Process

The Work Groups developing the web sites, other programming code for tNN, and perhaps even specialized communications hardware, will collaborate with one another — just as will any other type of WG. And the desires and needs of the NUs for such development will be expressed within their NUs, as with other WGs, and their development work will be monitored by the NUs.

Furthermore, when software and data are to be simultaneously installed in multitudes of NU web sites (i.e. a mature tNN), there must be some kind of process for so doing that permits the collectivity of NUs to know what’s going on and have supervisory control over the results.

To enable reasonable supervision and approval of computer and software work that will impact tNN operation — Network Maintenance Instructions (NMIs) should be used to indicate:

1. What software is being proposed to be developed.
2. For what purpose.
3. How it will be evaluated and proven.

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4. How consistent it is with existing tNN operation.
5. How operation will change.
6. How it will be installed and maintained.

NMIs should be issued by the work groups working in this area, and should be sent to collaborating WGs and to the web WGs of NUs likely to be affected by the work.

Development of tNN communications and computer software and hardware will have to be planned and coordinated by experts in WGs distributed across the NUs. As tNN grows, the NUs will demand improvements in access to data and in the set of collaboration tools. What is important is that:

- The NUs of the overall tNN truly understand the implications of the changes and enhancements to programs and procedures used by tNN.
- The various pieces of code and electronic/optical circuitry operate per openly published intent.
- All code, circuitry, etc. be openly published and available for public examination.

This implies all code used should be ‘Open Source’ and in the public domain. Wikipedia defines ‘open source’ as the following:

‘Open-source software is computer software that is released under a license in which the copyright holder grants users the rights to use, study, change, and distribute the software and its source code to anyone and for any purpose. Open source software may be developed in a collaborative, public manner.’

The web site: *opensource.org* describes the concept and indicates the process.

Also, NMIs should be issued for other tNN internal maintenance. For instance, if a Registry or Relay contains a serious and persistent fault or shortcoming — an NMI can be issued to the affected part of tNN to caution the NUs who might be using it.

Work Group Example — Social Security

Social Security (SS) is a good example of an issue that some cluster of NUs might study and attempt to turn into an issue-solution pair for national consideration. A **Step 1** dossier pertaining to SS might look like what we’ve put into Appendix-A of this book. (It’s way too big to put into this Chapter.)

Chapter 6 — REGISTRIES

NUs need something like a set of ‘telephone books’ for all the election districts in the nation. Each such telephone book, or Registry, lists the NUs in the district and indicates how to contact them. Furthermore, each Registry needs to be like a reference desk — describing the level and function of governance it corresponds to, and summarizing current tNN activity in the district.

Registry Requirements

The Main Purpose

The content and organization of the Registries must enable various kinds of contact between NUs. These types of contact are to:

1. Broadcast Information Dispatches (IDs) to the NUs in a specified election district.
2. Submit action dossiers (potential policy directives) to NUs within an election district for approval, revision, or rejection.
3. Collaborate with randomly selected NUs within an election district.
4. Enable access to a NU’s knowledge base (part of the Neighborhood Information Network or NIN) which contains its work group’s investigation results.

Registries must also facilitate:

1. Discovery of what issues are currently under investigation in the election district.
2. Exposing unnecessary redundancy of efforts among the NUs.
3. Finding what areas of the nation are not yet part of tNN.
4. Validating tNN neighborhoods. (Phantom NUs could be an attack on tNN.)

A Registry Per Election District

There must be a Registry for every election district in the nation — that is for:

1. each City Council member,
2. each Mayor or City Manager,
3. each County commissioner,
4. each State Representative,
5. each State Senator,

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6. each State Governor,
7. each U.S. House Representative,
8. each U.S. Senator, and
9. the President and VP of the U.S.

These Registries, these lists of neighborhoods, with each list corresponding to an elected person, permit policy directives or mandates (the solutions to issues) to be formulated for, and delivered to, the appropriate elected officials.

Among the consequences of this requirement to associate Registries with election districts are:

1. Each NU addressing an issue relating to an election district can refer to the Registry for that election district. Here it will find the full set of NUs from which it will ultimately have to obtain agreement on any solution to the issue.
2. Each neighborhood, each NU, will be referenced in nearly a dozen Registries.
3. Most Registries, those for City Council members, small town Mayors, State Representatives, and County Commissioners, will be manageable in size — in the number of NUs it must keep track of.
4. Registries for federal Representatives, Senators, and U.S. President will be extremely large. These will have to make use of Registry lists in Registries of lesser sizes.

NU Items in the Registry

The requirements described above imply the data for each NU listed in a Registry should include:

1. A self-proclaimed name for the neighborhood. This name is how the neighborhood wishes to be titled in emails, mail and other contact.
2. The physical location of the neighborhood (city, state, bounding streets and other features), and the GPS (Global Positioning System) coordinates of the approximate center (or prominent point) of the neighborhood.
3. A hyperlink (using the URL) to the NU's web-site.
4. Email address of a contact person, a representative of the NU.
5. Email address or addresses for tNN notices, collaboration, voting on tentative mandates, and the like.
6. The enumeration index of this NU in the Registry.

The name of the neighborhood can be whatever the NU chooses. It can be useful in addressing notices and as a double-check when verifying the identity of the neighborhood.

A NU physical location needs to be specified both in ‘human readable’ terms such as streets and natural structures, and in ‘machine readable’ terms — meaning GPS coordinates. These provide a way for the NU to be located on old-style paper maps, and also via coordinates useful for computer searches. The human readable terms permit people in work groups to chart neighborhoods and determine their extents — to help identify areas not yet included into tNN. The GPS coordinates can be used by computerized mapping applications to (1) detect neighborhoods potentially missing from the network, and also to (2) detect possibly malicious generation of phantom NUs — which could be revealed by the coordinates of two NUs being too close together. (But again note that several NUs located in a residential skyscraper will have the same GPS coordinates!)

A link to a neighborhood web site is like a front door to a small proprietorship. Through the link, all the various functional parts of the NU should be accessible.

The email addresses to contact persons should enable human-to-human contact between NUs for any purpose requiring such direct contact. The email addresses for tNN notices (i.e. for PDs, IDs, NMIs and collaboration), should make for efficient delivery of messages and attachments to WGs and persons.

Posting Boards

Another function is needed for the Registries — an ‘information desk’ service or public ‘posting board.’ Each Registry should have one of these. This capability can show the current activity pursued by NUs in the district — in order for the people in the neighborhoods to better plan and coordinate their own work. This service might be organized in categories such as:

- **Outstanding Mandates.** Listed chronologically, these are well formed items of the public will (or PDs) which have been issued to the elected person but are not yet implemented into statutory law or executive decree.
- **Issues under Consideration** by the NUs in this district.
- **Help Requests.** Descriptions of expertise or labor needed for current WG projects by NUs or IGs in the district.
- **Past Work.** Abstracts of important past work by NUs in this Registry.
- **Representative’s Reports.** Information for the neighborhoods provided by the elected legislator or official. It can be responses to criticism, progress reports, complaints about mandate contents, whatever. It likely contains references to other documents (ideally, hyperlinked for easy access).

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- **District News.** Other, news-like information that doesn't fit into the above categories.

References to Relays and to NIN-LIBs

Very useful to NUs will be references (in the form of Internet links) to Relay NUs and other web sites that might be of service in facilitating collaboration and statistical polling – and references to NIN-LIBs (see chapter 8) containing information relevant to this district.

Information Regarding The Registry Itself

Finally, each Registry must contain a fair amount of information about itself and the election area to which it corresponds:

1. Its name. (Chosen by the operator NU for the Registry.)
2. Its URL (universal resource locator). i.e. how to access it on the web.
3. Title of the election district. i.e. the title of the elected person's office.
4. Approximate geographical area of the district. (i.e. a map).
5. GPS coordinates (approximate geographical center of the political district).
6. Duties, powers, and privileges of the elected person.
7. Web-site URL and email address of the elected person.
8. Office USPO address of the elected person.
9. List of backup (redundant or sibling) Registry instances of this Registry.
10. The number of NUs currently listed in this Registry.

Registry Duplication

Registries, of course, have to exist somewhere. As with pretty much everything about tNN, such functions have to be located in NUs. Some NUs volunteer to do this function, and this means there will usually be redundant NUs (call them siblings) – NUs covering the same election district.

This is good and necessary. NUs sharing the same district behave as if they were unique, but check their data against their 'siblings' as we might call them, to correct for omissions and differences. Where there is a difference, a correction should be made.

A NU needing registry access can access any one of the redundant registries to perform a necessary access function.

Accessing a Registry

For the Registries to be useful, it must be possible to easily access their data. The following internet browser ‘forms’ (or something like them) are necessary for NUs to fully and easily use Registries:

Finding the Registry you need:

The first kind of needed access is to find a web site of a Registry corresponding to an election district. You should be able to access the following internet browser form from your NU’s web site:²¹

FIND A REGISTRY

Name of Legislator or Official:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 80%;" type="button" value="Cancel"/>
Description of gov. position:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 80%;" type="button" value="Clear"/>
Other info:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 80%;" type="button" value="Submit"/>

You can type in what you know about the elected position and then click on the submit button. In the ‘Description of gov. position’ field it should be sufficient to type in: U.S. Senator, mayor, county commissioner. In Other info: you can put what city, state, etc.

Your web site then searches its data base to find Registries satisfying the criteria you provided. If you don’t provide enough information, it will respond: “Please enter more information.” If your information is invalid or contradictory, it will return: “Invalid or contradictory information.”

If the information you provide is sufficient, it finds any Registries that match, and will return the web site references (URLs) for you to access:

Registry Identification is: <registry URL here>
 Registry Identification is: <registry URL here>
 Registry Identification is: <registry URL here>

²¹ The list of correct, functional Registries (and Relays) should be kept up to date by your ‘web master’ or ‘tNN integrity’ work group.

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I've shown several web sites as satisfying the request. This is because, as previously mentioned, redundant Registries are permitted. Multiple Registries for each representative and executive office are encouraged so there will always be at least one operational, and so that independent NUs will be independently gathering and updating information on the neighborhoods for which the Registry pertains. You can choose whichever you care to — they should have identical or nearly identical information.

Finding a NU at Random or by Name in a Registry

The second kind of access required is to randomly select a NU listed in a Registry. For this you first need to go to the Registry and find how many NUs are in it (which you can find in the Registry's description of itself).

Second, go to the web site: RANDOM.ORG. A form will be presented in which you indicate the range of integers from which the random integer should be chosen. (This range is 1 to the number of NUs in the district.) Also, at that site you can choose how many such random integers you need.

Once you have a random number, and you have your web browser set to the web site of the Registry, you use the following form. Just fill-in the 'NU Index' text box with the random number you obtained. Leave the others blank.

FIND A NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT

NU Index: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>		OR	<input style="width: 90%;" type="button" value="Cancel"/>
NU name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>			<input style="width: 90%;" type="button" value="Clear"/>
NU GPS: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>			<input style="width: 90%;" type="button" value="Submit"/>

Hit the 'submit' button. Since your random number is less than or equal to the size of the Registry list of NUs, the corresponding NU will be found. The particulars of that neighborhood will be presented (for example):

Name: tNN_PortageParkSouth60641
Location: Montrose, Central, Irving Blvd, Dakin St. in Chicago, Illinois
GPS: 41.95192636, -87.7764272
Web-Site: tNN_PortageParkSouth60641.org
NU Index in this database: <the random number you obtained>
Contact: donna.rossi@chicagoILportageparksouth.org
Collaboration: collab@chicagoILportageparksouth.org

This 'FIND A NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT' request using a web browser can be called over and over again — for each sample neighborhood you need for your collaboration or statistical survey.

Note: You can use the form shown above to find a NU using its name or GPS coordinates — instead of its index. The database search program will use whichever you provide. However, for most collaboration purposes, the index entry will typically be used.

Finding a Random set of NUs in a Registry

Another way to find a set of NUs within a Registry's district is to use:

FIND A RANDOM SET of NUs

Number of NUs:

Here you just tell the Registry how many randomly selected NUs you want from it. The set of NUs (chosen at random) will come from this Registry, and will be provided as a list of their web site URLs.

Finding Random NUs in a Collection of Registries

There can be instances where a NU would be interested in a special set of electoral districts — for example: the set of counties bordering a large city.

Here, finding the number of samples needed, and obtaining a random set of NUs, is not so simple as using Table 3 in Chapter 4, or a web app, and then using one of the forms above. Here the process is a bit more complicated.

Mathematically (and statistically), here is what can be done:

1. Determine the number of NUs in each of the appropriate election districts and corresponding Registries. This provides a list of numbers: N_1 is the number of NUs in the Registry for the first district, N_2 the number of NUs in the Registry for the second district, and so on.
2. The total 'population size' (number of NUs) for all of the pertinent Registries is equal to $N_1 + N_2 +$ and so on until the last N_{last} . Call that total: N_{total} .
3. The random sample numbers, for the total population of NUs of interest, are then gathered, as discussed in the **Getting Random Numbers** section in chapter 4, each being in the range 1 to N_{total} .

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Each randomly determined sample number: S_i can be converted to an index into one of the Registries in the following way:

if $S_i \leq N_1$ (this means S_i is 'less than or equal to N_1 ')
then the sample NU is in the first Registry and its index is: S_i

else if $S_i \leq N_1 + N_2$ then the sample is in the second Registry
and is the NU with the index: $S_i - N_1$,

else if $S_i \leq N_1 + N_2 + N_3$ then the sample is in the third Registry
and is the NU with the index: $S_i - N_1 - N_2$,

... and so on ...

This continues until the sample index is found. It will be found because the random number ' S_i ' is less than or equal to: N_{total} .

A NU, wanting to do collaboration work, shouldn't have to mess with what I've just shown above in order to find random NUs with which to do work. The above algorithm needs to be put into a web page form to do the work, and such a web page should be available on every Registry. The form might look like:

FIND A RANDOM SET of NUs FROM A SET OF REGISTRIES

Number of NUs Needed:

List of Registries:
(Use URLs.)

You should just need to type in the number of NUs you need to find samples for, and the list of Registries from which those NUs need to be selected.

The application code interpreting what you've inserted in the form should examine the Registries you've indicated, do the calculating work, pick the indices at random, and list the random set of NUs for you — all according to the algorithm above.

Implementing Large Registries

Implementing and maintaining a small or medium sized Registry should not pose much difficulty for a NU volunteering to be a Registry. If there are only a few hundred NUs in the geographical area a Registry covers — the Registry Work Group maintaining the Registry should be able to cope.

However, when election districts for: State and U.S. Senators, Governors, the U.S. President, and U.S. House of Representatives are listed by Registries — we are talking thousands and tens of thousands of NUs.

But notice, the Registry at the level of the U.S. President might, with proper design, use the Registries for the Governors of the fifty States to provide the access form capabilities I've described in the forms on the previous several pages. And in turn, the Registry for each Governor should be able to use the Registries of the representatives of the State's House of Representatives or — alternatively — the Registries for the states' representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives.

This implies that any access function (that is, a Registry 'form' as shown in this chapter), needed at any level of Registry in this scheme, should also be provided in some way, at the lower levels of the system of Registries, for use in some fashion by the more encompassing Registries. This would allow the 'larger' Registries to 'piggy back' their functionality onto the smaller Registries.

I propose this as the tentative tNN plan of action for building and maintaining the web programming to support the Registries.

Registry Evolution

In the beginning, with only a few neighborhood units in existence, lists of NUs can be constructed, maintained, and shared on simple text files by the NUs themselves. These files would consist of informal lists of URLs and telephone numbers. NUs of an embryonic tNN can simply transfer these files to one another, as the need arises.

Very soon in the evolution of tNN, however, web-based computer programs must be coded, maintained and expanded in function (as described in this chapter) to support the network's needs. Some NUs, with very expert web savvy people, will need to volunteer to take on the task of using PHP, MySQL, and other web programming means to develop the data base programming required. Applications so developed must then be adopted by small subsets of tNN NUs to verify they work properly.

Such applications — established, used, and verified on test sets of NUs can then be delivered and installed on other Registry NUs to achieve or update their registry capability.

Using Posting Boards

Posting to and retrieving posts from the posting area of a Registry are inherently database submission and access functions.

Viewing what has been posted can and should be done openly. Anyone who wishes to view a post should be able to. But posting to some data base sections will have to be filtered to ensure the posts come from the entities for which the posting areas are established.

- An ‘Outstanding Mandate’ post should be posted by a Relay NU after receiving notice of constituency approval from the elected official who received a MDA document from the Relay — as described in Step 4 of the Policy Directive process in chapter 5.
- The ‘Issues under Consideration’ post area should allow a NU to post here only under its name and only referencing the work of its own work groups.
- The ‘New NUs’ area should be posted by the Registrar NU after receiving and checking an email request to do so from the new NU and the NU that spawned it.
- Posts by government officials and legislators to their respective ‘Representative Reports’ must, likewise, be limited to those persons and their staffs.

Therefore, such posts will have to either (1) be sent to, and checked by the Registry staff or, (2) in the case of ‘Issues under Consideration’ or ‘Representative Reports,’ be permitted by submission of special ‘passwords’ obtained from the Registry.

How Do Registries Find the NUs in their District?

Registries need to know of the NUs in their political area. How do they get this information? The following are sources of NUs in the district:

- The list of NUs that encouraged the volunteer NU to become a Registry.
- Each new NU asks to be included in the Registries it learns about.
- When isolated tNN subnets merge, their corresponding Registries merge.
- The staff of the office holder for the corresponding district is checked for its list of NUs in the district — if it maintains one. (This is only possible when the representative is elected by, or sympathetic to, tNN.)
- It receives an NMI informing it of a NU omission.

How Do Registries Become Known?

To let tNN entities know of its existence, Registries can:

- Periodically send a NMI, identifying itself, to each NU in the Registry.
- Inform the district's office holder that it exists, covers the holder's district, and is ready for general use. (NUs can then check with the office holders office to discover the Registry.)
- Inform Relays (those that it currently knows of) of its existence.

Merging Registries

If I anticipate growth of tNN correctly, tNN will spring up unpredictably in many parts of the country. Clusters of cooperating NUs will grow in number and spawn new NUs as the opportunity arises — usually in nearby areas, but not always. Ordinary contact with people while on vacations and business trips, by tNN members, can inspire a new NU. This may lead to a new cluster that will become part of the member's tNN subset — even if it is located far away.

But this suggests a question — how will independent tNN clusters merge when, by chance, they learn of one another?

First, they will have to become familiar with one another: How many NUs are in their network? What issues have they tackled? How long have they been in existence? How did they start? What web tools and apps did they develop? What web expertise do they have?

Second, are they willing to expand their network by merging with other similar tNN networks that have political inclinations perhaps different than their own? This is important. It is very 'comfortable' to work with politically and philosophically like-minded others — and that can aid in getting action on local issues where the citizenry are of the same background — but it leads to frustration when the effectiveness of tNN depends upon collaborating with truly random subsets of NUs. The old adage: 'There is no gain without pain' holds true. In merging situations, the better choice, usually, is to ignore ideology and merge — if that is not too difficult to do in terms of merging Registry contents and updating or adding Relays.

If the networks are amenable to merge, Registries and Relays will have to be expanded. This implies data bases will have to be expanded — which will most likely require programming changes and the building of utility programs to transfer accumulated data of different formats. The web work groups will have to collaborate and experiment. The plus side of this is that the better computer programs from both sides can be adopted by the merged network. The minus is that this entails extra work: modification of web page forms, and dealing with new data base arrangements and data.

Registry Inspection

A small network doesn't require much self examination. The NUs know each other, Relays are unnecessary, and Registries are few in number and list small numbers of NUs. Using them regularly finds any problems.

As tNN matures and the number of NUs climbs into the thousands, we need to check the quality of Registry entries (and Relay functioning as well). Redundancy of Registries provides protection against possible hostile interference with tNN operation. The 'tNN integrity' work groups of the NUs should periodically verify that the Registries they use are bona-fide and fully usable.

Tests that each of these 'integrity' work groups can perform, either manually or using computer applications for the purpose, on a Registry are:

- Do the various access forms function properly. Are the data responses to queries accurate?
- Is the entry for the investigating NU in the Registry fully correct?
- Do all of the NUs listed in the Registry have addresses and GPS coordinates listed as being inside the election district covered by the Registry?
- Do the physical locations indicated by NUs agree with their published GPS coordinates?
- Are any neighborhoods listed multiple times under different names? (Nearly identical GPS coordinates are a give away.) Different names could indicate a phantom neighborhood, but keep in mind multiple NUs in a tall building or a cluster of multistory buildings are possible.
- Do the NU officers live in their neighborhoods, and do members of the neighborhood know of the NU and its meetings — even if they don't attend its GMs?
- Is the list of sibling Registries in the Registry accurate? (Are some Registries missing or are others listed that are defunct?)
- Do sibling Registries contain identical information? (Note however, indices are probably different.)

If every NU spent some effort to see that it is listed (and listed correctly) in all the Registries that should list it — that, in itself, would go far in validating the system of tNN Registries.

When the work group finds and reports faults to a Registry, are they quickly and accurately corrected? If a pattern of faults persists, or if a Registry is evidently and maliciously malfunctioning, notification to the NUs in the district should be made via a NMI.

It is now high time to discuss Relays.

Chapter 7 — RELAYS

Relays are specialized message broadcasters and document delivery agents. They use the internet to send messages to specified parts of tNN. Initially, some NUs volunteer to perform that function, and we call those NUs Relays. As tNN computer programming becomes more sophisticated, the relay functions performed by work groups in the Relay NUs might be performed by web site programs designed for relay NU use. Relays are useful not only because they make it easy for NUs to transmit tNN messages, but because they provide useful discipline and traceability to these transmissions.

Relay Requirements

Relays are used by NUs when:

1. An **Information Dispatch** or urgent message needs to be broadcast to some part of the tNN. (Such a broadcast has to be filtered as described later in this chapter.)
2. An IG (small cluster of NUs) needs to see if a issue-solution pair it has intensely investigated is agreeable to a **modestly sized random sampling** of NUs. This is needed when an IG is ready to collaborate with a wider and more representative circle of NUs than is the IG. This is per **Step 2 — Testing and Collaboration** of the **Policy Directive Process** described in the NETWORKING chapter. Such a sampling will only send messages to a few dozen NUs at most.
3. A collaborating set of NUs needs to conduct a **highly reliable, high precision sampling** of opinion from a large number of NUs. This is needed when a potential mandate to the public servants needs to be certified as acceptable to the appropriate population of NUs — that is, per **Step 3 — Full Statistical Test** of the PD process. Such a sampling can send messages to several thousand neighborhoods.
4. An item of the public will (an issue-solution mandate) has been formed and verified by a rigorous statistical sampling of the NUs, and now the item must be delivered to Relays capable of performing a **Mandate Delivery Action** in the relevant election districts. This is per **Step 4 — Implementation** of the PD process.

Theoretically, each NU might perform these functions directly by obtaining information contained in the Registries. But it is far more convenient for NUs to use Relays. Moreover, the filtering (screening) required for sending broadcasts and MDAs might be bypassed by errant NUs or IGs deliberately violating the correct protocols — which is unacceptable. It should be easier to detect malicious messaging if a much smaller

number of messaging units (the Relays) normally process and send these types of messages.

Accessing a Relay

The following are some ways, that occur to me, that NUs might access a Relay:

To Broadcast a Message to an Election District

When a NU or cluster of NUs produces an Information Dispatch or other message, it can request an appropriate Relay to broadcast it to all NUs in a specified election district. But broadcasts are potentially very disruptive. If they become too commonplace, or are maliciously issued, they can do damage.

Therefore, a filtering process should be put in place to verify a candidate message is suitable for broadcast. The Relay to which such a message is submitted would:

- Randomly select a relatively small number of NUs to examine the message — for the accuracy of its content and its likely interest to the audience.
- Broadcast or discard the message based on whether a simple majority of the examining NUs approve it.

The broadcast request form to be found on the Relay’s web site might look like:

The image shows a form titled "BROADCAST REQUEST" on a yellow-green background. It contains three input fields on the left and three buttons on the right. The input fields are labeled "Broadcast district:", "Submitter Credentials:", and "Message at:". The buttons are labeled "Cancel", "Clear", and "Submit".

where ‘Broadcast district’ identifies the election district (or Register) where the message is to be broadcast, where ‘Submitter Credentials’ is the password that has previously been agreed upon between the submitting NU and the Relay, and ‘Message at:’ is the web URL for the message location (which will be at the requester’s web site).

After processing, a report might then be sent to the requester. That report either informs (1) that the message has been broadcast, or (2) that the request has been denied. If denied, the list of comments and complaints provided by the NUs which did the screening are attached. (However, their identities are not revealed.)

To Send an Issue-Solution Collaboration Request to a Small Sample of NUs

This is required in **Step 2 — Testing and Collaboration** of the Policy Directive Process described in the NETWORKING chapter. Initially, NUs will contact other NUs simply by using their URLs which are listed on Registry web sites. However, as tNN grows, NUs could use Relay web sites to do the random selection and to deliver collaboration requests. To do so, NUs might simply access the following form on a Relay web site:

ISSUE COLLABORATION REQUEST

Number of Examiners Desired:

Registry URL:

Dossier URL:

Here, before acting on the request, the Relay should verify the submitted Registry URL and examine the dossier. Before performing the random selection and sending the dossier, the Relay should check the gross validity of the dossier. That is, it checks:

1. That the dossier has a sensible format and adequate entries.
2. That the submitting group of NUs or IG, as listed in the dossier as originators, are all listed in the Registry.
3. The issue and solutions indicated are readable and relevant to the district.

If the dossier looks OK, the Relay goes to the indicated Registry, does the random picking of the required number of NUs, then sends the dossier to each of them.

The Relay notifies the requesting NU or IG that it has done so.

Each recipient NU first (and also) judges the validity of the dossier — that it is formatted properly, has the required ‘boiler plate’ (required information), and is a genuine request for judgment of, and request for collaboration on, an issue.

Then the recipient NU examines the dossier issue description and proposed solution or solutions. Finally it determines whether it wishes to collaborate, and responds to the requesting group of NUs.

The transaction is archived in the NIN (See chapter 8).

To Do a Reliable Sampling of NUs to Validate an Issue-Solution

After a collaborating set of NUs has done a thorough a job of dealing with an issue and has hammered out a solution that it thinks will resonate with the entire appropriate population, it must verify its acceptability via a highly stringent statistical sampling of the population that would be impacted by the implementation of it. This is **Step 3 — Full Statistical Test** (of the Policy Directive Process) described in the NETWORKING chapter 5.

The following request to a Relay covering the appropriate election district(s) will result in just that sort of sampling. The messages sent to an appropriately large subset of the NUs in the election district(s) will request a YES or NO response which will be sent directly to the IG (initial group of issue sponsors).

ISSUE-SOLUTION VALIDATION REQUEST

Registry (URLs):

Cancel

Clear

Dossier URL:

Submit

Before acting on the request, the Relay examines the dossier and checks that:

1. The dossier has the proper format and adequate entries.
2. The submitting group of NUs listed in the dossier are listed in the Registries.
3. The submission is being made by one of the NUs in the collaborating group.
4. The issue and solution indicated in the dossier are readable and sensible.

Again, judgment is NOT made by the Relay on the validity and correctness of the dossier content — only that it is formatted properly, has the required ‘boiler plate’ (required information), and is a genuine request for judgment on the issue.

With this request, the Relay determines the necessary sample size using the algorithm for **Finding Random NUs in a Set of Registries** (described in the REGISTRIES chapter). It next goes to the indicated Registries, does the random picking of the required number of NUs from the totality of them, then sends the Dossier to the picked NUs. The Relay also notifies the requesting NUs that such has been done and supplies the list of contacted NUs. (This list can have thousands of entries.)

To Implement a Mandate Delivery Action

This suggested request would be used when an issue-solution has become a policy mandate. This occurs at **Step 4 — Implementation** described in the NETWORKING chapter. A high confidence statistical check has been conducted and the response was a consensus level YES. Therefore, this is a request for the Relay to perform a Mandate Delivery Action (MDA) shown in the flow chart on page 52.

MANDATE DELIVERY ACTION

RegistryID (URL):

Dossier URL:

Before acting on this request, the Relay examines the dossier/ document and checks that it:

1. Contains a Policy Directive.
2. Contains the correct identities of the requesting NU and the other NUs of the IG and CG.
3. Contains the results and data obtained from Step 3 of the PD process.

The Relay then selects a ‘verification group’ of NUs in the Registry to verify:

1. The format and readability of the Dossier.
2. The applicability of the PD to the specified district.
3. A sampling of the Step 3 polling data — to verify the polling data.

If the verification group judges the package is valid, the Relay passes the submission onto the relevant public legislator or official. That representative checks with his or her constituency. If a majority of that constituency approves the policy, the representative or official moves to implement it and so informs the Relay. The Relay then posts an **Outstanding Mandate** notice in the Registry and archives the transaction in the NIN.

Relay Design

Relay service is voluntary. Some NUs, realizing the importance of the function and having the technical expertise to handle the task, will volunteer. Most NUs will simply make use of them. The impetus to volunteer will likely occur when neighborhoods in a geographical area become so numerous that they begin having difficulty communicating and issue a call for such volunteers.

Any Relay should be able to access any tNN Registry. This is easier if every Registry has the same access structure — which may become a major challenge as tNN evolves and subsets of NUs with different evolutionary histories find one another and attempt to merge. Hopefully, standards for Registry (and Relay) data formats and access functioning will be developed — as noted below.

Multiple Registries for a district may exist (and are encouraged), so Relays may have a choice of which to access. In starting operations, new Relays may often know of some of these redundant Registries, but will learn of others as they gain experience. If Registers are properly maintained, redundant Registers should have virtually identical data.

Where Will the Data Come From?

Data used by the Relays will come primarily from the Registries. This is where the references to the NUs composing tNN are located in a (hopefully) uniform, indexed, reliable fashion. Relays will, at least initially, make use of random number generators available on the internet. (With time, for reasons of tNN security, they may obtain devices that attach to PCs that directly generate random numbers.)

Any request for service, using a form, will contain necessary data: the web address of the service requester; where the dossier (if one is to be sent) is located; the type of service requested; any pre-agreed upon PIN; and the web address of any specified Registry.

How Do Relays Become Known?

- A Relay can announce itself through NMIs to the NUs that are in Registries it is willing to use.
- It can ask other relay NUs with which it works to insert its URL into their lists of sibling Relays.
- Registries will list Relays which have informed them of their intent to use them.
- NIN-LIBs (see chapter 8) can be requested by a Relay to include their URL into the Directories of Relays they maintain.
- Some non-NIN-LIB NUs may volunteer to provide directories of Relays and Registries.

How will Redundancy among Relays Work?

We should expect that NUs will prefer to use Relays that address all of the Registries that they normally use — from the City Council level up to the Federal legislative and executive election districts. This suggests there could be a Relay for every City Council member. But that's way too many Relays. More likely, Relays will come into existence that handle perhaps a collection of City Council member districts and all election districts higher than that.

This implies that different geographical areas of the country will habitually use different Relays, and that there will be a great deal of redundancy at the State and Federal election district levels. At the town and small city levels there will, by this reasoning, be few Relays. However, this seems acceptable — since the performance of any Relay at this level should become quickly known. If an ID originating and sent here fails to be delivered, or a MDA to the Mayor or City Council member fails to be acted upon — the requester will quickly find that out.

How Will Relays Evolve?

In the beginning of tNN, there will be no Relays. Similar to the evolution of Registries, informal communication among NUs will suffice to handle information transfer and conduct local governance.

As the number of NUs increases into the many hundreds, they will tire of manually finding random numbers from which to select neighborhoods for polling and collaborating. They will ask web masters among the NUs for help — perhaps to try to develop the internet 'forms' (described earlier in the Registries chapter and in this chapter) which automatically produce lists of randomly selected NUs from specified Registries.

As tNN evolves, the need to implement the broadcast function will become apparent. Relay functioning will have to be coded to pick-out validation sets of NUs to examine IDs. Each Relay NU will have to form a WG to examine the screening results and permit broadcasts. This is not a function that can easily be automated.

Further in time still, MDAs — addressed to districts having large populations — will have to be dealt with. Again, WGs, with the help of automation, will have to begin processing these.

Where Relays become overloaded with request traffic, additional Relays are likely to be formed from NUs in the affected districts. Web software should become more capable and sophisticated as time goes on, as the number of NUs increases, and as the NUs learn how better to conduct their operations.

The number of Relays that will be needed is hard to anticipate. As tNN evolves, experience will dictate the number of Relays actually needed.

Who Will Build the Relay Application?

The special applications that provide the services provided by Relays will have to be developed by the web experts within the NU web site work groups. They will most likely use and build upon **Open Source** software.

Experts in the Open Source community may wish to contribute their considerable talents to the tNN cause.

Merging Relays

When growing subsets of tNN find one another, they are likely to merge. Each may have (if large enough) its own set of Relays.

There will be impacts on the merged set of Relays:

- The number of Relays might increase. Some may become unjustifiably redundant.
- If some election districts in the merging tNN subsets are the same, the corresponding Registries (the merged Relays use) will have to have their data merged.
- The Registries will likely have different data formats. These differences will have to be resolved.
- Registry and Relay application code will have to be reconciled (this means some computer program recoding), and the Registry data will have to be reformatted and the modified databases updated.

When merges become commonplace, recoding and merging disparate data will become an intolerable nuisance. Web people in the NUs will complain. As tNN grows large enough, standards for Registry and Relay code will have to be created and then published via NMIs.

By that time, many existing versions of the Registry and Relay code will have been in use for some time and everyone in the tNN subsets will have gained a great deal of experience. Knowledge regarding:

- how the NUs really use the Registries and Relays,
- the best formats for the data,
- the best ways to access the Registries and Relays,
- ways to avoid maintenance difficulties,

- the best ways to backup the data files, and
- the best ways to code the applications,

will have been gained from that experience. Web experts involved in the merges will create and publish standards and begin coding to them.

Thenceforth, merges should become a far easier task.

When broad swaths of the public learn of tNN, rapid growth of tNN should occur and not only should merges become very common — but newly spawned NUs should be able to adopt existing apps at their inception. Merges will then become as easy as installing applications already in existence and of proven quality.

Relay Inspection

Any NU is privileged to examine and test any Relay. NUs with ‘tNN integrity’ work groups are expected to examine and test the vital structures of tNN — meaning its Registries and Relay components — as well as the NIN.

When a NU issues an ID and receives a notice of ‘intent to broadcast’ from a relay, it can sample check that the ID was delivered to the NUs in the target Registry. Also, when a MDA is pursued with a Relay and that MDA is processed, the Relay’s correct execution of that MDA can be checked.

MDA and ID testing should be limited to tracking and checking what would normally have been issued anyway — that is without issuing special ‘test’ MDAs or IDs. This is because the effort and nuisance of exercising such functions for testing purposes only may be unwarranted.

If a set of neighborhoods feels a Relay in their area is habitually failing to fully meet their needs — they may well encourage the establishment of another Relay. That new Relay will need to provide access to the same set of districts.

Chapter Wrap-Up

Relays are a new concept — not tried before tNN was conceived. Such a mechanism would not have been needed before we wanted to communicate among large numbers of entities in the way tNN does, and would not have been possible to implement without computers and digital communications technology.

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This chapter is a beginning specification for the Relay concept. The descriptions here should show what, generally, needs to be done. But it should be taken as a starting point, not as a hard and unalterable specification.

The Relay function is very important. It provides necessary discipline to tNN communications, and the automation it provides should make it much easier for the NUs to do their necessary work.

Chapter 8 — The NIN (Neighborhood Information Network)

tNN needs some sort of library to put, keep and retrieve the various kinds of information that it creates, needs, uses, and archives. This chapter considers:

- The structure of the NIN — using NIN-LIBs.
- The information tNN works with.
- How that information is accessed.
- The use of Information Expediters.
- A Neighborhoods Network News Service (NNNS or 3NS).
- Likely evolution of the NIN.
- Some design guidelines.
- How its integrity can be tested.

As with the other descriptions in this book (registers, relays, suggested web interfaces, etc.) my statements of how the tNN can be structured are mere suggestions, mere starting points. Hopefully NU members and NUs will use them as that, and will adopt (and communicate to other NUs in the network) what will work and work better.

How the NIN is Structured

The NIN resides, physically, in two places: the broad panoply of NUs (or more specifically in their individual data bases), and in the special NUs which volunteer to become NIN-LIBs (short for tNN NIN libraries).

Each NU and its work groups build their archives and reference materials. These productions are all contained on its web site databases, but are grouped in the following way:

1. Web pages and data areas of the NU that the NU deems well developed enough and important enough to be of general interest — are made accessible to the network of NIN-LIBs. In this category, links are made from and to NIN-LIBs — making the data, effectively, part of the NIN-LIB system. Documents and references located here are thus generally accessible and extensively cataloged.
2. But on pages and data devoted only to the business of the particular NU – to the conduct of its internal affairs – access is made only from the NU’s website. Direct links to these data are not normally submitted to the NIN-LIBs.

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The NIN-LIBs are NUs which volunteer to provide service, in the form of a web site, devoted to the tNN NIN function. These special web sites consist of menus to information of general interest to tNN — and should, eventually, incorporate search engines and other automated information search capabilities. Also, NIN-LIBs help direct searchers to human Information Expeditors (IEs).

Information Each NU Needs to Conduct Its Affairs

Before going further, let's consider what information each NU needs to conduct its own, internal business.

For each NU's General Meetings:

1. Any meeting preparation notes the officers care to provide.
2. GM announcements.
3. Issue suggestions, collected prior to the GM, and the vote totals for the neighborhood's priorities on those suggested issues.
4. References provided by meeting participants (including those from invited experts).
5. List of follow-up items and their particulars.
6. GM meeting notes.
7. Directory of all WGs (past and present).
8. Meeting expense particulars.

After each month's GM, new information should be copied to the NU's database archives when the current web pages are updated for the next GM.

For the Work Groups of Each NU:

1. Directory of all WGs (past and present).
2. Work Group Charters (all versions) for all the NU's WGs.
3. Work Group reports to the GMs and meeting notes as WGs provide.
4. Data References the WGs discover and judge to be of high relevance.
5. Copies of reference documents (where it is possible the referenced material might become unavailable on the web).
6. Final WG Reports.

For those NUs that are Registries or Relays

- For a Registry, snapshots of the Registry's NU Lists and Posting Board contents.

- For a Relay, copies of Broadcast messages (IDs), and records of Broadcast Screenings (lists of screening participants, their votes, and comments).
- For a Relay, the contents of all MDAs handled by the Relay, the statistical polling conducted, and the records of how the MDAs were processed.

Information tNN Needs to Function

Next let's consider the kinds of information and functioning the tNN needs, as a whole, to support its various activities:

For General Reference by the Citizenry and NUs

- A Neighborhoods Network News Service to disseminate pertinent, current news.
- Catalogs of links, by topic area, to documents pertinent to governance.
- Help desks, operated by humans, to facilitate search. (i.e. the **Information Expeditors**, described below.)
- Directories to Registries, Relays and NIN-LIBs.
- The Information Dispatches issued by NUs. These have been filtered and broadcast, by the means described in the chapters on Networking and Relays.
- Policy Directives issued. These have completed the MDA (mandate delivery action) process and constitute the current public common ground developed by tNN.
- Copies of all MDAs — with the processing records and polling data collected from statistical sampling — for each of them. Also, the implementation monitoring reports for each PD.
- References to all other publicly relevant services and information accumulated by NUs and their WGs. (eg. references to significant information sources outside tNN.)

For Access to Information Expeditors

1. Web pages created by each IE. (These pages direct information searchers to appropriate documents and information sources and services.)
2. Data which IEs periodically compose to facilitate search engine operation.

For tNN Infrastructure Archiving

- The various versions of computer/web program code used by tNN NU web sites, Registries, Relays, and the NIN-LIBs.

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This is the kind of information that NU work groups, pursuing the work delegated to them by their GMs, need in order to investigate issues and find solutions. This is the information that tNN needs to enable the citizenry to govern.

And yes – this amount of information to be created, stored, and accessed is daunting! But we ought to plan on eventually accommodating it.

How is the NIN Accessed?

The web site of each NU should contain a list of the NIN-LIBs it uses for doing its work or just happens to know of. But this alone will not provide an efficient way to find NIN-LIBs as tNN becomes large.

To expedite access to the full set of NIN-LIBs, each NIN-LIB can contain a list of all the NIN-LIBs it knows of, with some indication of the kind of content each contains. As NIN-LIBs learn of each other's existence, eventually all NIN-LIBs should contain fairly complete directories of one another.

Additionally, to each Registry, we may add lists of those NIN-LIBs which contain information relevant to the election district. If each NU (which hosts a NIN-LIB) were to inform all the Registries (that reference it) of its NIN-LIB function, we would quickly obtain a complete directory of all NIN-LIBs (Just examine the Registry for the U.S. President).

Eventually, we want search engines, incorporating effective search algorithms to all NIN documents and functions, in every NIN-LIB.

Use of Information Expeditors (IEs)

Serious searching and retrieving are tedious tasks. Computing power is needed to search through vast repositories of records and data in an efficient and timely manner. So the NIN must be highly automated. Menu hierarchies (and eventually search engines) can help searching. But another source of information guidance is also important — knowledgeable human beings!

Information Expeditors are persons, or work groups of persons, within the NUs, who have become experts in areas of information. (For instance: national budgets, medical statistics, scope of authority of various government officials, and so on.) These people can help direct information searches made by citizens and NU work groups. In this respect, IEs are like librarians.

Also, truly expert IEs are in position to act as ‘subject area reviewers.’²² This means they’ve examined a good sampling of the documents and data in a subject area — thus gaining a broad view of the various perspectives and biases, and gaining good knowledge of which information sources are well founded in actual fact and which are sloppily composed or only composed for propaganda purposes.

IEs can be accessed in two basic ways. The first is to visit the ‘topics’ area or information catalogs published by the NIN-LIBS on their web sites. The menus located there are a good first place to look for topic headings — which will usually lead to pertinent references and IEs. Secondly, each NIN-LIB will list IEs that it knows of, and will provide email addresses and sometimes direct telephone numbers to these human sources of help.

A Neighborhood Network News Service (3NS)

Reporting of current events, of the kind that require governance attention, are too important to leave to the mass media and the pronouncements of politicians.

Misuse of the News

The mass media is not a neutral entity. Its owners and powerful political entities have an interest in controlling public perceptions. Virtually every reportable event is subject to exercise of the arts of manipulation. Sometimes blatantly, sometimes very subtly, bias is applied. Individuals or groups associated with the event may be villainized. Blame may be attributed. Certain victims will be portrayed with sympathy, others ignored. Certain responses and actions may be suggested as the media judge desirable. In general — the event will be used for political and possibly unjustified use.

Even damage or loss of life due to seemingly ‘natural events’ is reported with bias. Apartment fires due to inadequate construction will be portrayed as natural disasters or simply due to renter carelessness. That builders or property owners might be culpable in such disasters, or that government officials failed to provide and enforce adequate building and fire codes — is often conveniently ignored.

To counter such misreporting of publicly relevant events, we need to provide a better system to report them. By no means do we want to take on the task of reporting everything that constitutes news, but we can and should provide a service that comes forth with pertinent background and direct information on events potentially important to governance. Moreover, this information should be forthcoming while the event has the attention of the public. The normal tNN process for deliberation and action is not

22 Note: the concept of tNN IE subject area reviewers is in part inspired by those in medical and scientific areas. There, published ‘survey’ studies examine a multitude of detailed studies on some topic for which hard evidence is hard to obtain. Such survey studies identify trends in the various, often contradictory, results posted in the literature. Those trends are often the best information currently available on a subject. Expert IEs can often be a surveyor or over viewer of information areas.

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sufficiently responsive. It would take too long for NUs to investigate such issues through GM discussions, the dispatch of work groups, and the eventual issuance of IDs.

Information Sources

What is needed is a way to immediately bring forth accurate background information (history of the site or region, relevant past incidents, the motives of the various actors involved), and the particulars of the event as witnessed by the various participants and observed by bystanders.

As tNN matures, Information Expeditors should exist, within tNN, to provide background information on any area of the world and should reveal the difficulties and conflicts of people everywhere. And with virtually every person living in a neighborhood organized into a NU, most witnesses to any event should have access to a WG capable of posting witness testimony and smart phone recordings onto a system of tNN web sites established for that purpose.

How it might be Organized?

Some neighbors might want to become **News Sentries**. These would be NU members who volunteer, as part of a work group under supervision of their NU, to become ‘reporters on call’ who can be telephoned or emailed during their hours on duty and who can collect news information forwarded to them by participants and observers on the scene of an unforeseen event.

The work groups of such sentries could post each such news item, with as much information as it can collect and organize, including links to appropriate IEs, onto a web site devoted to the news service. A system of such web sites might be organized on the basis of territory covered (national, regional, local) and also on a topical basis.

Likely NIN Evolution

In the Beginning

The NIN begins with simple web sites, perhaps one for each NU, with each NU site simply listing and linking to all the others it knows about — and noting which NUs are interested in what topics. Therefore, in the beginning, the NIN is just a tangled little network of references to other NU web sites. It looks like a small set of Registry entries — but organized by topic, not by political district. As NU after NU catalog the public problems they perceive, and the results of their detective work, a significant repository of investigate efforts will come into existence.

Growing Pains

That body of real knowledge will become so large and so scattered among the NUs that access to relevant information will become difficult. Good catalogs and search engines will become necessary.

Furthermore, some NIN information will become of intense public interest to people outside of tNN. Currently 'hidden' but accurate and important information will become known to an aroused public. Consequently, internet traffic to many NU web sites (of which the NIN will be composed) will become large. What computer people call 'caching' and 'high bandwidth access' for some tNN web sites will become necessary.

There is another issue. In this Internet Age many references are 'online.' This is generally very good for quick access to information, but online sources can quickly disappear. To be cautious, WG members will need to copy important reference documents into the NIN database. Care will have to be taken to be certain copyrights are not infringed.

Design Guidelines

It Must be Highly Distributed

As said above, the NIN will be embedded into the system of NUs, and for that reason the NIN will be highly distributed. This is what we require to avoid centralization of any important function of tNN.

Each NU Should Constitute Some Part of the NIN

The NIN is so important, and should evolve over so long a period of time, that each NU probably needs to devote a permanent task force to (1) handle its portion of the NIN, and (2) work with other NUs to evolve the database computer programming of the NIN. At many NUs, this task force might be part of the web master work group. This work group need not be a fully operational NIN-LIB but should handle links to NIN-LIBs and perhaps maintain some useful menus and references to IEs within its NU.

Each NU will have a web master work group to manage its web site. This work group will often have people capable of, and actually working at, improving database and other NIN software. Such WGs will naturally form a collaborating substructure of tNN.

Need for Expertise

We're going to need web and database expertise, particularly to support the NIN database and search functions. We need experts to develop these web apps and get them installed in our NUs and NIN-LIBs.

Again, tNN should go to the ‘open source’ computer people for help — and not to the commercial corporations like MicroSoft and Oracle.²³

NIN-LIB Duplication

The various NUs volunteering to become NIN-LIBs will overlap, to a very large extent, in the information they contain and in the references they maintain. Each will grow in the number of documents it references or stores, and each will add topics to its catalogs. Any given item of information is very likely accessible from many NIN-LIBs. This resembles the U.S. Public Library system.

So no formal duplication of NIN-LIBs is necessary nor sensible. Individual NUs will access whichever of these it cares to, and likewise will visit different NIN-LIBs as experience teaches. Those NIN-LIBs which have better suites of relevant documents and references to the most useful IEs will be used more often.

Do NIN-LIBs Resemble Public Libraries?

This may seem to be a strange inquiry, but it raises a good discussion about the nature of NIN-LIBs.

The Public Library system in the U.S., as it was many decades ago, is something of a model for the NIN. I haven’t used it much in recent decades, but in the 1950s, 60s and 70s it was a thoroughly useful public utility. The content of each library was biased toward what people requested in the neighborhood where it was located. What a library itself did not have — was often available through extensive inter-library borrowing services. The number of Public Libraries — some 16,549 as of 2010 equates to about 40 NUs per library (at 500 persons per NU in a population of 320 million people today).

The NIN-LIBs mirrors that system with important differences.

First, the NIN is devoted to information and documents pertinent to governance. It will not usually contain materials useful to elementary school children, books of fiction, movies, scientific books, nor magazines, travel brochures, hobby materials, medical references, and most other topics of general interest. This makes the volume of material that a NIN-LIB contains only a tiny portion of what a Public Library contains.

23 They are secretive. They seek to hook customers for long-term revenue streams. Politically, it seems to me, they are adverse to anything resembling real democracy.

Second, the NIN-LIBs will most certainly refer to one another, and the inter-library function will be quick — through electronic links. Being not paper, but computer files, NIN-LIBs will hold a huge number of web pages and files.

Integrity Checking

In addition to carefully constructed factual information, the NIN is going to contain all sorts of fabrications, conjectures, opinions, viewpoints, and heresy. That's a consequence of freedom of speech.

Yet, the purpose of the NIN is to enable governance by the citizenry. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to insist the NIN be devoted to information relevant, even if only indirectly, to governance. That's quite a broad amount of information.

But that doesn't include vicious attacks on persons, nor slanderous material which could precipitate legal action against tNN.

Where a NU or NIN-LIB steps into such, or where deliberate falsification of information occurs, the body of NUs needs to expose such occurrences — and disassociate tNN from the perpetrators. Where NUs and erstwhile NIN-LIBs are identified as having false or malicious information — they need to be identified to the larger body of NUs and NIN-LIBs by the discovering NU or NUs — along with specific references to the offending information. This should be via broadcast IDs or NMIs.

The facts of such reputed activity must be checked in the usual way by tNN — that is, by some neighborhoods conducting an investigation leading to an information directive verifying or refuting the putative claims and determining a solution to the issue.

tNN, by its very structure, is not able to use police force, nor generally able to use the courts of law, to enforce any rules of behavior. However, the ability to communicate among its parts should be sufficient to identify and isolate any malfunctioning part from the remainder, its properly operating body.

Wrap-Up

In short, the NIN is the needed information resource for us to reliably inform ourselves.

Chapter 9 — BUILDING CONSENSUS

Those who fear democracy and hope it can never work, and those who want democracy but fear it can not work, have something in common — the notion that vast numbers of people will never be able to agree on much of anything. That people can form consensus is, of course, at the heart of democracy. That people can think and act for their common good as well as for their more narrowly construed self-interests, and do so persistently, is a primary prerequisite for genuine democracy.

The current American culture certainly does not bring out the cooperative instincts in people. By providing self-oriented role models in the mass media, by schooling and coercing us into subservient roles in real life, and by ensuring that a huge portion of us must compete against one another in the employment markets while suffering in economic deprivation and political impotence — the stage has been rigged so that we struggle against one another, not cooperate with one another.

For Americans, these are now deeply entrenched habits. But even so, the vast majority of us still have the instincts of family evolved over many generations. Even our collective proclivities are not entirely eradicated. Many of us sense and feel that the good in man far exceeds his evil.

In this chapter I want to discuss consensus, not just the high numerical percentage of agreement which we seek to achieve in individual items of our public will — but also the deeper meaning and implications of consensus or the lack of it.

As one of America's founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, informed us (see page 2 of this book), there are really only two forms of governance: the democratic where the people actually rule, and the aristocratic where an elite of one form or another has control.

Where is Consensus Absent?

In aristocratic societies, tension between the privileged, the aristocrats, the elite, who are in the minority, and the serviles, constituting the majority — is inherent. In order to maintain their privilege, aristocrats have to manage their underlings.

They do so by manipulating the serviles into believing:

1. The division of elite and serviles is the 'normal state' of humanity.
2. The elite are superior.
3. The elite are necessary to protect society from enemies — external and internal.

4. Without elites to rule, society would fall into ‘chaos.’ The lower classes, with their ethnic, religious, and other differences would quickly fall to fighting one another. Selfishness and greed would reign.
5. ‘Ordinary’ people are incapable of governing themselves.
6. Only by cooperating with the elite do they individually have the possibility of improving their circumstances.

Elites fear insurrection as much as foreign invasion. Any organization among the people, unless it is completely innocuous, is watched. Any organization that could threaten elite control is dealt with by subversion, intimidation and, if necessary, by outright physical repression.

Among the serviles, individual persons and families are essentially without power of a public nature. Tradition and the elite set the rules for behavior, and the elite handle all of the population’s needs of a public nature. The churches teach subservience to the children. Building of roads, public places, water supply, and the military defense of the realm — are provided by the elite. The elite adjudicates conflict between individuals and families. The people have no substantive public decisions to make. They are to: labor, provide for themselves, pay taxes, provide vulnerable foot soldiers for military use, keep their ‘noses clean,’ and must cause no trouble. Making public policy is not part of their lives. Consensus by them on public issues has no societal relevancy.

There may be ‘elections’ of various kinds of ‘representatives,’ but those persons either serve the elite – or are replaced in subsequent elections by more compliant people who receive monetary and good media support from that elite.

Consensus of the controlled and manipulated population to submit to their current reality is contrived and artificial. It continues only because they have been denied the thinking that could set them free and put them into the power that constitutes genuine democracy.

Where Do We Find Consensus?

The usual place we find consensus thinking is in real communities. There, people know what is and what needs to be done. There is general agreement about what should be done, how people should behave, and how to deal with usual issues and circumstances. There is little confusion or tension. People are comfortable with others and with themselves. There is general agreement about the essential arrangements of society and most of the details. That is ‘consensus.’

When an abnormal issue arises, people talk about it, and the various opinions, facts, and lots of hearsay, circulate throughout the population. Some kind of general agreement precipitates, and is accepted — at least until circumstances or new information forces further consideration.

In societies where ordinary people might rule but have serious differences based on religious, ethnic, wealth, or other differences – they still might rule – but only if they can find consensus among themselves on the most important issues composing governance.

So Then, Specifically What is Consensus?

Consensus is widespread agreement on issues. But it is much more than that.

It is a state of mind where people know they are part of a population of like minded others. It is a state of mind where persons and their families are protected and safe — protected by a kind of shield of togetherness that will respond to threatening circumstances of most any sort. And it is real. A society in which each person has power leveraged by that of a large multitude of others who share the same sentiments as they do — is an elevation of personal power into collective power. A person has and projects not only his or her personal capability, but by connection with others — also projects the power of the community of which he or she is part.

And that is what we are trying to achieve.

Generally — How Do We Get There?

Getting to self governance implies transforming ourselves from a mere population of politically isolated individuals and families — into serious citizens working together to find the relevant issues, facts, and solutions to our public problems.

We Transform Our Thinking

This transformation happens when we:

- Learn the feelings and concerns of others — expressed without inhibition by those others.
- Stop accepting as fact what the media tells us, what we are told in the classrooms and work places controlled by the privileged, and what is in the corporate managed internet blogs.
- Work with others to investigate the facts of an issue — by actively searching for information via many distinct routes, and cross checking each source against other independent sources.
- Get ideas and opinion directly from subject matter experts having different biases toward the issues.
- Permit the facts, as they emerge, to modify our preconceived notions of the issues.

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We shut out false versions of reality when we stop being recipients of imagery and claims from the media, the institutionalized schools, the workplace ‘human relations’ systems, and even the ethnic and other stereotypes we learn from our parents and relatives. We begin the connection to real reality when we become the active agents in the search to comprehend reality, and work with others to expedite that learning effort and respectfully correct one another.

We get to consensus by participating with multitudes of other persons to investigate all the really important aspects of what is our common public life.

This leads, first of all, to real understanding of our public problems, and then to agreement on the solutions to those problems.

We Find and Tackle the Principal Issues

From the issue suggestions submitted by neighbors to their NUs, we can make a comprehensive list of the most important public matters where legislation and enforcement might apply. Many of these will already be under some kind of consideration by current governance. The names of the various congressional legislative committees can be used to help organize this list. So can the names of the executive departments of government. And in a variety of ways we will find still more issues.

As we build tNN, there will be thousands and then millions of us — having become detectives and scholars. We will be the multitudes to examine the substance of the issues for everything on these lists. Our reasoned process for study, determining the facts, understanding the issues, creating solutions, and testing for consensus — will produce the policies that should determine governance.

Where There is Consensus We Make It Happen

When a NU and associated cluster are able to consider and deal with an issue through the PD process, that will be genuine progress. And as tNN grows, more and more such issues will follow. Our current common ground is very small compared to what it should be and will become. But even now, we Americans have a widespread interest and consensus on matters such as: employment, social security, the importance of education, clean water and air, the purity of foods, the safety of transportation, protection from fire and disease, and much more.

Where It’s Important But We Don’t Agree, We Study, Learn and Teach

But on other important matters, we have been badly manipulated by the mass media and other special interests. On taxation, on trade with other nations, on foreign policy, and on many other matters — we’ve been heavily manipulated to tolerate the agendas and ambitions of others.

Here, we are not soon going to issue policy. Rather, those of our NUs that focus on such issues, are going to quickly discover that the facts and reality are far different than we

Americans have been manipulated to think. These NUs, as they do their detective work, are going to amass facts, statistics, and an understanding which will have to be communicated to vast numbers of Americans before policy can be widely agreed upon. The Information Dispatches (described in the NETWORKING chapter), produced by those NUs, must come to the attention of our neighborhoods and citizenry. I believe this must become the principle means of us informing ourselves.

That education is how we will gain the ground work for the consensus we will need to fully govern, especially at the federal level.

Where There is Local Agreement, We Implement Locally

At the inception of tNN, our ability to gain consensus, and to govern, will be local. Here, the NUs will gain their first experiences at governance. This will be the ‘teething ground,’ our kindergarten stage.

With Experience We Will Implement Region Wide, Then Federally

There is a great deal to learn about city wide (large metropolitan areas), county, state, and federal government offices, legislatures, and the various operational parts of these governance levels. We need to learn the functions, powers, and limitations attendant to all these — then deal with issues at these levels.

This will take time. And the number of NUs in a good proportion of the relevant election districts must become large for us to effect noticeable, tangible change. But we will learn, and we will gain widespread public involvement and acceptance at these levels of governance.

Where Agreement is Impossible, We Accept That

There will be some issues which will be truly intractable. We are a nation of widely different ethnic origins and views on religion. The degree and intensity of these differences are described in books by Colin Woodard²⁴ and Kevin Phillips.²⁵ On issues that are fundamentally impacted by those differences, we are not likely to agree. These are matters upon which problems will continue to fester — at least until they become so serious that we will have to find compromises to reduce and manage the adverse consequences.

I believe, with time and experience, this collection of ‘tough’ issues will diminish. As we accustom to dealing with issue after issue with good detective work and respect for one another, we will gain understanding and agreement that is impossible in a population that has been subject only to deliberate and divisive manipulation designed to ‘divide and conquer’ us.

24 Collin Woodard, *American Nations, A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2012)

25 Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy, The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006)

Consensus Building Tactics

Power to the people means building consensus on virtually all matters of public importance. It's what we mean when we talk of building our common ground.

Specifically, what can we do? What are some guidelines and suggestions on how to proceed?

Act Where there is Consensus

Most NUs will initially try to gain total consensus — thinking that facts and reason can bring everyone (or very nearly everyone) together on both acceptance and interpretation of the facts of an issue, and then agreement on what most consider the optimal solution to the problem posed by the issue.

But often this cannot be done. While respecting all individuals — where there is an overwhelming consensus (say 75 or more percent agreement) on an issue-solution pair (and the solution is not in violation of the U.S. Constitution) — the remaining people are going to have to accept that item of the public will. We cannot be hamstrung by a minority — including those minorities that are very vociferous and demanding — even in the face of strong public judgment to the contrary.

We try for consensus, and in good faith we try to accommodate as many interested parties as we can without destroying a good solution. But when consensus is achieved, we don't let a minority inhibit action.

Those in such a minority have the freedom and privilege of trying to modify the feelings and convictions of the majority — by offering new data and logic per the mechanisms available for honest discourse within tNN — but not by force and intimidation.

Decisions have to be made. And decisions made by the vast majority who must suffer the consequences of what they decide — are, in general, better than decisions made for them by any minority or elite.²⁶

Connect With Other Organizations

tNN, composed of neighborhoods, is an excellent organization for connecting with virtually every institution and every organization in the nation. Neighborhoods, by our definition in Chapter 2, are ubiquitous. Had we NUs in most every neighborhood of the nation, most every individual in every organization in the country would have the opportunity to be a member of a NU!

One implication of this is that every needed expertise is potentially available to tNN through NUs!

26 James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2005)

Make it Easy to Connect with Other Grassroots Institutions

One project of the NUs might be to build and maintain a very thorough and accurate catalog of grassroots organizations with detailed descriptions of what they do, their Web Site URLs, and who to contact. This catalog can be part of the NIN.

When expert advice is needed by a WG, or collaboration is required with an organization competent in a capability vital to an important project — this catalog can be consulted.

Use Newsworthy Events to Extend the Common Ground

When something significant happens and reported (no matter how superficially) on the mass media or some other source — the topic can become an issue to study in depth. Persons identified in that reporting may be willing to speak at NU general meetings. This could lead to a significant ID or PD.

Try Hard to Understand Views With Which We Disagree

In discussions with others where we disagree, we can sometimes best discuss the issue by ‘changing sides’ – that is, espouse the position of the person with which you disagree, and he or she espouses your position. This forces both sides to fully understand the other!

If Agreement is Elusive, Try an Experiment

If a solution to an issue is urgent, but no solution can be agreed upon, implement some kind of experimental semi-solution to generate data that might indicate an acceptable solution.

Chapter Wrap-Up

Consensus is societal agreement — on both perception of the facts and action to be taken. It’s also a state of mind where people know their personal power to think and act is multiplied by participation with like minded others who are formed into real community.

Governance of, by, and for the people requires a true common ground of perceptions concerning all matters subject to governance and requires consensus agreement on what needs to be done. Building consensus, locally, regionally, and nationwide, is the major challenge — and it is the major objective of tNN.

Chapter 10 — GOVERNING

The Basics

Citizens of the thirteen original American colonies fought for, and obtained, their independence from the tyranny that was England in 1776. Colonial aristocrats created the **U.S. Constitution** in 1787, knowing full well that the citizenry expected the principal document of governance in America to establish and support genuine democracy. And that is what the citizenry got — although biased to favor white males with property and giving a great deal of latitude to the States.

Anything less would have led to immediate insurrection by the population. Today it remains the highest law of the land. Amendments, over the years, have improved it; and the States have adopted it as their principal governing instrument as well — as reflected in their Constitutions.

The Bill of Rights of that Constitution codifies our right to assemble peacefully and speak freely. Thus it enables tNN, and prescribes how we the people may govern — through placing candidates for public office on the ballots — and voting, without harassment or fraud, those candidates we the people choose, into the offices of government to represent us.

Therefore, selection of candidates, placement of them onto the ballots, and the legitimate election of them — is the control mechanism of governance ‘of, by, and for us, the people.’

To activate the democracy that the above mechanism makes possible, we the people must provide the policy directives to those elected officials. We must monitor what they do in order to assure compliance to our, the public will. And we must remove, by legitimate means only, those who fail us.

This chapter explores:

1. Local governance.
2. How the federal and state legislatures might become organized and function to implement the public will — consistent with the overall but very general duties prescribed by the Constitution.
3. How the citizenry might best establish public policy.
4. How tNN can provide a candidate selection, ballot placement, election, monitoring, and removal function.

Local Governance

An embryonic tNN, with NUs initially established in but a few locales, will make its first attempts at governance at the local level (town, city, and county).

Those living in small and medium size towns may well have the best first experiences since the number of NUs needed to form their agendas, and elect truly representative city council members and mayors, will be small.

Those living in medium sized and larger cities will start to learn the ways the ‘players’ (the mass media owners, major corporate interests, owners of significant amounts of land, and the merchants) keep control of local affairs.

Perhaps most interesting to citizens first learning to govern, will be the various rules and laws passed by state and federal legislators limiting what locales can and cannot do. (For instance, regarding: taxation, zoning, food contaminants, etc.)

These early learning experiences (in electing Council members, attempting to force local authorities to publish detailed budget and tax collection information, and so on), will bring a good sense of political reality to our citizenry. It will be sobering to know where real power currently resides and by what means it is held. These early experiences should bring awareness of unwarranted bias and incline our citizenry to roll up their sleeves and get down to the business of putting governance into the hands of the people.

And at the local level, some serious work can be done: staffing the zoning commissions with persons protecting the interests of home owners and renters, overseeing the election process to ensure citizen access to voting and the accurate counting of votes, ensuring full and detailed reporting of the budget and tax collections, and the like.

U.S. Congressional Organization

Article 1. of the **U.S. Constitution**, sections 1 through 9, states the composition of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the general duties of both those legislative parts of government, the requisites of age and domicile for the elected members, the duration of their terms, that there shall be quorums for the passing of legislation, and specifies the scope of legislation.

The U.S. Constitution does not, however, dictate how the houses of Congress are to organize their activity — other than indicating that there shall be a Speaker of the House, that the Vice-President shall be President of the Senate, and that both bodies shall regularly meet to conduct their necessary business. No mention, nor presumption, is made concerning ‘political parties’ as we know them.

Current Congressional Organization

The U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate both delegate investigative work and the composition of bills of law to committees. There are several types:

- ‘Standing’ committees — these continue from one Congress to the next.
- ‘Select committees’ — temporary and formed for specific purposes.
- ‘Joint committees’ — conduct business between houses of Congress.
- ‘Conference committees’ — to reconcile differences between similar bills of the two houses.

The following table lists the standing committees:

Table 7: Standing Committees of the U.S. Congress²⁷

HOUSE	SENATE
Agriculture	Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Appropriations	Appropriations
Armed Services	Armed Services
Banking and Financial Service	Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Budget	Budget
Commerce	Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Education and the Workforce	Energy and Natural Resources
Government Reform	Environment and Public Works
House Administration	Finance
International Relations	Foreign Relations
Judiciary	Government Affairs
Resources	Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Rules	Indian Affairs
Science	Judiciary
Small Business	Rules and Administration
Standards of Official Conduct	Small Business
Transportation and Infrastructure	Veterans Affairs
Veterans Affairs	
Ways and Means	

²⁷ This table, and other information about Congress was obtained from: www.ushistory.org/gov/6c.asp and related web pages.

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Indeed, such delegation is both sensible and necessary. These resemble the work groups proposed for each NU under tNN concept described in this book.

But how committee members are currently chosen, how the committees function, and how bills proposed by members of Congress are brought to vote — is fraught with opportunity for undemocratic influence and outright corruption.

To begin with, the Party system puts the “winner” of the two dominant political parties in position to choose the Speaker of the House of Representatives. He or she, in turn:

- “Influences” committee assignments for new members.
- “Influences” which bills go to which committees.
- Presides over the proceedings on the House floor.
- Rules over questions of parliamentary procedure.

Some 8,000 bills are introduced into the U.S. Congress each session. Each such goes to a standing committee whereupon:

- A hearing, including expert testimony, may be held.
- It may be dropped, for whatever reasons the committee finds. (Less than 10% make it to the floor, are voted upon, and become law.)
- It may be revised and ‘marked-up’ for reasons of coherency or merely to make it palatable to powerful, interested parties.

If and as a bill (in the House of Representatives) is ready to “go to the floor” to be debated and voted upon, it is sent to the Rules Committee. There time limits for debate can be imposed, and made impossibly short so as to prohibit the bill from ever being passed.

Bills may be packaged so that some may be nestled alongside others of major import — thus drawing attention away from the former. Such “piggybacking” is a common way to get bills passed that should not be.

Hearings can be held openly or behind closed doors. Committees and their members may meet as they choose and may meet with interested outsiders, including professional lobbyists. The content of such meetings may or may not be available to the public. There is plenty of opportunity for professional lobbyists to operate, and to do so on a day-to-day basis. Much of what is discussed and decided is hidden from the public.

In short, the process enables influence and deal making by those who have money, power, and an interest in making or altering legislation.

A Transparent, Democratic Structure is Required

A better organization and functioning of Congress is possible. tNN should work to correct both the federal and state Congresses. Among the changes should be:

1. Require all bill submissions to be made known to all members of Congress.
2. Require that members of Congress vote on the priority of each submitted bill, and that these votes be published in the Congressional Record.
3. Require potential committee members to declare their interest in the committee, then be elected or rejected for such by the House or Senate as appropriate.
4. Require that members of Congress vote on what committee each bill ought be directed to.
5. Require that each committee member indicate how he or she judged each bill handled by the committee and why he or she so passed judgement.
6. Prohibit unrelated bills from being bundled together.

Except for bills expressly requiring secrecy (e.g. military funding for specific weapons, projects, research, etc.) — discussion and investigation by committees should be open and transcripts publicly available.

In such an open legislative arrangement, no legislator need participate in collusions whereby member A has to agree to committee member B's bill in order for member A's bill to be seriously considered. i.e. no 'horse trading' is necessary. Each bill becomes open for full, impartial consideration by the entire legislature, and the public can see how each legislator voted on each bill.

Given such rules and transparency, "back room dealing" becomes more difficult.

Senators and Representatives can discuss the bills as they wish among themselves, but no ring-leader has leverage to enforce "party discipline" or ensure that certain lobbyist based interests become requirements imposed on legislative action.

Establishing Policy

We the citizenry are not in position to specify the exact content of every bill, and every act of a legislature. That requires the expertise and attention of representatives knowledgeable of the full body of existing laws, and experienced in the process of adding to and changing that body of law in the least disruptive and most efficient way possible.

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This doesn't mean that congressional legislators must be given power over policy. It does mean the citizenry must avoid giving those representatives contradictory policy statements. It also means Congress must be given latitude in determining the (reasonable) span of time to implement policy, and it means the citizenry must accept the tax and other implications of the legislation that will be created.

There are guidelines for making good policy. I'll list some of them here; and to make them more tangible I'll illustrate several with an example. I dislike giving examples (because examples suggest their implementation is desirable), but examples can clarify. Some variation of those I've selected here will almost certainly be brought up by the citizenry — with or without my suggesting them.

Make Policy Reversible

Decisions and action that can be undone are generally preferable to those that can't. In the area of crime legislation, for example, if the perpetrator of a crime is sent to jail rather than executed, then, if a mistake has been made, he can be let loose and partially compensated for the damage done to him. If he is killed, redress is impossible.

Where the consequences of contemplated action are irreversible, we had better be certain those consequences are acceptable.

Go Slow or Small

If a law, tax, or project can have great effect, it might best be attempted on a small scale, or at a small magnitude, to test the consequences.

An example of this would be expanding Medicare into a full, "Single Payer" medical insurance system for all Americans. Policy steps to do this might proceed as: (1) provide adequate policing for fraud, then use the savings to add dental insurance to medicare; (2) get rid of the costly insurance 'privatization' attachments (for pharmaceuticals and deductibles); (3) add young children to the program, then gradually increase the age of eligibility for children; and (4) gradually reduce the age that older Americans become eligible until all adults are covered. Do this progression over a period of perhaps seven to ten years. Provide for effective upgrading of accounting, medical and fraud identification procedures, and computer software. Ensure that doctors and other providers are adequately compensated for their services. As necessary, supplement current MED/EE revenues with taxes on untaxed or under taxed business income (e.g. foreign corporate income and shadow banking profits).

Use "Two Tier"

"Two Tier" refers to an economic arrangement whereby government provides some kind of infrastructure (tier one) which the citizenry and industry (tier two) use to perform something useful.

As an example, the system of public streets and highways, with traffic control signals and highway police, constitute tier one of our automobile and trucking system. Tier two, consisting of the car and truck manufacturers, gasoline suppliers and others, provide the vehicles, fuel and maintenance for the general public to conduct transportation. It works great. Tier one is a ‘natural monopoly’ best handled by government. Tier two is commercial market mediated.

Our telecommunications system ought to be such a two tier system. Tier one should be a ‘dumb’²⁸ fiber optic transmission and switching network (with attached wireless cell sites) which merely carries packets of bits between its millions of termination points — and is operated by the States or Regions of the U.S. Tier two, on the market side, would consist of the various personal communications devices which would attach to the tier one fiber optic or cell site connection points: telephones, TVs, personal computers, wireless devices, and so on. These would continue to be provided by commercial manufacturers. But telephone service, internet access, and the multitude of other services and applications — would be provided by an open market place of service vendors — vastly greater in diversity than the current telecom oligopoly and its subsidiary portals and apps.

Public benefits of such a two tier division include: lower telecommunication fees; privacy of personal communications; elimination of the monopoly power held by the current service providers (which use their ‘common carrier’ role to disadvantage the vast pool of potential, independent service providers); and maximal opportunity for real innovators to innovate.

Limit Organizational Integration

There is a strong tendency for commercial organizations to try to gain monopoly advantages by extending their businesses both ‘vertically’ and ‘horizontally’²⁹ — thus becoming behemoths ‘too big to fail’ and too politically powerful to control in the public interest.

One way to increase legitimate competition is to pass laws and enforce good regulation to inhibit such expansion. It is often reasonable to establish policy to demand this. (In banking, Glass Steagal was such legislation before it was essentially repealed.)

28 Visit: www.isen.com and examine the articles in The *isen.com Papers* section. The tier one network would simply transmit packets of bits from one network termination point to another. All functional services (tier two) would use that simple, transmission neutral, ‘dumb’ capability.

29 ‘Vertical’ integration refers to expansion into the suppliers of one’s business (upward) and into the distributors of your product (downward). ‘Horizontal’ integration refers to creeping sideways into similar or related markets.

Insist on Transparency

Except for national security and policing — where project details and operation must be conducted in secret — operation of government and the conduct of chartered projects should be completely transparent.

Use Competition Intelligently

Economic capabilities run by government are certainly subject to corruption — even when the government is free of commercial influence. (Take, for example, the endemic corruption that existed in the ex-Soviet Union.)

But take, for another example, Canada, where the Canadian National RR (a Crown Corporation) must compete against the Canadian Pacific RR (a commercial operation). Here, the public can compare the two — seeing the differences in prices, service, externalization of costs, and response to criticism.

Let the Public Decide Controversial Issues Directly

There are controversial issues. Many concern moral judgements upon which no overwhelming consensus is likely to be obtained. Yet, arguments and emotional claims persist and are used by politicians to distract from other more substantive matters.

These are issues upon which tNN will not get public consensus. Where it does not violate the U.S. Constitution, it may be best to have these issues be put up to direct vote. Whatever the public chooses, even if only by a few percent margin, would be legislated into law.

Let the Local Establish the Global

Not everything has to be done by government or by investor owned commercial corporations. Many activities and functions can be done directly by organizations established by citizens acting locally.

For example, we currently have regional food coops — often operating together with shared purchasing, advertising services, and legal services that the individual coops have established and control jointly. By establishing these ‘umbrella’ or ‘global’ service superstructures, the coops gain the capabilities of a Walmart in terms of purchasing power, architectural planning, construction of facilities, finance, and many aspects of administration.

This can be done, not just for merchandising, but for manufacturing, for providing energy, and so on. Here you have a kind of ‘peoples capitalism.’

Match Organizations to their Functions

When organizations don't do what they should do or are proclaimed to do, you have a functional mismatch.

As an example I offer the Federal Reserve (FR). If ever there was an organization more mismatched to its proclaimed beneficial function to the public than the Federal Reserve, I don't know of it. That any entity could be capable of effectively dealing with: unemployment, controlling money inflation, and dealing with economic depressions — by issuing vast quantities of money loans at low interest rates to investment bankers — is outrageous. In fact, its apparent current, real function is to enrich bankers and lubricate financial speculation.

To correct this we might terminate the FR after instituting the following: Each year (1) anticipate the economic growth for the following year, (2) issue checks, of equal size, totaling the dollar worth of that growth, to all adult citizens of the U.S. in January of every year.

This provides the economic 'demand' required to purchase the anticipated economic growth, distributes it fairly to the entire population — ensuring it will go for purchases and savings (investment) as people choose — and does so without causing inflation.

It is a far better way to increase the money supply and facilitate growth than to loan interest free money to speculators — which results in inflation and further misdirects wealth. It is not unrealistic. Alaska is an example where a large portion of the oil revenues due the State are distributed in just this fashion.

Select and Elect

Locally

In the suburbs where I've lived, insiders dominate the local government, control the City Council and School Board, and occupy City Hall with the Mayor at the helm. They usually own nearby land and other local commercial property, and are usually friendly with corporate employers of the local labor pool. The local newspaper and media give so little information about the real problems faced by the suburb, that intelligent voting on the basis of issues is difficult. Those few of the general public who do vote, will usually vote in a confused manner so that the public vote will almost cancel itself out. Under this circumstance the friends, relatives, and business associates of the inside crowd are often sufficient in number to settle the local elections in their favor. I call this the "patronage on top of randomness" system of voting.

The network of NUs within a town or city will become the key to winning local elections. At present, we the people have no way of identifying appropriate candidates

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and no effective way of communicating among ourselves for the purpose of voting. As the NUs come into existence in a significant fraction of a city's neighborhoods, this will change. The NIN will become the source of information pertinent to the locality, and the NUs will become the forum to discuss who ought to be elected to public office. Once a candidate is identified, and his or her mandates clearly expressed in PD documents on record in the NIN, his or her identity and agenda can become common knowledge to a significant fraction of the community. The "patronage on top of randomness" system can be swept into the garbage can.

Generally

A process can be put into place for selecting candidates, at every level of governance, to run for public office:

- The NUs study and publicly catalog the various offices of government.
- Each position is fully described in terms of duties, prerequisite skills for the office, the scope and limits of power held, the budget and privileges of the position, the salary, the normal points of contact with other officials, the location of the physical office, the nature of any supporting staff, and everything else that is pertinent.
- For each office, a "testable agenda" is formally created by the NUs. This will be the list of current PDs that have been issued, and a list of specific, expected, visible accomplishments expected of the office holder.
- Individuals, identified by NUs within each election district as willing to run for office and able to faithfully pursue PDs issued by the district's NUs, are encouraged to petition for placement on the appropriate ballot. District NUs then facilitate that placement and help obtain the necessary petition signatures. The ***District News*** section of each Registry **Posting Board** can provide news and information regarding the petition process.
- NUs in each district then provide a web based forum and a number of public debates for discussion of the issues and vetting of all the candidates for that office. In those discussions and public debates, opponents can criticize each other and clarify their positions. Third parties, properly identified, are permitted to have their say as well. This part of the process becomes the means through which past behavior, business conflicts, any ideology of the candidates, and so on, become identified.
- Citizens scrutinize the information and vote as they are then inclined.

TV debates may be conducted, but are not required. The owners of the mass media can attempt to influence the population as they wish. Eventually, most citizens will ignore their blather and manipulation, and simply trust the mechanism operated by the citizenry, the one that proves it works in the public interest.

Compensation

A major fault in the current political system is the lack of income provided for many offices. This guarantees that those of wealth, and their agents, occupy such posts. We must work to provide sufficient pay for all elected positions so that the candidates best representing the public interest can hold public office.

In the meantime, we have the problem of how to elect genuine representatives to posts where compensation is inadequate. Without knowing its legality in various cities and towns, I suggest the following scheme:

Let us say a medium sized American city has 500,000 residents. Perhaps there are 20 poorly paid political positions of importance. If well covered by NUs, this city might have 100,000 of its citizens organized into 2000 NUs of some 50 active members each.

If each NU member contributed merely \$20 per year into a special “elected official support fund,” \$2,000,000 would be available to support the 20 office holders at an annual salary of \$100,000 each — an adequate compensation. Would it be worth that kind of contribution to ensure elected representatives are truly beholden to the public? This is an example of the power of organizing.

No one NU can do the job of selecting and promoting candidates. A wide association of NUs must pool their efforts to accomplish such a comprehensive process. That association will involve so many citizens that the outcome of the formal election process will often be determined by the votes of NU members.

Monitor Government

Currently, the various levels of government pretend to inform the people. Budgets are published. Politicians and pundits speak to the people about proposed legislation and regulations. But when the special interest action inside government is over, there is a lot less said to the people than done to the people.

The budget pie charts and lists of department expenditures (those of municipalities) are too summary to permit analysis. No comparisons to other municipalities are presented, nor rarely can such comparisons be meaningfully made given the categorizations provided. The Federal budget in “unitary” format completely distorts the numbers. (As our example PD dossier in Appendix A reveals, this format masks deficits in the general budget with confiscated Social Security surpluses and makes the military expense appear much smaller than it really is.)

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Usually, no meaningful breakdown of tax collections is made of the kind which would allow an analysis of who was given tax breaks and who had to bear a disproportionate burden.

We the people must shoulder the job of ferreting out the numbers so that we may discern injustice, demand better allocation of government effort and expense, and expect better allocation of tax and regulatory burden.

Fortunately, there are many of us. Scattered throughout our population are people who have all the kinds of expertise necessary to compose the dossiers needed by our citizenry to understand and control the organizational entities which perform — in our interest, or against our interest — the functioning of society. For example, some of us are retired government workers and business managers, often very knowledgeable and able to direct others of us in working through publicly available data to glean good information for decision making.

Some NIN-LIBs and their Information Expeditors might help to identify such expert, knowledgeable people and make them known and available to fulfill this information need (intelligence function if you will) of the citizenry.

Perhaps we need better laws requiring more and better organized information from the various levels of government. Useful information is backed up with details and is organized to reveal the inner workings of the subject of the information. And useful information permits comparison to other organizations and situations. Most of all, useful information permits intelligent consideration of issues and the actions possible to resolve them.

Monitor All Large Organizations

Analysis should not be limited to government. We the people need to pay attention to all large organizations: business, corporate, religious, and voluntary.

This may seem to be unnecessarily intrusive and unwarranted. But institutions have power far exceeding that of most individuals. History teaches that destructive ambition works through institutions it controls and which become unaccountable to the sensibilities of the public.

We are wise to learn what we can about the workings and sometimes hidden intentions of both the principal players in institutions and those of the multitude of lesser participants.

Our intention in collecting information about such organizations is not to act like policemen, but to ensure, by legally sanctioned examination only, that we the people are not being disadvantaged nor endangered. Where damaging behavior is discovered, it should be publicly exposed and government directed to address the issue or issues.

Monitor Office Holders

Monitoring the behavior, in office, of elected public servants is as important as electing them. The ploy of talking one way to the public to get votes, then proceeding to serve the unrepresentative interests, will end only when the public eye watches the public servants.

To see what elected persons are actually doing, NU task forces need to monitor what the legislators and officials are doing. However, the monitors (and tNN in general) must interpret what the elected officials do in the context of what is occurring in the economy, in the nation, in the world at large, and inside government itself. That is why the types of monitoring described in the above two sections of this chapter are so important and are necessary background to effectively monitor our elected representatives.

In order to monitor what elected persons are actually doing, NU task forces need to:

At the Local Level

- Sit in on publicly open meetings and councils (e.g. city councils, school board, zoning board, and supervisory boards of other government departments).
- Understand the local ordinances and track changes in them, then determine who desired those changes and which officials pursued them and how.
- Summarize and tabulate the arguments made by representatives: in council, while legislating, in official decrees, and in statements to the mass media and the public.
- Record the votes of those who legislate, and the execution of legislation by officials. Make these records easily available to the public.
- Carefully watch the administration of taxes, tax collections, and the payments to vendors. Identify favoritism when it exists and those responsible for such bias.
- Periodically interview representatives. Get their interpretation of (or at least witness their public relations comments regarding) public issues, and track their activity concerning those issues.
- Produce monitoring reports and make them available to NIN-LIBs for reference. Transmit IDs concerning issues that the district's NUs should be informed of.

At the State and Federal Levels

- Monitor legislation (through the Federal Register, other government publications, and by interviewing lobbyists, legislators, and others involved in legislation). Track what bills the legislators introduce, how the members of committees process those bills, and how the legislators vote on the congressional floor.

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- Monitor trade journals, legal judgments, and other publicly accessible conduits of information pertaining to public activities. These often expose the interests and intentions of special interests.
- Develop sympathetic contacts within organizations regularly conducting business with government. Such people are often privy to ‘behind the scenes’ action and hidden intent.
- Develop and maintain contact with academics who study the various departments of government — often as part of their interest in topics of public importance.

Thus diligently piece together the big picture of what is going on by integrating numerous bits of information from a multitude of sources. Out of this kind of intelligence gathering and synthesis — the real functioning of elected legislators can be discerned.

Also note, lawyers will sometimes be needed to analyze legislation and executive orders. Information obtained by all the various means needs to be reconstituted and summarized into documents and reports readily understandable to us the citizenry.

Recall

We need a recall mechanism. Currently, in the U.S, the politicians can float through their terms without worry that the public can quickly remove them. Often they “do their dirt” early in their terms — hoping the public will forget by re-election time, or at least lose their anger about what they’ve done one or more years ago. But the damage that such politicians can do is large and we need not tolerate it. The U.S. Constitution doesn’t currently provide a mechanism for removal through public petition, but we can change that. We might establish an Amendment permitting public recall of members of Congress, the President, and Vice-President.

Initially

Those representatives we first elect and send to the legislatures and executive positions may have a bad time of it. These people will not be welcomed by establishment politicians. We should understand and expect that they:

- May (as legislators) not be recognized by Congress. They may not be seated.
- May not be privy to meetings nor the normal word of mouth communication.
- Are unlikely to be offered committee membership.
- Will have their proposed legislation ignored and dropped.
- May deliberately be misled in order to embarrass them.
- May be subjected to attempts to co-opt them into serving other interests.

- May be tempted to ‘horse-trade’ involving bad legislation – in order to accomplish something visible to the constituency.

We need to send these first true representatives of the people into the legislatures and executive departments with the understanding that they are merely ‘paving the way’ for the time when many more like them are elected. We should expect detailed information from them on how government currently works, and we should expect reports concerning current legislation and those influencing them, but little in terms of desirable legislation.

Wrap-Up

We can govern. We will certainly be no worse at it than the selfish, self-centered, cynical and power intoxicated circles of economic and military power that currently and destructively govern.

The majority of our people are not now concerned with the suffering of people here and in other lands, of the possibility of real world peace, and of possible economic arrangements that could serve the real needs of Earth’s populations. But thrust into the roles of rulers in a true “government of the people, by the people” — they will. Our people are neither cruel nor stupid. We have merely been decoupled from real self-governance and desensitized to the suffering of others. It is a curable condition and the cure is involvement.

To those in movements intended to gain equal civil rights for minorities, protection of the environment, and political freedom for dissidents — and to those who are honestly motivated by the suffering of others and apprehensive of the danger and cruelty of aristocratic rule — I would suggest that the process, of learning and awareness that will accompany the building of democracy by the majority of our citizenry, will direct attention to all such issues. I believe the action taken by the public will be both substantial and magnanimous, not cruel nor selfish. The real soul of America’s citizenry is to be found in the descriptions of Laura Ingalls Wilder’s “Little House on the Prairie” series of books,³⁰ not Hollywood depictions of self-interest, cruel depravity, and “mob rule.”

We should not fear governing, but we should be mindful and careful. Growing up and accepting full adulthood (which includes effective participation in governance) is somewhat scary — but we have to do it.

Our time has come.

30 Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1935)

Chapter 11 — ESTABLISHING and GROWING tNN

This chapter considers the spawning of NUs — and their evolution into the full network that will be tNN.

Potential Growth of the NUs

The possible rapid profusion of an idea or organization — one that is appealing to the general population — is immense! Were it possible for each NU to spawn two new NUs each six months, then the total number of NUs, over time, would be shown by the following table:

Table 8: Potential Growth in the Number of NUs

Nbr. of Triplings	Nbr. of NUs	Nbr. of people in NU neighborhoods	Time
0	1	500	0
1	3	1,500	0.5 year
2	9	4,500	1 year
3	27	13,500	1.5 years
4	81	40,500	2.0 years
5	243	121,500	2.5 years
6	729	364,500	3.0 years
7	2,187	1,093,500	3.5 years
8	6,561	3,280,500	4.0 years
9	19,683	9,841,500	4.5 years
10	59,049	29,524,500	5.0 years
11	177,147	88,573,500	5.5 years
12	531,441	265,720,500	6.0 years

Of course, we should not expect such an ideal (evenly paced) growth nor such a short period of time for large-scale coverage of the nation's population. There will be periods of stumbling where we will struggle. In the beginning, we will have the frustration of establishing even a few NUs and getting them to function effectively.³¹ And as we grow

³¹ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th Edition., (New York: The Free Press, 1995)

to significant numbers, there will be all sorts of impediments, mistakes, confusion, improper communication, misunderstandings, and deliberate attacks upon us.

But we will find ways to handle all such situations. As we produce good information and bring honest government to many locales, and as forthcoming events indicate a real need for the NUs, growth is likely at a rapid pace.

In the Beginning

All things we humans do have a beginning, and often they are humble. So it is with tNN. The saying: “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”³² — is but a simple truth.

At the time of writing the final draft of this book, tNN is being suggested to the people of several neighborhoods by samples of this book, by the distribution of pamphlets, and by small articles in some publications.

Starting From Zero

A set of people reading this little book might want to start a neighborhood unit — partly because they recognize the need for it, and perhaps partly out of curiosity to see if they can make it work.

If so, they have the suggestions (and that’s all they are) in this book as to how to structure their NU and how to operate. Such a group might informally meet a number of times and sketch out what they should do. The following steps could be in their plans:

First — they arrange for a meeting place, parking, date & time, duration, projector (laptop compatible), chairs, laser screen pointer, cookies, coffee, etc.

Second — they compose a pamphlet to give to their neighbors. This pamphlet might contain:

- A condensed version of chapter 1.
- The time and place of the first meeting.
- The name and telephone number of someone to talk to.

³² Lao Tzu, chapter 64 of the *Tao Te Ching*.

Third — they rummage through the web site: www.theneighborhoodsnetwork.org.³³ It contains a number of ‘power point’ (actually .pdf file) slide shows that might be shown to introduce tNN to a neighborhood. The initiators are free to copy/modify those files as they see fit for their presentations at their neighborhood meetings.

Fourth — they make a hundred copies or so of the pamphlet they’ve produced. They roll them up with rubber bands and attach them to the door knobs of their neighbors dwellings. They explain themselves and the pamphlet content to those they meet.

Fifth — they put together some kind of hand-out so that attendees to the meeting will have reference material when they arrive and some outline of what was tentatively planned for the second and forthcoming meetings.

Sixth —they execute the meeting. If there is significant interest, they work out, with the attendees, what is needed for the next and forthcoming meetings.

Operating a New NU

Until a neighborhood unit gets both effective and in a comfortable routine, its continued existence is in doubt. It needs to conduct its general meetings on a predictable and regular basis. It needs to identify its initial officers. It needs to start soliciting the neighbors for issues to consider. It needs to ‘get some fire’ into the GMs with visiting subject matter experts and discussions of issues, and it needs to unleash work groups onto issues of high interest to the neighbors.

Building a web site is important. The web site contains the computational help needed to unburden both the officers and work group members of the tedium that is intrinsically part of any organization. Help may have to be sought from web knowledgeable friends, or work associates of neighborhood members, or from other NUs. Visit www.w3schools.com/html/ for a tutorial on web coding. This site contains lots of information on building web sites. And some NUs may have members who are computer programmers with Open Source experience and/or connections!

Once the people of a neighborhood and NU get comfortable with their internal activity, they need to start encouraging (spawning) other neighborhoods and collaborating with them. At that point, their NU is ‘well on its way.’

³³ I established the site for exactly this use. Nothing in it is copyrighted. You are free to copy whatever is there and modify it for your use. It is, however, very incomplete. I’m not a competent web site builder. I just tinker with it as I have ideas and time.

Attracting Neighborhoods

The experts the NU invites to give a lecture, the contacts the NU work groups make in their investigations, and the mere mention of the tNN concept to people whom members of the NU meet — will let many people know they too can either join the NU or form NUs similar to the one they've just learned about. The “word” will get around! Soon, there will be a cluster of networking NUs.

Neighborhoods adjacent to an established NU have the example of that NU to suggest they too might become part of tNN system. As the existing NU tackles real issues, it becomes an example of the power of organizing.

Most Americans know the public realities are not what they should be. They know that:

- There should be a better financed, universal coverage medical system.
- Manufacturing jobs have been out sourced by unjust global agreements.
- The wealthy should be taxed more.
- Corporations should not be allowed to demand tax abatements as a condition for locating in a state or city.

and so much more. These are issues on which Americans already have common ground.

The mass media skirt around these issues, and so do the politicians while blabbering in general terms about emotionally arousing but ultimately distracting and irrelevant matters. When elected, those politicians do nothing to correct the real problems. Sadly, Americans currently see no way to change this.

So attracting neighborhoods to organize into NUs should not be difficult — people in currently unorganized neighborhoods merely need to:

- (1) Witness the existing NUs actually addressing the real issues, and
- (2) Learn how tNN is designed to accomplish what they thought was impossible.

Inviting people we meet to visit our GMs is a great way to spawn new NUs, particularly if such people, when they show interest and want help, immediately get help in organizing from a work group created precisely for that purpose in that visited NU.

As PDs are created, and IDs are composed for distribution within tNN, pamphlets can be composed containing summary content of these. Such pamphlets, including some information about tNN, can be distributed into currently unorganized neighborhoods, demonstrating the capability of tNN.

Merging the Embryonic tNNs

We hope that tNN finds a beginning in a multitude of neighborhoods — all over America — and also in far away places around the planet. That would imply all sorts of variations of tNN would come into existence, many of which would be important improvements over what we suggest in this book.

Should that be, there will come a time when tNNs of different origins will discover one another. From the point of view of statistics, that is not likely until thousands of neighborhood units are formed and hundreds of embryonic networks are in existence. If and as that happens, most often, they will choose to merge — because the more encompassing such a network becomes, so does its resource base become more capable, and so does its capacity to influence government.

When such contact and merging occurs, great opportunity will exist for participants to learn from the experiences of one another. It will also create some merging problems since the particulars of their registries, database entities, polling, broadcasting, collaboration protocols, mandate delivery processing, and web pages will, almost certainly, be very different (as I've indicated in the REGISTRIES and NETWORKING chapters).

That sounds painful and it is. But it is a blessing in disguise — because ideas and insights will emerge from careful analysis of procedures, experiences, complaints, and web site code maintenance problems. Such 'clashes of culture' are an opportunity to 'pick and choose' the better ways of doing things.

As time goes on, those developing code for tNN infrastructure will create and adopt standards, whereupon merging will become smoother and easier.

Evolving Web Site Capability

As our numbers grow, so will our need to evolve our web sites. Beyond the information cataloging, the Registry format and message protocols needed for networking, and the back-up indicated in chapters 6, 7 and 8 and throughout the book — we have additional web and database work to do.

Regarding our NU and service web sites, we should:

1. Provide a 'look and feel' identifying each NU's web site as being part of tNN.
2. Help NU officers to ever more easily and quickly perform their monthly duties.
3. Help work groups organize, perform and document their work.

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4. Simplify the use of Registers and the transfer of formal documents while making these even more useful.
5. Expand the number and types of directories that point to useful services and data that lie outside tNN.
6. Enable individual NUs to more easily test and validate the Registries and document transferring processes they use.
7. Expand the NIN-LIBS to contain more information and make that information easier to access.
8. Extend tNN to provide a news service of extremely accurate reporting and widespread coverage of both local and worldwide events (the 3NS or Neighborhood Network News Service discussed in chapter 8 on the NIN).
9. Further facilitate ensuring the integrity of the tNN.

Chapter 12 — PROTECTING tNN

People who don't understand tNN will ignore it, or think negatively of it. Those intent on preventing real democracy will work to discredit and destroy tNN. This chapter is intended to discuss likely misunderstandings of tNN, then caution us about some of the ways we ourselves can inadvertently do damage. And finally, I explore some possible organized attacks against tNN.

Possible Critiques of tNN

I can list some of the objections that will be raised against tNN:

- (1) Neighborhoods differ greatly — in wealth, in social status, in ethnicity, even in spoken and written language. Thus, they cannot work together.
- (2) Although nearby neighborhoods can communicate effectively by the simple mechanism of neighbors visiting one another's general meetings, communication among hundreds or tens of thousands of neighborhoods is impossible.
- (3) Matters of governance, of foreign policy, of economics, and of much else — are complex and require expert knowledge. How can 'ordinary citizens' provide policy guidelines executable into effective government action?
- (4) Some action by government requires either secrecy to be effective or must be decided and executed quickly — such as use of the armed forces or providing emergency help.
- (5) Neighborhood Units might become vulnerable to subversion by demagogues, radical organizations or ideologies, or by agents of foreign powers.
- (6) Neighborhood Units could be intimidated by gangsters, the police, or violent ideological groups.
- (7) Neighborhood Units somehow resemble the organization, at the lower echelons, of the German Nazi and Communist parties into "blocks" and "cells."
- (8) tNN is really a "political party," and one that seeks to displace all others — making itself the one and only political party.
- (9) If successful, excessive local power might subvert the balance of government powers as established by the Constitution.
- (10) The very idea of Neighborhood Units is built upon a false assumption about human nature — that people will pursue public matters in a spirit of cooperation guided by a desire to effect the general public good. In fact,

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people are absolutely selfish and will, almost always, press for advantage over others and other groups.

(11) Some people aren't part of a neighborhood.

The following addresses these specific concerns as best I am able. Clearly, my comments cannot resolve them in any final way, but I hope they serve to initiate further, rational discussion.

(1) Neighborhoods differ too much.

Indeed — we are a nation of diverse classes, cultures, ethnicities, religions, and even languages. Books by Kevin Phillips³⁴ and Colin Woodard³⁵ give the flavor of these differences. Many go back many generations. And these differences have been intensified and used for political purposes by politicians and the mass media.

Whether our own biases lean to the right or left economically or socially, or whether we are of the 1% or the 99%, or whatever are our views of religion — we are going to have to talk respectfully to one another and learn from one another. We must separate the facts from the mere prejudices that often underlie our opinions and convictions.

Those on the right need to learn that markets are a useful exchange mechanism, not a religion nor a theory about how the universe operates. Those biased toward the left need to appreciate the usefulness of entrepreneurship, that is ambition coupled with innovation. Those too closely identifying with their ethnicity need to mingle with people of other backgrounds and learn their true feelings and values. And those of deep religious conviction need to dismiss fables of a second coming and pay more attention instead to the Ten Commandments.

As the tNN brings people together (through collaboration with randomly selected NUs, and reception of Information Dispatches), we will learn from one another, and we will build our common ground. Our differences will soften.

Even with our current differences, there is a great deal the vast majority of us agree upon: we need laws governing relationships between people and organizations, we need police, public schools, public roads, utilities for water and energy, and so forth.

(2) Communication among many neighborhoods is too difficult

To the contrary, each NU serves as a collection point for matters worthy of communication and a filter of communication. An isolated, individual human being would have great difficulty in broadcasting an item of information, or an opinion, to all

34 Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money In The 21st Century*, (New York: Penguin, 2006).

35 Colin Woodard, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2011).

of mankind. The untested opinion or claim of a single person is rarely considered to be of much importance. In contrast, an idea or item of information which has survived discussion and testing within a neighborhood is highly likely to be perceived as pertinent by other NUs.

Each NU knows that it is only one of many. A typical NU may have 50 active members within a neighborhood of perhaps 500 people. A city of 250,000 might therefore have some 500 NUs. This is a large number, but hardly insurmountable for the purposes of: selecting candidates to run for office, investigating building construction standards, and the like. Quite the contrary. Tasks such as monitoring government, examining budgets, and studying the tax codes for unreasonable bias, are expedited by the existence of large numbers of neighborhoods engaging in persistent, dedicated effort to uncover information and develop policy.

Information exchange between hundreds or thousands of neighborhoods cannot, of course, be composed of babble. It must be kept reasonable in amount. Its content must be kept to what is in the common interest and of common concern.

tNN strategy for coordinating among neighborhoods, to develop public policy, uses the statistical likelihood that a small set of neighborhoods can work to establish a tentative item of the public common ground. That item can then be tested for acceptance, rejection, or modification by a small but statistically meaningful sampling of neighborhoods. Collaboration can then result in a “well-formed initiative” or “well-constructed item” (policy directive) to be tested further. If then approved by a consensus percentage of statistically polled neighborhoods, it can be communicated to the relevant elected representatives and officials. All of this is detailed in chapter five.

Broadcast of important information, on topics carefully investigated by individual neighborhoods or clusters of neighborhoods — can similarly be managed. Information Dispatches (news and in-depth analysis of issues) to vast numbers of NUs might only be sent after a small group of randomly selected NUs has examined the information dossier and found it suitable for widespread broadcast. The way to do this is detailed in the tNN Information Dispatch section of the NETWORKING chapter 5. This is the democratic alternative to information broadcasting controlled by an aristocracy.

These may not be the only ways to communicate and collaborate among huge numbers of entities. As people organize for real democracy, methods and computer software — to support the kinds of communication required in a real democracy — will be constructed. A balance between simple courtesy and restraint, on the one hand, and formal methods to verify usefulness, on the other, will be worked-out through experience.

(3) Need for Expert Knowledge

In the implementation of policy, great expertise is often required. The repositories of such expertise are the universities and the bureaucracies of government where true public servants devote their lives to the conduct of various departments and functions. These are

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intended to be drawn upon and they are — currently by a governing elite to serve their selfish purposes and their agendas.

These same resources can also be used by us to establish public policy.

Certainly, we the people can determine whether the military should be used to suppress democracy in other parts of the world, or to help it be achieved. People can decide if they wish the economy to be biased in favor of local and community ownership, or to favor the wealth and ownership of most everything by a class of wealthy investor-aristocrats. Good, ordinary people can decide whether it is better for a Brazilian farmer family to remain on its ancestral land, or be pushed off so a multinational corporation can export coffee to the world at the lowest possible production prices. Such policy decisions do not require the expertise of experts, but rather the simple good sense of the multitudes of mankind. Where special expertise is truly required (facts on pollution, human psychology, and economics — and regarding the details of implementation of policy), the professors, experts, and managers can be called in — just as they are into Congressional Committees and into corporate board rooms and corporate task forces.

(4) Need for Secrecy and Urgency of Execution

Most aspects of government and society can be maintained openly and in public. No secrecy is required. The military can be conducted, as it currently is, with information concerning weapons, force deployments, and the like kept in secret. However, the purposes of the military should be publicly determined, not held in secret as now.

Likewise, operations of the local police against criminals should be maintained in secret. But it is of public importance that police operations be conducted according to the law as ultimately determined by policies established by the people — in the interest of public safety and within the limits established by the U.S. Constitution.

The ability of the government to act quickly in response to emergencies is one reason we have executive departments separate from the legislatures. Nothing here requires any change. The executive branches of a truly democratic government will continue to act upon such emergencies according to policies established before emergencies occur.

(5) Vulnerability to Subversion

Demagogues of the sort that appeal to desperate people unaccustomed to rational, systematic examination of real problems and their constructive solution — should find little in the NUs to support their hateful deceptions. The filtering, examination, and collaborative mechanisms of the NUs are designed precisely to discover the root causes of problems and to find and implement constructive solutions. An empowered people are not inclined to engage in hateful jihads.

Agents of foreign powers will certainly try to penetrate organizations of conceivably friendly ethnic or ideologic groups. It is certainly within the proper scope of operations

of the FBI, CIA, and other American security organizations to investigate such activity and, where laws have been violated, provide appropriate information to facilitate prosecution in the civil courts.

Should an occasional NU become “radical” while legitimately representing the people of a non-typical neighborhood, then its views will simply be ignored by the greater population of NUs. By its very structure, the network of NUs can only lead to action through general consensus among the NUs and approval by the overall population. Where there are dividing issues, no action results. This is the safety valve characteristic of real, participatory democracy. It is why real democracy is not mob rule.

(6) Vulnerability to Intimidation

One conceivable threat to tNN is that those wielding some kind of police authority, or coercive power based on organized crime, or ideological association, will be able to forcibly disperse an NU or even all NUs in a town or region.

If law enforcement agencies are acting in accordance with local and national laws that conform to the U.S. Constitution, such intimidation should not be possible. It is certainly possible to threaten an individual via fear of violence to one’s self or one’s family, but to effectively threaten hundreds of people in close proximity to one another seems to me beyond credibility unless the police or military are involved. This is because intimidation, by an outside agent, of an individual who is part of a genuine community, normally results in a powerful protective reaction by the community. Faced with threats and bullying, the people of a neighborhood normally respond collectively.

Faced with intimidation conducted by the police or military, people will simply not come to meetings, not participate in task groups, and not contribute information to one another. The consequence would be the state of affairs we now have, the absence of any effective organization of ordinary people.

(7) Resemblance to Nazi and Communist Cells and Blocks

NUs will derisively be called such units of organization by critics. But the difference between such cells and the NUs is enormous and fundamental.

Members of each NU are representative of the neighborhood. Members of a neighborhood freely elect to join the NU or not. The agenda of each NU is created solely by the members of the neighborhood. Nothing and no one from above or outside descends upon the NU to dictate agenda, to determine activity, nor to punish members for their views.

Not so with Nazi, Communist, Republican, and Democrat, “blocks,” “cells,” and “precincts.” There the “party” descends into the neighborhoods seeking compliant adherents. Only those espousing party ideology and willing to submit to party discipline need apply. Central, National, and State committees establish the agendas and issue the

orders to action. The blocks line-up like troops on the field and march as they are told. “Heretical thoughts” raised by an adherent bring exclusion or physical punishment.

In the network of NUs, by contrast, the people of the neighborhoods “wear the pants,” establish the agenda, and issue the orders. The intelligence, courage, spirit, and personal integrity of Thomas Jefferson, Tom Paine, Sam Adams, and Ben Franklin ring in these people, but they are subject to no ideological prescription. The members of the NUs are full-fledged men and women seizing the day and accepting their responsibility to self-govern. There are no jihads on which to embark, only practical problems requiring the capable attention of mature citizens. There are no, and must not ever be, any “central committees.”

(8) tNN is Really a “Political Party”

tNN is most certainly a ‘political entity,’ but is not a political party in the sense that term is commonly used. The current American political parties, and those parties of which I have knowledge from history books, seek adherents to some syndrome of military, economic, and governance policies. Usually, they pursue policies favoring some class or ethnic group. Membership and power of the party is increased by appeals to the general population, usually based on propaganda and false promises. Persons may ‘join’ only if they subscribe to definite policies demanded by the Party and contribute money which is administered at the top. No political party of which I am aware, fails to have such a hierarchy of control and power — including something like a ‘central committee’ which makes the major decisions and requires discipline at the ‘grass roots.’

tNN, in high contrast to those characteristics, is inherently decentralized and invites persons of virtually every opinion and bias. It seeks not to impose predetermined policies upon the people and the nation, but to enable the population to build a ‘common ground’ of issues and policy solutions to issues determined by the citizens themselves.

Its only pre-existing bias is that it insists upon genuine democracy. It does indeed reject the aristocratic form of governance and society — and only in that sense is it biased.

(9) Subversion of the U.S. Constitution

It is hard to see how a network of neighborhoods could be construed to conflict with the U.S. Constitution. Rather, such a network complements it and gives meaning to it by permitting the obvious division of power implied by that Constitution to be accomplished (see p1 of this book).

In essence, the people establish the policies or goals of government which the legislatures convert, as the will of the people, into tangible and coherent legislation deliberately crafted to effect those policies. The executive branches, in turn, execute or administer that legislation into reality. Finally, to protect the rights of individuals and the integrity of the nation itself, the constitutionality of any legislation can be contested in the system of federal courts.

This is a “first order” and most fundamental interpretation of the U.S. Constitution. If this observation, concerning the design and intent of the Constitution, is not true — nothing is.

And without such an organization of people as the NUs constitute, this clear intent of the U.S. Constitution is denied and subverted. If people cannot organize and discuss to produce consensus and deliver policy mandates to the legislatures, what is there to accomplish that? Petitioning by lobbyists? Mass media propaganda to distract and influence the public? If so, elections become meaningless because those elected then cannot meaningfully represent the people whose collective will was not even allowed to be formed.

(10) People are too Selfish

The notion that “people are too selfish” can only be told where community and the commons have been totally destroyed. Sociologists tell the very opposite, that community and cooperation are the norm — that people normally and throughout the ages have conducted themselves in a way balanced between personal needs and public, community needs.³⁶ My own grandparents, when they were young, lived in a time and place where people were ‘not too selfish.’

What is unusual in human history is not community and selflessness, but unrestrained selfishness. Humans in genuine community survive and prosper. Humans perpetually cheating and stealing from one another fail. The brief and recent period of tyranny, of looting and dominating the world by military force, of manipulating people by means of the mass media, and forcing people (who would otherwise cooperate with one another) to compete against one another, is the true exception to human nature and hopefully will soon end.

(11) Some People don't belong to a Neighborhood.

Some people are so destitute that they drift from place to place looking for food, a place to sleep, and a refuge from bad weather. Others are so wealthy they have mansions all over the planet. Some people are “on the go” virtually continuously and thus have the most tenuous connection to anything resembling our notion of a neighborhood.

Such people are an extreme minority of the American population and therefore do not invalidate the NU concept. Those who are destitute might still consider themselves as being part of whatever neighborhood they are near, even if only on a transient basis — and in a just society there should be very few destitute persons.

All in all, the arguments I've heard proclaiming that grass roots democracy is impossible, fail to hold water. They are based upon ideological prejudice, not social nor physical fact.

³⁶ Lionel Tiger, *The Manufacture of Evil — Ethics, Evolution and the Industrial System*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1987)

Deal with Predictable Self-induced Troubles

There are some possible problems, generated by ourselves, which we can anticipate and try to prevent — or at least ameliorate. Here are several that concern me.

Political Factionalism

The system of NUs described in this book will work properly only when (1) members accept the need to respect all points of view and (2) the NUs work on a collaborative basis with *randomly selected* sets of other NUs.

If we are tempted to try to force our will on others, we will, at worst, divide ourselves and at minimum, taint our portion of tNN. So long as we guide our efforts to build the common ground, whatsoever that may be, we are in safe waters.

But this requires a very harsh self-discipline: rejecting ideology, sticking to the issues, researching the facts, working constructively, and allowing ourselves to overcome our own prejudices. However, that is exactly what is necessary to get us to the true public will.

I fear it is going to be very tempting to divide ourselves into nice comfortable, but hostile, ideological camps. This is because we have been taught ideology (to divide us) and do not yet see ourselves as members of true community. But such division is absolute poison. We cannot achieve public consensus if we do that. We must stop thinking of ourselves as members of ideologic and ethnic clans. Rather, we must see ourselves as human beings with a common, public interest.

But viewpoints held only by a minority must be treated with respect by the NUs.

Certainly we exclude from the public will, and from implementation, those ideas and agendas that do not resonate with the vast majority of our citizenry — but we do not reject and denigrate the people holding such ideas. We should view the NUs, in part, as a powerful mechanism through which those of minority viewpoints may find support for their views on the basis of the merits of those viewpoints. Importantly, as our shared problems change, we must maintain an openness of mind and a broad pool of ideas and perceptions from which we can initiate constructive experimentation and change in the future as we deem appropriate. Such change will often benefit from previously rejected ideas.

Communication Overload

Registries and the Relay functions facilitate communication between huge numbers of neighborhoods. Nonetheless, information transmitted to large numbers of neighborhoods

must be very limited in amount and thus exceedingly pertinent to that collectivity of neighborhoods — or traffic will overwhelm us (in terms of what the neighborhoods must examine and deal with). Determination of what is sufficiently pertinent must necessarily be a work in progress.

The burden of managing broadcast information traffic will fall primarily on the GMs and their work groups tasked to take part in the broadcast screening function. (See the NETWORKING and RELAYS chapters). If screening is too restrictive, good information will be blocked and lost. If it is too permissive, the GMs and analytic WGs will become overworked and ultimately sloppy in dealing with received information.

It is critically important we learn how to manage our communications.

Unnecessary (and Frustrating) Duplication of Effort

Duplication of effort among the NUs often makes sense. Each neighborhood needs to develop its own agenda. We don't need to mindlessly adopt the agendas of others. Our common ground occurs where our neighborhoods maintain their integrity, and agendas coincide without coercion.

Duplication of effort is also good where it permits us to double check the work of others — thus ensuring that it is correct and complete. Where the results of independent WGs largely agree, that will be evidence of correctness.

But there are circumstances where duplication is wasteful or disruptive. For example, when troubling events of a very public nature get publicity, we are likely to have huge numbers of NUs begin investigation of the issue — far beyond what is useful for checking of results. This duplication can be a waste and will be very frustrating when it occurs. Also, good work done in the past, or done by NUs distant in the communications web, might not be evident to an NU until wasteful, duplicate work is well along.

Suggested Solutions

To help solve both the communication and duplication problems, we've associated with each registry of neighborhoods, a "Posting Board" where NUs in each district can:

- Post their current activity. (Issues under consideration.)
- Request help.
- Post abstracts of past investigative results.

Combined with a good computerized cataloging and search mechanism, use of these should reduce duplicate communication and effort of the unproductive kind.

Deal with Outside Threats

There most certainly are those who despise “rule by the people” and who will work to destroy the NUs and the NIN. While we must not become paranoid, vindictive, nor violent, we should consider the possible threats and intelligently counter them. The threats I am able to anticipate are:

The Mass Media Conducts a Disinformation Campaign

As the NUs prove their viability, but before they are wide-spread and well known to the majority of the citizenry, the powers that be will act against this threat of real democracy. At first the mass media will ignore the NUs, hoping they will go away if denied mass media attention. If and as the NUs begin exerting discernible influence — raising issues to the attention of the public and influencing local elections — they will come under attack. The attacks will vary:

- If NUs reveal the unfair system of taxation, they might be accused of class warfare.
- If NUs distribute information pertaining to inadequate building codes (causing cracked foundations or dwellings susceptible to fires), they will be accused of an anti-business bias.
- NU members may be called trouble makers and malcontents.
- As they have done with other grassroots organizations, business interests may harass NUs and their members through law suits claiming slander and restraint of trade. The mass media will be quick to publicize such litigation — to intimidate other NUs and the general public.

To protect themselves against legal attacks, the NUs should:

- Be careful not to make untrue claims.
- Avoid turning public issues into issues of personality.

In general, mass media attacks should be met with openness, facts, and thorough exposure of those media and other entities responsible for the attacks.

Government Disbands the NUs

There is the very remote possibility that the NUs will be legally banned, that direct police action will be used to disperse the NUs and intimidate the citizenry from forming and joining NUs. Charges might be fabricated against the NUs claiming they are usurping government, that they are composed of radicals, that they pose a threat to the current “democratic order,” and so on. In addition to the direct use of police power —

gangs and other organized criminals might be contracted by those of wealth and government authority to harass selected NUs.

Such tactics are regularly used in foreign countries by the proxy governments of all neocolonial powers.³⁷ The use of such tactics within the U.S. is a possibility if and as NUs prove their ability to organize the citizenry, become politically effective, begin to propagate rapidly — and thus provoke great fear among the U.S. ruling class.

I think such extreme action will not be contemplated until the U.S. aristocracy sees the NUs as a significant threat — which will not occur until many networked clusters of NUs exist in a number of areas of the country. By then, the NUs should be sufficiently well established that most Americans would be outraged by any attempt to carry out such harassment. The situation may well resemble that during the “anti-Vietnam war” years when student and other protesters became so numerous and widely distributed that the authorities dared not suppress the movement using physical violence.³⁸

Note that aristocracies are in a conundrum with this kind of danger to their unjustly held power. If they aggressively suppress individuals and incipient movements and organizations, they must terrorize a multitude of entities — most of whom would never have come to any significance. One side-effect is that the general population will learn of this suppression. The aristocracy will then be teaching its people that it is indeed a tyranny, not a “system of freedom” as it tries to pretend. Yet, the other side of the coin, suppressing only those movements that have shown they are indeed a threat, leaves an aristocracy vulnerable to more mature threats. It is a quandary that aristocracy cannot avoid — no matter how much snooping on its population it does, nor no matter how much money and favor it lavishes on professors of psychology and sociology to invent better techniques for controlling humans. Aristocrats in an aristocracy have a great deal of power, but that power is not absolute. This is one of their vulnerabilities.

All in all, the system of NUs will be vulnerable to vilification and harassment by those who despise democracy until they grow into a vast network, gain experience, and become well known to a large portion of the population.

Still Others, Fearing Democracy, Will Cause Trouble

Conceivably, religious, ethnic, and ideological groupings might be mobilized in some sense against tNN. Considering the lack of bias that most NUs will have regarding

37 Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000)

William Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, 3rd Edition, (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2005)

38 However, note the “unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable” shooting of student protesters at Kent State University, May 4, 1970 by the Ohio Army National Guard. (see *President's Commission on Campus Unrest/Scranton Commission*.)

religious and ethnic differences among ourselves, it is hard for me to see how the network of NUs could be depicted as being biased against any ethnic or genuine religious group. To the contrary, the NUs will bring people together to overcome their suspicions of one another and will become a venue through which those holding minority view-points can speak — offering an effective means for communicating and for initiating action. In the arena of ideology, it may be claimed that the NUs are a community entity and thus antagonistic to the “free market system.” But, again, the fear is misplaced. The NUs can be expected to work to bring a needed balance between legitimate business entrepreneurship and community.

Subversion & Sabotage

Subversion, in the sense of bribing or threatening the top administrators of an organization — is not a possibility with the NUs. To force the network of NUs to adopt policies or an agenda contrary to the thinking of the populace should not be possible. One of the principle strengths and value of tNN is that the citizenry, organized for real democracy, will be insular to such attempts. There is no hierarchy of administrators to corrupt. Any ideas proposed, from any source, will be rationally considered by a multitude of NUs. Work groups will be launched to investigate any actionable item proposed, and the motivations for proposing any item and any merit of it will be exposed.

Sabotage, however, is still possible.

Phantom NUs might be created, and made to appear as real-live and normally operating neighborhoods. Such phantoms could generate amounts of provocative IDs and MDAs containing false information, and even NMIs that would disrupt tNN networking.

False IDs and spurious MDAs should alert us, and we should investigate. Phantom NUs should be detectable if we:

- Check for GPS coordinate overlap of NUs. Either we have a residential skyscraper (with multiple NUs), or a GPS posting mistake has been made, or we have a phantom.
- Visit (physically) neighborhoods generating suspicious messages — thus positively identifying phantom NUs wherever people in those neighborhoods don't know of them.
- Cannot otherwise find it as any operating, locatable NU.

Such minimal and unthreatening investigation by ‘tNN integrity’ work groups should be conducted on a regular basis.

We certainly are not trying to create a ‘Gestapo.’ Any tagging of NUs for having ‘wrong’ political views is absolutely not to be done. But tNN does have to protect itself from malicious, systemic misuse of its structural parts.

We can also expect that outside forces can agitate to corrupt NUs in areas of the country where racial, religious or other anti-social extremism is endemic – in order to cause confusion within tNN – and to provide examples of NU behavior that can be broadcast by the mass media to provide very negative publicity.

We should be watchful for this sort of thing, and where it occurs we should expose it for what it is.

Wrap-Up

Ultimately, freedom can only be sustained by people whose hearts and souls embrace genuine democracy as their necessary form of society and civilization.

To ensure that state of mind, like the victims of the Nazi Holocaust, we must never forget. Nor must our children and grandchildren — down to the millionth human generation into the future — ever forget the exploitation, ecocide, injustice, cruelty, misinformation, slavery, and war-making that inevitably comes forth under the lack of true democracy.

The real life of real people over the last 6,000 years must be studied and documented in great detail for all to study and remember. The corporate servitude, the lifetimes of hard work to make others rich, the slavery, the conquest, the torture, the massive war making, the techniques of propaganda, the falsification of history, the enforced poverty, the vilification of peoples and leaders, the terror of armed troops descending upon hapless populations, the bombing and napalm, cluster bombs, fuel air artillery rounds, the use of munitions containing depleted uranium (DU), the forced prostitution, the discotheques and bars for occupying military forces, the “forbidden cities,” the “millionaires clubs” (sex dens) for rich males, and all else must become important reading and viewing material, and must be understood by all forthcoming generations of mankind.

Each human being, from this time forth, must study the lives of those of this and past generations who are or were not free — to learn the meaning of slavery — in order to never again descend into the aristocratic form of governance and society. In order to fully participate in future democracy, and to know its absolute importance, each human must know, both emotionally and intellectually, the consequences of permitting the alternative to democracy.

Appendix A — Social Security Policy Mandate

The following is a contrived example of what a ***Step 1 Policy Directive*** dossier, produced by an Initial Group of NUs, might look like. It is the kind of document which would be sent to a larger group of NUs (tNN calls it a Collaboration Group) which is more likely representative of the population. Each NU in the randomly picked CG would be asked (1) to examine the dossier for worthiness, and (2) whether they would be willing to collaborate to improve it.

Dossier follows to end of appendix A

What Is This All About?

This Dossier concerns the U.S. federal government social security program established by the **Social Security Act of 1935**. It was produced per Step 1 of the process for producing Policy Directives related to governance in the U.S. — as described in chapter 5 of the book: ***the NEIGHBORHOODS NETWORK***.

The American public has seen this program denigrated by members of Congress, the mass media, and others. It's usefulness has been reduced by increases in the age a citizen must attain in order to receive its benefits, and by failure, over time, to properly adjust benefits for money inflation in the American economy.

We've asked, as have many of our national citizenry, just what are the facts and issues regarding SS. And, to the extent there are problems, what should be done to best address them? Hence, our investigation and this dossier.

Who Are We?

The web sites, email addresses, and GPS coordinates of our Initial Group are:

Table 9: Initial Group

Web Site	Contact/ Name	GPS Coords.
tNN_PortagePark60641.org (Chicago, IL)	john_skipper@gmail.com	41d 57m 24.67s 87d 45m 43.85s
tNN_Ledbetter75236.org (Dallas, TX)	rank_golub@yahoo.com	32.776665 -96.796989
tNN_BeverlyHills90210.org (Los Angeles, CA)	pete_martinez@gmail.com	33d 57m 2.34s 118d 14m 18.70s

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tNN_Columbia10025.org (New York, NY)	herman_ross@nyu.edu	40.776798 -73.95607
tNN_Fremont98103.org (Seattle, WA)	lydia_termann@bing.edu	47d 39m 26.09s 122d 18m 45.44s

The PortagePark NU initiated the effort, picked four large cities from which to recruit sister NUs, and selected the four other members of the IG by randomly picking from the mayoral registries for those cities. This is NOT a random picking of the total U.S. population, but does get a sampling of the most populous cities.

What We Would Like From You

At the end of the dossier, there are four **Action Options**. Would your NU please examine this document, then decide which action, if any, you would most prefer? If an action might become preferred with some changes, we'd like to know what those changes might be.

Should you find at least one of the actions acceptable to you, or possibly so with some revision — we'd like the option of collaborating with you to produce a more mature dossier — one ready for a statistically significant public validation. Such collaboration would also include other NUs similarly favorable to this inquiry. Let us know if you'd be interested.

The Social Security Concept

The Basic Idea

The Social Security (SS) program was and is to ameliorate the basic problem elderly in the U.S. face when they can no longer be gainfully employed. That problem is the lack of sufficient savings and income to support oneself and one's spouse — a major problem for the vast majority of elderly persons in the U.S.

SS is one of the few, large scale social benefits that Americans enjoy — the most prominent others being Medicare and the system of Public Schools.

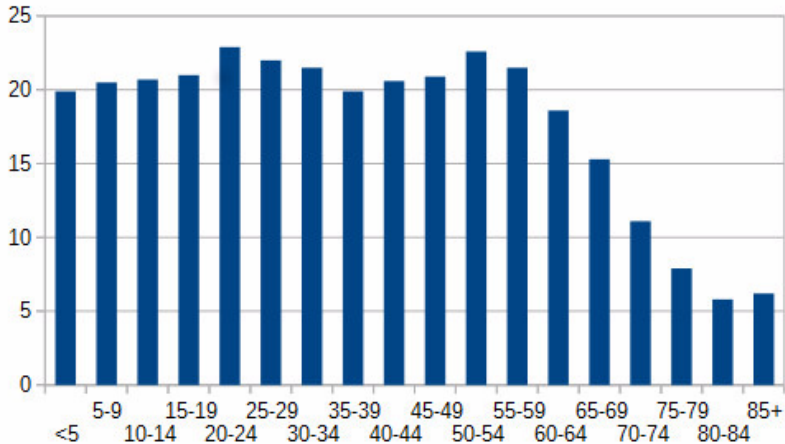
The basic SS concept is to gather a relatively small premium from the wages of working people, then enhance that by taxing employers by the same amount. That revenue is then distributed to those who have similarly paid into the SS system, in the past, while they were working, and who are now retired or who cannot, due to disability, work any longer.

Social Security Related Facts

Before discussing Social Security in detail, let's first present a set of facts pertinent to its current state and its possible futures.

The U.S. Population Distribution with Age

This chart shows the age distribution of the U.S. population in 2014.



From: www.census.gov/popest/data/national/asr/h/2014/index.html.
The numbers in the column on the left indicate millions.

Generally speaking, the U.S. working population is in the range of 20 years to 65 years old. Those retired will mostly be in the 65 and above range.

Using the chart above, we can estimate there were, in 2014:

- Some 168 million persons of working age.
- About 46 million persons in the ages we expect to see retirees
- About 3.6 persons of working age for every person who is 65 or over.

There is a 'bump' in the population at the ages 50 through 60. These are people born in 1955 through 1965, making them part of the 'baby boomer' generation. You don't see a bump in those baby boomers whose ages are now 65 and above because a large portion of them are now deceased. But when they were born they were a bump in the population distribution graph at that time. Today the baby boomers constitute a temporary increase in the number of persons collecting Social Security. The children of the baby boomers are now in ages 20 to 35, where you see another more minor bump in the graph.

GDP, Debt & Income Taxes

Some politicians blame Social Security for the current large national debt. They also say that the currently large Social Security Trust Fund surplus will not be honored when needed to finance promised pensions. Such claims require us to examine federal taxation, spending, debt, and other aspects of the U.S. economy.

Table 10: GDP, Debt, and Federal Income Tax Rates^a

End year of a four year period	GDP	Debt	Highest tax rate ^b	Administration	Significant Events
1980	\$2.9T	\$0.9T	70%	Carter	
1984	\$4.0T	\$1.6T	50%	Reagan	Kemp-Roth tax cuts
1988	\$5.3T	\$2.6T	38.5%	Reagan	----- “Star Wars” & other military buildup to bankrupt the USSR
1992	\$6.5T	\$4.1T	38.0%	GHW Bush	
1996	\$8.1T	\$5.2T	39.6%	Clinton	
2000	\$10.3T	\$5.7T	39.1%	Clinton	
2004	\$12.3T	\$7.4T	38.6%	G.W. Bush	\$3T Iraq war -----
2008	\$14.7T	\$10.0T	35.0%	G.W. Bush	\$1.35T tax cut ----- U.S. Afgan war ----- addn’l \$0.35T cut
2012	\$16.2T	\$16.1T		Obama	

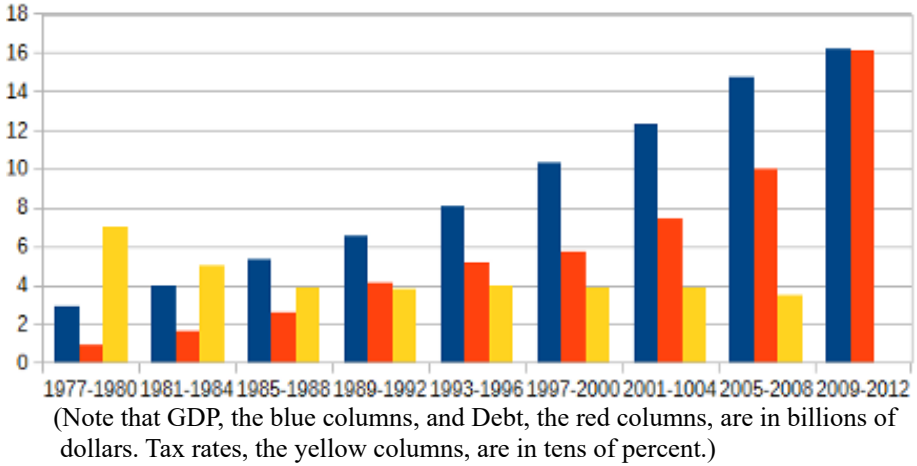
a. These numbers come from several sources:

- GDP:** www.bea.gov/national/index.htm#gdp Current dollar and “real” GDP (Excel spreadsheet);
- Debt:** https://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/pd/histdebt_histo4.htm;
- Tax Rates:** Wikipedia - *Income tax in the United States*.

b. The wealthy typically pay only about 60% of the highest tax rate. Note that when the U.S. had high progressive tax rates, the country was prosperous.

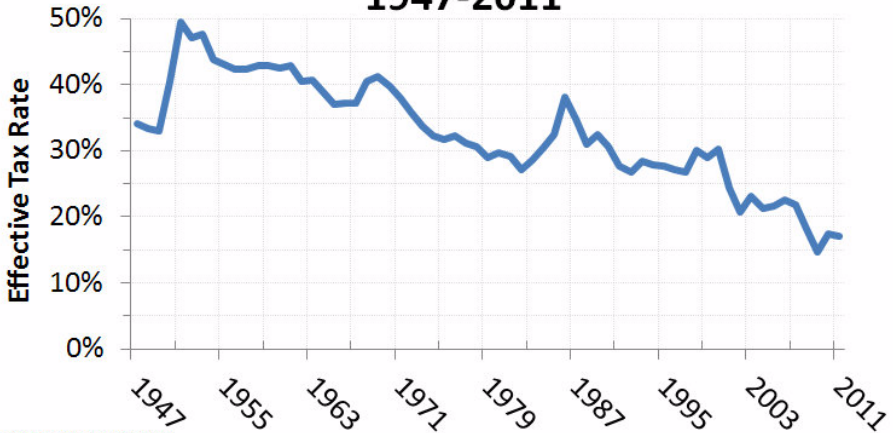
In chart form, the above Table becomes:

U.S. GDP, Debt and Maximum Federal Taxes 1977 — 2012



The huge increase in federal debt over three decades, as the federal income tax rate was cut,³⁹ is suspicious and leads us to examine tax collections and spending:

**U.S. Effective Corporate Tax Rate
1947-2011**

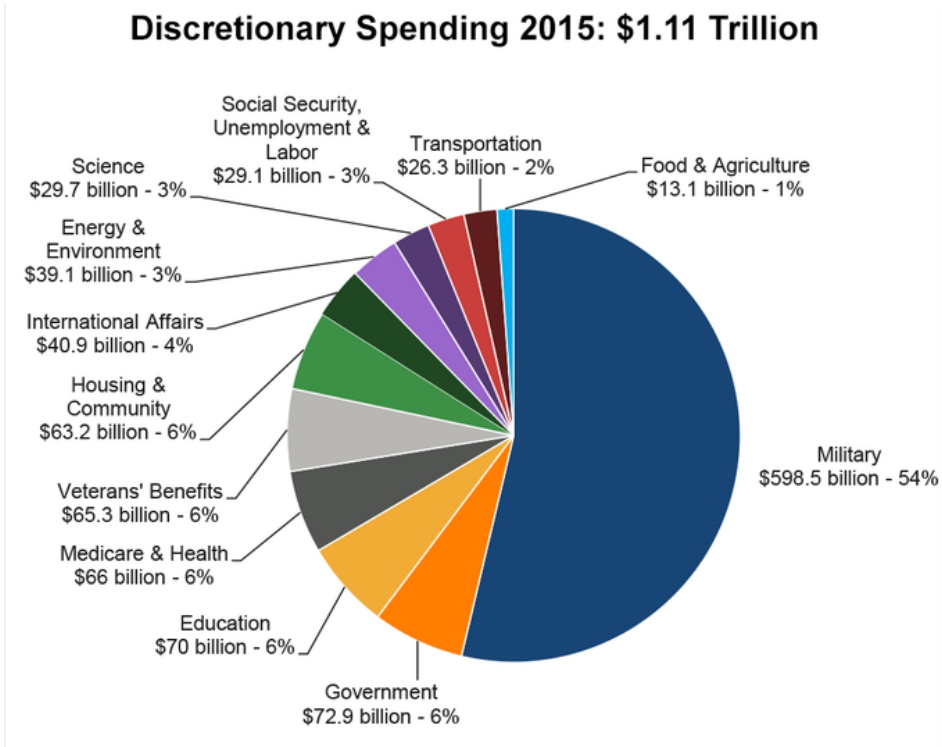


From this graph we can deduce the Corporate Tax rate went from about 30% in 1978-1980 to about 17% in 2010. This, in addition to the diminishing personal income tax rates shown in the prior chart and table, must be part of the reason the federal debt soared between 1980 and 2012.

³⁹ The 70% highest federal income tax rate, during the Carter Presidency (and even higher rates back in the 1950's and 1960's), might seem to be exorbitant. However, individuals in the higher tax brackets have significant deductions. The average tax collections in those brackets are only some 60% of the official tax rate. This makes a 70% top rate only 42%.

Federal Spending

Outside of Social Security and Medicare spending, which are funded separately from the general operating budget⁴⁰ — and which we will examine shortly — just what does compose federal spending? The following ‘pie’ chart⁴¹ tells us:



Here the expenses are clear — the military expense is dominant. Not included in the large military wedge of the chart, but which should be added, are: ‘Veterans’ benefits,’ a portion of the ‘Energy & Environment’ slice (containing nuclear weapons activity), the CIA, and the special appropriations for ongoing military operations and support to clients in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

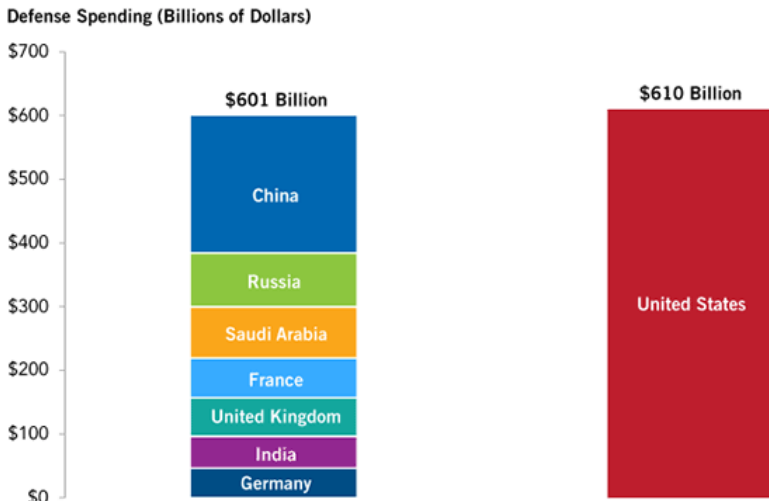
We have to question whether such large military spending is necessary. A comparison of spending on the world’s militaries shows:

40 The General Operating budget, shown here, is NOT the often portrayed “unified budget” of federal spending which lumps ‘on budget’ spending (discretionary, shown on this page), and ‘off budget’ (mostly Social Security) spending together. This was introduced by President L.B.Johnson to minimize the apparent fiscal impact of the Vietnam war, and has been used ever since by federal administrations to mask the huge deficit and debt of the real federal budget shown on this page.

41 Note that the ‘Social Security, Unemployment & Labor’ wedge in this chart refers to programs NOT covered by the ‘Social Security’ we are discussing in this dossier.



and (from a different source):



SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, April 2015. Data are for 2014. Compiled by PGPF.
NOTE: Figures are in U.S. dollars, converted from local currencies using market exchange rates.

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PGPF.ORG

Since France, the United Kingdom and Germany are firm allies of the U.S., and since India and China are historic rivals bordering one another — wouldn't a U.S. military budget of perhaps \$300 Billion be more appropriate?

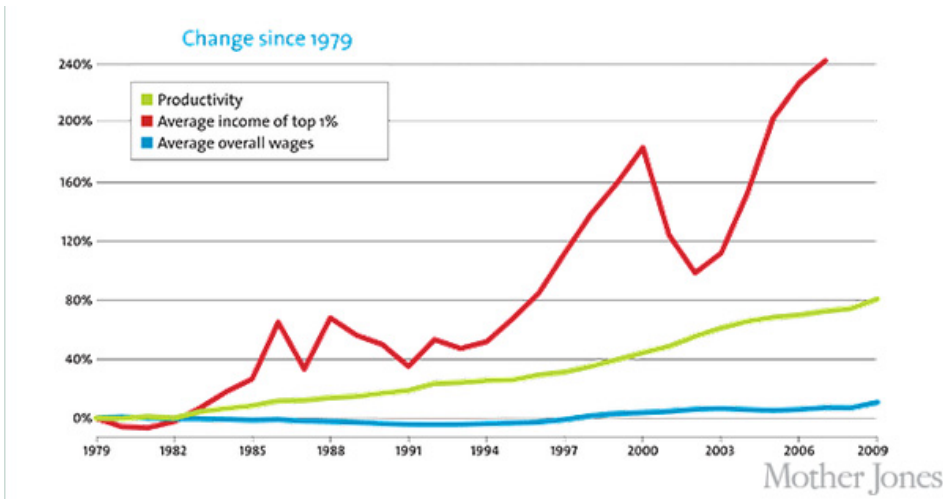
A budget of \$600B plus several hundreds of billions more for other military expenses (such as for current foreign wars) is more that of an Imperial power — not a nation state seeking to protect itself and secure its true vital interests.

Here we start to see why we have such a huge national debt. Income taxes have been lowered at the same time as the U.S. has a huge (and perhaps unnecessarily large) military expense. This begs the further question: are taxes on some portion of the population too low? Who benefited from the tax reductions we see in the above GDP-Debt-Tax chart?

But before looking at taxes, let’s quickly look at the wages of us ordinary people.

Wages

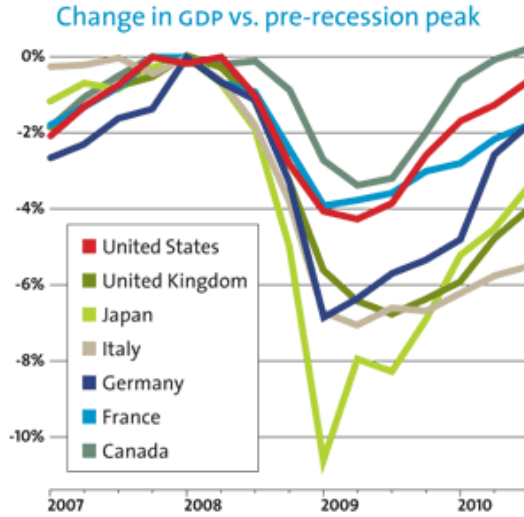
Could it be that wages have got too high? Could it be that American workers have too good an employment situation? Has wage growth outpaced productivity? The following inflation adjusted chart should reveal this.



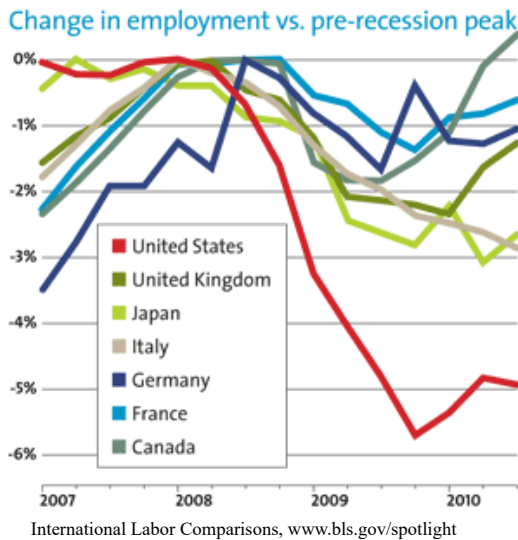
It doesn’t seem as though wages have risen! This graph shows the income of the very wealthy has grown even faster than productivity — while real wage earner income has been ‘flat’ for 30 years! In fact, income of the ‘1%’ has risen so fast that productivity can not explain it. There must be other factors.

Let’s look more at the employment situation:

The following composite chart for GDP of the major Western economies focuses on the recent ‘Great Recession.’



And the following is the companion chart showing employment in the same period for the same economies:



It's apparent from these two sets of charts that U.S. GDP did come back after the 2006-8 'Great Recession,' but U.S. employment didn't.

What happened?

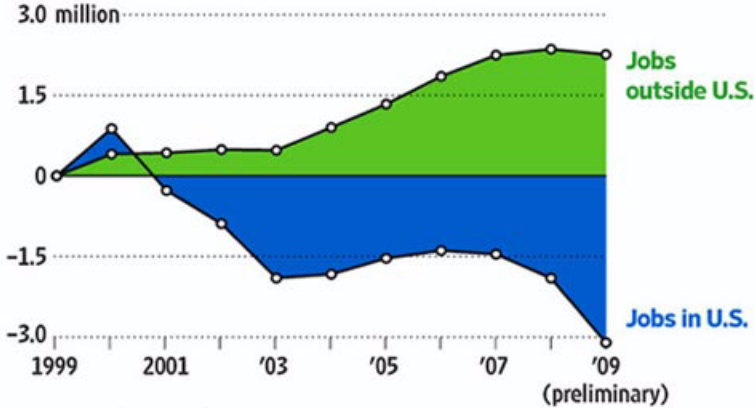
Where did the U.S. jobs go? In Europe, employment did recover substantially. In Japan and Italy, jobs did not recover so well but did not fall as drastically as in the U.S.

But in the U.S. the fall was extreme and there has been very little recovery.

Let's look at outsourcing:

Where the Jobs Are Going

U.S.-based multinational companies added jobs overseas during the 2000s and cut them at home. Cumulative change since 1999

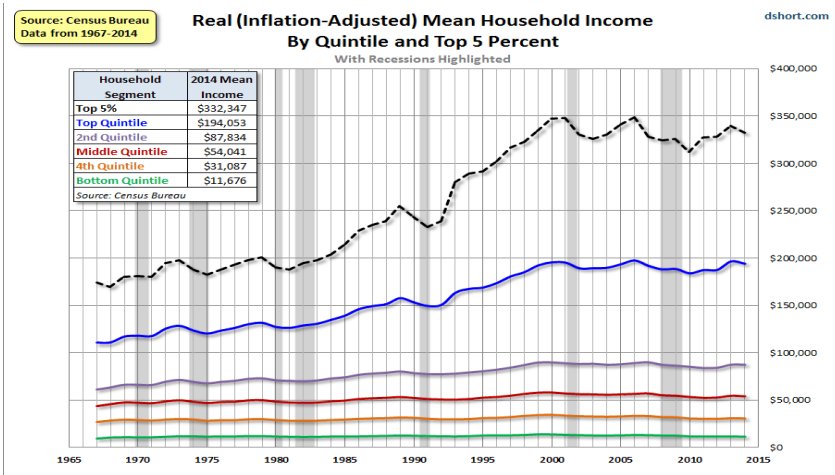


Here we start to see what's going on. The large U.S. corporations have decided they would rather pay Indian, Chinese, Mexican and Russian engineers and computer programmers \$5 an hour, than pay Americans \$40 an hour — and similarly for manufacturing technicians and other U.S. workers.

Another place jobs are going is automation. [I don't have estimates of this.]

Income & Wealth

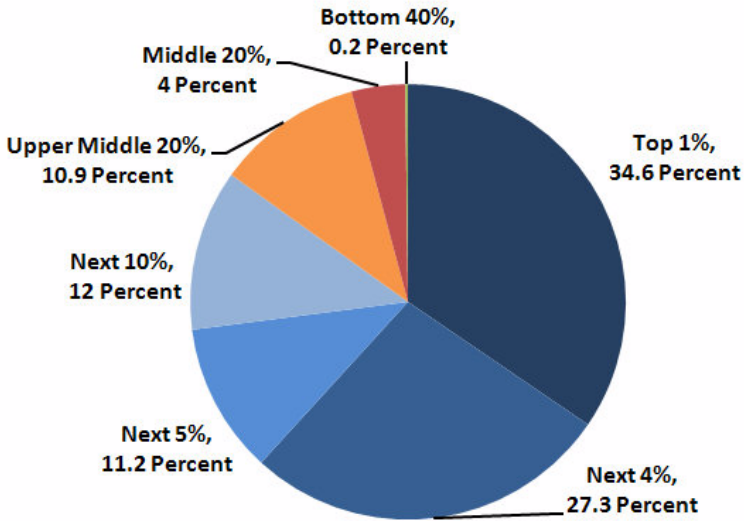
Now let's look at the income position of the wealthy in the U.S.



<https://www.advisorperspectives.com/dshort/updates/2016/09/15/u-s-household-incomes-a-49-year-perspective>

From the graph above we see that since 1980, the wealthy, income wise, have been doing very well indeed. Next, let's look at wealth data. The following shows the maldistribution of wealth in the United States in pie chart form:

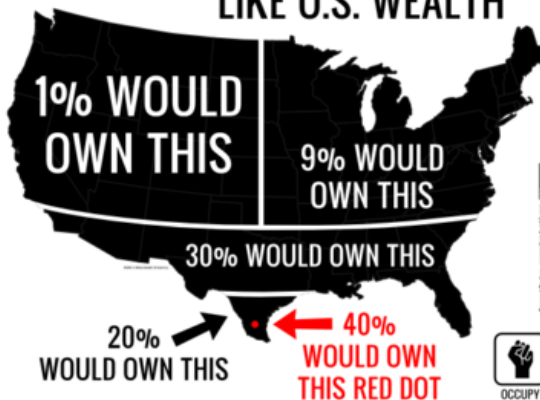
U.S. Distribution of Wealth, 2007



Edward N. Wolff, 2010

and essentially the same data in a more dramatic form:

IF U.S. LAND MASS WERE DIVIDED LIKE U.S. WEALTH



It would seem that such a maldistribution of wealth would call for progressive and higher taxes on the wealthy — not tax reductions favoring them.

Given this general economic background we are now able to more intelligently discuss Social Security.

Social Security Finances

The following tables enable us to determine the current status and recent trends of money flows in the social security system. Again, note that receipts (cash input) to Social Security come from the OASDI entry in workers paychecks, NOT from the general federal funds (Federal withholding) entry.

Table 11: Social Security Receipts, Expenditures and Surpluses^a

Calendar Year	Total receipts (in millions)	Total expenditures (in millions)	Surpluses, net increase during year	Asset Reserves at end of year – Trust Fund
2006	\$744,873	\$555,421	\$189,452	\$2,048,112
2007	\$784,889	\$594,501	\$190,388	\$2,238,500
2008	\$805,302	\$625,143	\$180,159	\$2,418,658
2009	\$807,490	\$685,801	\$121,689	\$2,540,348
2010	\$781,128 6	\$712,52	\$68,602	\$2,608,950
2011	\$805,057	\$736,083	\$68,975	\$2,677,925
2012	\$840,190	\$785,781	\$54,409	\$2,732,334
2013	\$855,021	\$822,925	\$32,096	\$2,764,431
2014	\$884,276	\$859,230	\$25,046	\$2,789,47

a. <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/STSTS/table4a3.html>

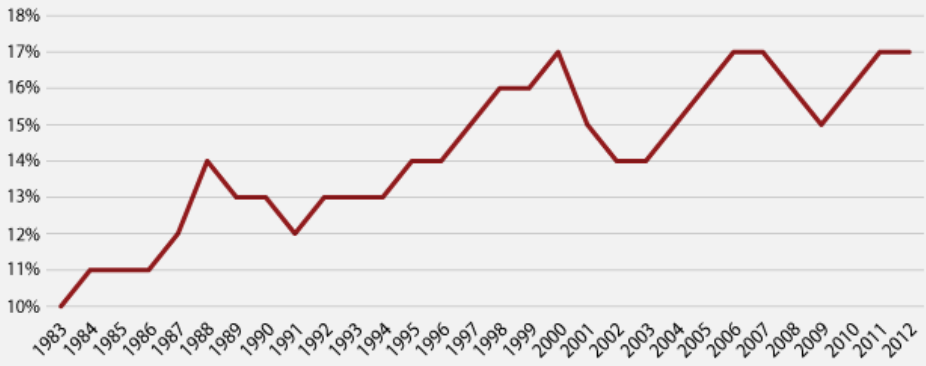
Receipts, expenditures and net additions to the Trust Fund were proceeding as they should until 2010 (the G.W.Bush years), when the OASDI was deliberately cut “in order to decrease taxes on working people” — it was said. Surpluses in 2010 and after dropped to less than what they were before 2010.

Also, as shown in the chart below, a rising share of earnings, at the high level — was escaping OASDI revenue. Increases in the Asset Reserves (the SS Trust Fund) are disappearing. This is apparent in Table 11 above (the bold items).

FIGURE 1

As inequality has risen, an increasing share of earnings has escaped Social Security taxation

Between 1983 and 2012, the share of earnings that escaped taxation rose 7 percentage points



Source: Social Security Administration, "Annual Statistical Supplement: Table 4.B1—Number of workers with taxable earnings, amount of earnings, and Social Security numbers issued, selected years 1937–2012" (2013), available at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2013/4b.pdf>.

Let's now turn to SS benefits.

Table 12: Social Security Benefits, September 2015^a

Type of Beneficiary	Number of Beneficiaries (thousands)	Percent of Beneficiaries	Total monthly benefits (millions)	Average monthly benefit
Retired workers	39,893	66.8%	\$53,359	\$1,338
Spouses of retired workers	2,325	3.9%	\$1,592	\$685
Children of retired workers	637	1.1%	\$414	\$649
Children of deceased workers	1,866	3.1%	\$1,550	\$831
Widowed mothers and fathers	140	0.2%	\$132	\$941
Disabled workers, spouses of, children of	10,812	18.1%	\$11,049	\$1,022
Other	4,064	6.8%	\$5,072	4,153
total	59,737	100%	\$73,168	

a. Data taken from: https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/quickfacts/stat_snapshot/ Research, Statistics, & Policy Analysis Monthly Statistical Snapshot, September 2015 Table 2. Social Security Benefits.

144 the NEIGHBORHOODS NETWORK

By examining these SS revenue and benefits tables, we can calculate:

- Worker retirement is the major part of, but only one part of, Social Security. Retired workers are about 67% of the beneficiaries. Their spouses account for another 4%. Disabled workers, their spouses and children receive another 18%. Children of deceased workers receive yet another 3%.
- The benefits table gives some numbers from which we can calculate the number of retired workers collecting SS. Since their monthly benefits total to \$53,359M and the average monthly benefit is \$1,338, this implies there are $\$53,359,000,000 / (\$1,338 \times 12)$ or 39.9 million retirees on Social Security.
- Doing the same kind of calculation on spouses of retired workers gives us another 2.3 million people who, mostly, are of retirement age.
- Retired railroad workers, school teachers, and others who are not covered by Social Security would add several million people to the 42 million people accounted for in the two items above. This total is close to the 46 million people who are 65 or over in the population chart at the beginning of this dossier. This is a gross check of the various numbers we've been collecting.
- The total monthly SS benefits (of 12 x \$73,168M) in Table 12 add up to \$878B for 2014. This was the SS outlay for 2014.
- The average wage earned⁴² in 2014 in the U.S. was about: \$44,570. There are about 145 million wage earners in the U.S. so that the total wages of U.S. workers is about: $\$44,570 \times 145 \text{ million} = \6.46T .
- Dividing \$0.859T (total SS expenditures in 2014) by \$6.46T (portion of GDP earned by workers) is 0.133 or 13.3%. With employers paying one-half of the Social security premium, we estimate a 6.6% premium (OASDI) deduction on wages is required for current payouts.

As a percentage of overall GDP (of \$16T in 2015), required Social Security funding is a small portion of the economy. SS requirements divided by GDP, or $0.878\text{T} / \$16\text{T}$ is 0.055 or 5.5%. This suggests that Social Security should additionally be financed by those who receive the other more than half of the rewards of the economy — that is by those who received income from 'profits and rents' to the tune of \$9.5T in 2015 (or 60% of GDP).⁴³

42 <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/central.html>

43 Note: $\$16\text{T} - \6.5T (approx) = $\$9.5\text{T}$. Also note: both the $\$6.47\text{T}$ for wage earners, and $\$9.5\text{T}$ for non-wage income, are pre-tax amounts.

Summary of SS Basics

A mature, technology based nation-state should be able to sustain a reasonable retirement for persons of ages 65 or more who (1) have worked consistently and diligently for 40 or more years, after studying for a decade and a half or more to become educated and productive, (2) have become of age where their physical capabilities are diminished, and (3) when their mental agility is significantly lower than that of younger persons.

To further put SS into perspective, we also note the following:

- SS was created in 1935 for good reason. There were huge numbers of destitute elderly, and not just from the Great Depression. Most people were not able, and now still cannot, save enough to ever ‘retire’ without SS.
- An adequate system of SS is vital to the vast majority of the population. Without it (and Medicare) most persons as they grow old would quickly deplete their savings. With current savings rates, most of our population, if unemployed, would be unable to pay for food, rent and medicine in a few months.
- The system is popular. The vast majority of the population is in favor of continuing it into the indefinite future, even expanding it (both age wise, and in amount of benefits).⁴⁴
- Administration of SS is extremely efficient. Less than 4% of collected revenue is devoted to administration of the system.
- Existence of a reasonable level of support for retired persons, such as SS and Medicare provide, produces a stabilizing level of economic demand for the overall economy. Most SS benefits are spent — providing a multiplier effect that constitutes a minimal level of demand from a significant portion of the population.
- For many retired persons, some savings, at end of life, becomes available as inheritance to the next generation. This, for almost all families, would be lost without SS and Medicare.
- Lacking SS and Medicare, most older persons quickly become a burden to the next generation — one that would leave most families desperate and destitute — especially with the current requirement that all able bodied persons in most families must become employed.

We conclude that, currently, the Social Security system is stable and maintainable in the short-term, and in the long term is necessary for a just society.

⁴⁴ See: <https://www.nasi.org/learn/social-security/public-opinions-social-security>

A Serious Threat

In our study, we could not ignore the following:

Generally

Thirty five years ago, starting in 1981, huge changes in the political economy, directed from Washington, D.C. were pursued: (1) a series of massive and permanent tax cuts, disproportionately benefiting the wealthy, were legislated; (2) a costly and continuing military build-up was made — in part to seriously threaten the Soviet Union — and in part to assert America’s ‘special status’ in the world; and (3) worker’s unions were targeted for emasculation.

Beginning in the early 1990s, in part due to the dismantling of the Soviet Empire and thus its influence in third world economies, in part due to the opening of China to foreign investors, and in part due to the earlier establishment of the IMF and World Bank, and then the WTO — foreign investment by American holders and handlers of investment wealth increased enormously. Less investment was made in manufacturing in the U.S. — with the result that U.S. manufacturing has steadily declined — along with American manufacturing jobs, wage growth, and tax receipts from such better paying jobs.

Reducing taxes on the wealthy, and degrading the U.S. economy — while increasing military spending — had the predictable and direct result of vastly increasing the national debt. Table 10 on page 134 of GDP and the Debt shows this clearly — with the debt at \$0.9T (1/3 of GDP) in 1980 and going to \$16T (equal to GDP) at the end of Obama’s first term in 2012 — with only a minor slowdown of debt creation during the Clinton years.

This economic policy change was apparently deliberate — not only to alter the tax environment to favor the wealthy and to advance their commercial foreign policy interests, but to suppress government social programs as well. The “starve the Beast” theology (the Beast being the social benefits of government), promoted by persons like Grover Norquist and Milton Freedman, became the ideological backdrop⁴⁵ to the administrations of Ronald Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, and G.W. Bush. The strategy was simple and has been consistent over the past 35 years: put the government deeply into debt (by further enriching the rich) and use that debt to justify reduction and elimination of social programs.

45 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grover_Norquist. Also see: democraticcapitalism.net/starve-the-beast

Full discussions of this, with checkable references, are contained in books by: Kevin Phillips,⁴⁶ Allen Smith,⁴⁷ Keith Quincy,⁴⁸ Chalmers Johnson,⁴⁹ and others.

The Specific Threat to Social Security

Thus, destruction of Social Security, Medicare, and all other parts of the “safety net for the people” is the clear intent of those who currently govern America. Such intent cannot be openly admitted to a population which prefers the existence and even enhancement of that safety net. Rather, those who have that intent are conducting a campaign to disparage SS — and especially to make younger people feel SS is failing and cannot be sustained into a future where they would benefit from it. This malicious campaign claims:

1. People, because of advances in medicine, will live much longer. That will drive up the cost of Social Security to unaffordable levels. They say we need to keep increasing the retirement age for receiving SS benefits.
2. Revenues from wage earners cannot be raised enough to keep SS solvent — particularly fifteen, thirty and seventy years from now. They say the obligations that exist to fund those revenues into the future are in the many tens of trillions of dollars!
3. They are telling younger people that they are, and will increasingly be, paying money into a ‘bankrupt’ welfare system — one from which they will never benefit. This is unfair to them. They say Social Security is just a ‘Ponzi scheme.’
4. Inflation is low. They say there is no need to make cost-of-living allowances (COLA) to SS benefits.
5. The national debt is huge. The nation cannot afford SS and other such benefits, they say.
6. The Social Security Trust Fund (the surplus) is an illusion. It’s just non-marketable IOUs from the Treasury. We are told: given the astronomical national debt, it won’t get paid back!
7. The money going to SS would be better used as investment — to create jobs.

In fact, all these dire suppositions are either false or very misleading:

46 Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy, The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2006)

47 Allen W. Smith, *The Looting of Social Security*, (New York: Carrol & Graf Publishers, 2004)

48 Keith Quincy, *Worse than You Think, The Real Economy Hidden Beneath Washington’s Rigged Statistics, and Where to Go from Here*, (2012)

49 Chalmers Johnson, *Dismantling the Empire, America’s Last Best Hope*, (New York: Henry Holt, 2010)

A general increase in life expectancies (at birth) of Americans from about 79 years (in 1989) to about 84 years (in 2060)⁵⁰ should increase the number of us over 65. This is the premise of the first claim above. But such an increase, over a 45 year period, if it materializes, is hardly cause for alarm. If increases in productivity (particularly from the body of automation that should come into being in the next one-half century) cannot provide the revenue necessary to adjust for such a modest change — something is gravely wrong with the economic system.

A precipitous decline in the numbers of wage earners or the wages they might earn in the future (implied by the second claim above) — is quite a confession of expectation — if not intent. If things continue as they have, under the current form of globalization, and as investor owned automation comes to full-fledged maturity — this claim just might be correct. That implies, however, a level of poverty will be imposed on the American citizenry that will lead either to revolution or brutal suppression of the population.

Social Security is most certainly not a Ponzi scheme (the third claim above). As long as ordinary people earn income from employment as they have in the past (or derive income from automation in the future), the system operates in a relatively stable way.

Regarding inflation (the fourth claim above says it is negligible) — it is real and much higher than indicated by the government figures as reported by the mass media. See the book (referenced above) by Keith Quincy.

The national debt (fifth above) is indeed huge. The reasons are: (1) an unjustifiable foreign policy and consequent military expense (as described by Chalmers Johnson), (2) legalized tax evasion (as described by the Allen Smith book), and (3) a degradation of the economy by the shift of investment abroad by those who have effective control of the working capital of America. All of these factors need to be understood and corrected. If they are not, the people of America will be crushed — whether SS exists or not.

Sixth, the current Trust Fund deposits must be honored for what they are — savings to fund Social Security during exceptional periods. Political action by the citizenry can ensure this happens.

Regarding the seventh claim, the supply side, ‘trickle down’ argument is simply not true. The wealthy will use most of any more money they obtain to either invest abroad or purchase non-productive property in the U.S. Our economy is currently demand side limited, not supply side limited.

Beyond the publicly expressed complaints denigrating Social Security, we perceive other reasons the U.S. corporate and finance interests wish to destroy it:

50 Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1989 to 2060 graph in: U.S. Population Projections: 2012 to 2060, Jennifer M. Ortman, Population Division, Presentation for the FFC/GW Brown Bag Seminar Series on Forecasting, Washington, DC, February 7, 2013, United States Census Bureau.

- SS reduces the ability of businesses to exploit elderly workers.
- It reduces the ability of the business class to confiscate virtually all the property and savings of the unemployable elderly.
- It allows younger workers to enjoy some inheritance from their parents — which provides some independence from workplace abuse.
- Government use of SS surpluses reduces the amount of risk-free, interest income that rich bond holders can obtain from government.
- It is a successful example of government working beneficially and efficiently for the public good. As such it might encourage the public to want more of government to “promote the general welfare” that is specifically stated as a legitimate function of government in the opening paragraph of the U.S. Constitution.

It is important to understand that the current, horrendous national debt has nothing to do with Social Security. In fact, confiscation of Social Security surpluses, and their use in funding ‘in budget’ government operations, allows that debt to be understated by almost \$3 trillion. As we’ve noted earlier in this dossier, Social Security is a program separate from the other parts of the federal government and is funded by a separate premium, or tax if you will, on wages and a co-tax on employers. The OASDI deduction on pay check stubs indicates worker contribution to Social Security and is separate from the federal income tax. High wage incomes, such as those earned by middle and upper level corporate managers, are taxed per OASDI only up to \$118,500. Non-wage income obtained by the investing wealthy currently contributes nothing to it.

The totality of these maliciously pessimistic predictions about Social Security are appropriately summarized in this quote from the AMERICA ABANDONED chapter, page 195, of Jeff Faux’s excellent book: ***The Global Class War***.⁵¹

In Washington, the divine right of multinational corporations to have access to the world’s cheap labor trumped any concern for the resulting red ink. The indifference to an out-of-control foreign debt is in striking contrast to the fretting about projections that the Social Security system might have to start borrowing money forty years from now. On the present path, accumulating trade deficits will touch off a serious economic crisis long before the Social Security trust fund needs a modest tax to cover its obligations

51 Jeff Faux, ***The Global Class War: How America’s Bipartisan Elite Lost Our Future and What It will Take to Win It Back***, (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006)

What Should be the Social Security Future

In a sane and just society, the future of persons (and institutions like Social Security) should be secure. Evolution of science and technology should yield:

1. Rapid automation of both agriculture and the manufacture of products ranging from housewares, clothing, homes, buildings, vehicles for transport, to much else — including the manufacture of automation equipment itself.
2. Break-throughs to cure most cancers and other diseases, including many of the diseases of old age. (This should increase the average life-span some, but will likely have a greater impact on the quality of life toward the end of life.)
3. A new kind of economy, where automation is community owned, where that automation generates considerable revenue, and where that revenue is fairly distributed to the population. The population then purchases and uses the products of that automation. Where there is an excess of such revenue, it could be used to invest into still more automation. Such community ownership, and continued expansion, of automation, would thus create a rising ‘floor’ of shared prosperity and security from which real human freedom could flow:
4. Freedom of all people from tedious, dangerous, repetitive and stressful work — through extensive application of automation to do such work.
5. Freedom of all people to pursue activities of their own free choosing: learning; research; creating new products, inventing new technical systems; building new cities; creating new enterprises and organizations; creating works of art; entertaining; cooking; exploration of space; and whatever else that does not infringe upon the rights of others.

We need to understand that such a future could now be built and enjoyed by both the American population and people throughout the world. It is the true promise of the genie of technology — which humans are now embracing in the palms of their hands.

In Conclusion

In this dossier, we cannot fully describe Social Security in every detailed aspect. However, from a policy point of view, we judge it not only an indefinitely viable public program administered by federal government — but as an efficient past performer which can be enhanced and expanded to provide even more benefit to Americans than it has in the past and present. It needs to be protected from those who would first diminish, then destroy it. Furthermore, the underlying economic system needs to be adjusted to benefit the American population as a whole — not just the privileged few.

In consideration of what we have found — and partially documented above — we suggest, for your consideration, the following actions we the citizenry might demand be implemented into law by the federal legislatures:

Action Option #1 — Do Nothing

Let the current political actors proceed with their intentions toward SS:

- Keep increasing the full retirement age. Make it so an ever larger fraction of the public never gets Social Security, and so those that do only receive it for fewer and fewer years.
- Let the surplus evaporate. When it does, just reduce benefits each year to what revenues allow.
- Eliminate COLA (cost of living allowances). Let inflation quickly erode SS benefits.
- When younger people start seriously objecting to OASDI taxes for which their anticipated benefits are negligible — just use that as an excuse for eliminating this “undesirable” program.

Action Option #2 — Minor Modification

Patch SS up. But do not turn it into a more valuable, long-term stable, and ultimately self-sustaining program clearly and unequivocally benefiting all the citizenry.

- Eliminate the cap (currently \$118,500) on high income earnings. Don’t allow revenue to decrease due to inflation or evasion by higher earners.
- Increase the OASDI premium rate as necessary to match revenue to benefits.

But:

- Do not build-up the Trust Fund to where it is a significant source of finance to fund infrastructure and other legitimate government directed projects. Rather continue to force the government, as the dollar loses its “reserve currency” status, to borrow for such projects at high interest rates from the wealthy who profit from high value, low risk bonds.
- Do not turn the SS Trust Fund ‘special IOUs’ into priority federal instruments, truly backed by the ‘full faith and credit of the United States government.’ Let the redemption of this surplus remain questionable.

Action Option #3 — Expand SS into a Retirement Bank

This option does what is necessary to deliver on Social Security’s potential — on a long-term, unequivocal basis. It makes SS a principal funding source for legitimate government activity while using the interest on the surplus to fund SS payments.

Do not issue T-Bonds to wealthy money holders to collect risk-free interest. Rather:

- Build the Trust Fund from its current \$2.7T surplus to \$20T, \$30T or more — over a 30 to 50 year period.
- Do so by (1) removing any cap on OASDI contributions, (2) taxing lucrative banking and other speculative activity, and (3) taxing corporate overseas profits.
- Permit the Trust Funds (the surplus) to be lent for infrastructure and other constructive projects in America — but only those for which there is adequate collateral — of the same types and quality as would be required by a prudent commercial bank.

This yields, at 3% interest, \$0.7T to \$1T per year of cash to fund benefits.

As the dollar loses its “reserve currency” status (this is already happening), and economic circumstances stabilize after that ‘balance of world power’ changing event, the interest rate should converge to perhaps a real 3% rate. 3% of \$30T is roughly \$1T a year of funding for SS payouts. SS tax collections could then be used to accelerate further Trust Fund building.

Action Option #4 — Convert SS into Citizen’s Capitalism

This builds on Option #3, but expands its scope.

- Start building and purchasing the fully automated agriculture and industry that will come into existence in the next ten years or so.
- As farm automation and automated: food processing, metal fabrication, building construction, solar energy generating plants, and so on — generate profit in the commercial market — distribute that profit to the general population. (i.e. to share the benefits of real automation.)⁵²
- With time (many decades), the necessities of living become built and provided for by an (almost) fully automated economy.
- Let the true innovators among the business class continue to do their magic of providing new products and services. In a new, prosperous economy where energy supply, most transportation, much agriculture, and much construction is

52 Again, an example of this kind of thing is the: Annual individual payout of the Alaska Permanent Fund. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/Alaska_Permanent_Fund.

highly automated — and in public hands — this special area will be but a fraction of the overall economy, yet a very important part of it. Motivated by the energy and ideas of those who are both imaginative and ambitious, it will provide pathways to better technology and organization.

Such an arrangement provides a ‘floor’ of economic security for all citizens. It transforms Social Security into an important financial subsystem belonging to, and benefiting, all citizens — thus providing a comfortable, secure and stable level of existence for everyone. It solves the terrible predicament we are now drifting into (the accumulation of virtually all the wealth and all income derived from automation technology into the hands of a few).

End of Dossier

Appendix B — The 10 Commandments of Democracy

Much of this book can be summarized into a little list of should do's and should not do's for all of us. They are:

1. Thou shalt not remain a child. Thou shalt become a responsible adult participating in self governance with thy neighbors.
2. Thou shalt meet regularly with thy neighbors to discuss the public issues they and you deem of high importance.
3. Thou shalt participate in Work Groups to investigate the facts of issues, find the root causes of problems, and determine the best solutions. Thou shalt become an excellent detective, team player, and team leader.
4. Thou shalt help build the true Common Ground. Thou shalt not divide thyself into hostile tribes.
5. Thou shalt respect thy neighbor. His or her sincerely held opinions and convictions are worthy of thorough and impartial consideration.
6. Thou shalt help build a great and accurate information library containing the facts pertinent to governance.
7. Thou shalt embrace the truth. Thou shalt reject the false notions thou hast treasured in the past. Thou shalt honor the full truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth — as revealed by honest and thorough investigation of every issue of public importance.
8. Thou shalt select and elect representatives to all levels of governance, and thou shall monitor their productions — ensuring the accurate implementation of the public will.
9. Thou shalt encourage the creation of new neighborhood units.
10. Thou shalt watch over and protect tNN, its Registries, its Relays, and its NIN — that is, its integrity.

There is another, greater, and more fundamental “10 Commandments.” The commandments expressed above are only a corollary to those more fundamental commandments.

GLOSSARY

3NS (or Neighborhood Network News Service)

A service conducted by tNN to gather and disseminate the current news.

charter

As used in this book, a charter is the document issued by a neighborhood unit to define the work a work group is to perform.

Collaboration Group

A group of NUs collaborating to produce a policy mandate from a issue-solution.

data base

A store of accessible information. Typically, it is information contained in nonvolatile storage in a computer system — along with an organized and efficient means for keeping track of the information, for adding to and deleting from it, and for access to it.

democracy

Rule by the people. Derived from the Greek: “demos” meaning the people and “cracy” meaning rule by. It is this and nothing less.

It doesn't merely mean that there are “elections” nor that people are sometimes able to complain about something in public without repression.

Furthermore, democracy is not about the freedom of ‘special interest’ groups to lobby Congress (similar to monarchies where the most powerful petition the King). Rather it is the population finding its “common ground” of policies concerning governance, then implementing those through government officials who are truly ‘public servants.’

district

An election region of a city, state or the country. Each district corresponds to both a geographical area and the set of people who reside there and who elect a legislator or government official.

dumb network

A form of telecommunications network where the network simply transmits packets of information reliably from one endpoint to another without any special processing on the packets.

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An entity desiring to communicate simply requests communication service (at a specified transmission rate, maximum bit error rate, maximum permitted jitter, and maximum delay time) to an intended endpoint. If the addressed end point agrees to so communicate, packets are simply transferred without modification.

Each user of the network purchases a commercially vended interface box which fits between the network and the users' telephones, computers, TV, and so on.

All specific services (email, telephony, file transfer, video conferencing, and so on) are handled as the communicating pair mutually determine via computer programs they have specified in their interface boxes. It is the appropriate communications infrastructure of a genuinely free, decentralized society.

Forms

These are text boxes requesting information from someone or something accessing a web site over the Internet. They show up on your browser when you try to access some service from the web site – and the web site either needs some identification from you to establish you are entitled to the service you are requesting, or some other kind of information from you that it needs to perform that service.

General Meeting (or GM)

The periodic business meeting of a neighborhood unit. It might typically be held once a month in or near the neighborhood. Here is where officers are selected, work groups give reports, attending neighbors discuss issues, and so forth.

Information Dispatch (ID)

An information document which is submitted to a Relay for broadcast to all the NUs in one or more Registries. The broadcast of it is conditional upon filtering by a randomly selected set of NUs in the Registries. A majority of that selected set must feel the document is truthful in what it claims and is worthy of consideration by the entirety of the NUs in the targeted Registries.

Information Expeditors (IEs)

These are people or work groups of people dedicated to thoroughly understand important public topics — in order to help information searchers more quickly and efficiently gain the subject knowledge they need to do their work.

These people resemble the reference librarians we know from the Public Libraries.

Initial Group (or IG)

A cluster of neighborhoods, which do not need to be adjacent to one another, and which are collaborating on some investigation or action of mutual interest. The work on which

they collaborate either requires more effort than a single NU can provide, or can benefit from expertise or a multiplicity of viewpoints that can only be obtained through collaboration with many entities.

For work that is sufficiently simple, an IG can consist of a single NU.

interpolate

When a mathematical curve is approximated by numbers listed in a table, the table is usually accurate only for the points listed. If you need to know (approximately) the value of a point in between two listed points, you can make an approximation. For instance, if the point you need the value for is half way between two listed points, you can estimate that the value you want is one-half way between the values of the two nearby points.

issue

Issues are what neighborhoods consider. Issues are whatever people in a neighborhood care to focus on, to study, and deal with.

issue-solution

An issue-solution or issue-solution pair is a combination of a well-framed issue and a solution found to that issue. The term usually refers to a document that has been produced after a significant investigative effort. When it is well developed, an issue-solution can also be called a ‘well-formed-initiative’ or ‘well-constructed item.’ An issue-solution often becomes a mandate or ‘policy directive’ to legislators or officials.

Also see: well constructed items.

mandate delivery action (or MDA)

When a Policy Directive is created by the four step process described in the NETWORKING chapter and becomes part of the public’s common ground, it is ready for delivery to government. The delivery process is called an MDA.

Moderator/ Meeting Lead

The officer, in a neighborhood unit, selected and charged with arranging for, conducting, and moderating, the next general meeting.

Neighborhood Information Network (NIN)

The highly decentralized, yet highly accessible tNN database of information collected by the NUs. See Chapter 8.

Neighborhood Units (or NUs)

These are the formal tNN neighborhoods, organized into the Neighborhoods Network as described in chapter 2 of this book.

Network Maintenance Instructions (NMIs)

For the most part, these are messages between tNN web site developers and maintainers. Some such messages are also directed to NUs to inform them of (1) problems with tNN database and communications services (Registries, Relays) and (2) new and forthcoming features.

NMIs can also be issued between NUs on matters concerning tNN integrity and for other urgent tNN infrastructure or emergency notices.

Open Source

Computer software that is released under a license in which the copyright holder grants users the rights to use, study, change, and distribute the software and its source code to anyone and for any purpose.

Personal Identification Number (PIN)

A pre-agreed-upon number between two parties to a transaction, which, when given by one, verifies to the other that the giver is who it claims to be.

Policy Directive (PD)

A document, a dossier created via the **tNN policy directive process** described in the NETWORKING chapter. If it successfully traverses the entire process, it becomes the subject of a mandate delivery action (MDA) to an elected representative.

public will

For the purposes of this book, the “public will” is the totality of the specific “well constructed items” or policy mandates that the public has created through study and very broad agreement. It is the “common ground” that the public has developed through conscious effort by the neighborhoods network. It is the body of agreed upon action and policy that legitimate government is expected to translate into public law and executive action.

Registries

These are lists of neighborhoods (NUs) useful for collaboration, statistical testing of policy proposals, and much else. Each election district (for Senator, Mayor, etc.) in the nation is to have such a list.

In addition to a list of NUs, each Registry also describes the elected office, the current office holder, the geographical extent of the election district, and provides a posting board and other information useful for NU collaboration within the district.

Registries are maintained by volunteer NUs and are accessible by NUs as they desire or need. NUs hosting Registries can be called Registries.

Relays

Initially these will be volunteer NUs capable of transmitting tNN messages to targeted subsets of the tNN. They are useful for broadcasting information messages and for processing policy directives. In the future, these may be web accessible programs that do the relay function. For a detailed description, see chapter 7.

Representative

In this book it means either an elected government legislator or official in an executive department of government.

the Neighborhoods Network (tNN)

That organization of people, NUs, Registries, Relays and NIN as described in this book, intended to enable citizens to instantiate genuine democracy.

Two Tier

This is an economic arrangement whereby government provides some kind of infrastructure (tier one) which the citizenry and industry (tier two) use to perform something useful.

The U.S. highway system is an example. Government provides and maintains the roads and highways, and the system of signs and signals, to direct traffic safely and efficiently. Commercial interests provide the cars, trucks, buses, gasoline, and so forth. Citizens and businesses use the system to travel and move things.

URL (or Uniform Resource Locator)

Within the internet, a URL specifies the location of an object such as a web site and the means (i.e. the communications protocol) by which it can be accessed. For example:

<http://www.theneighborhoodsnetwork.org>

specifies the web site: www.theneighborhoodsnetwork.org and access to it per use of the hyper text transfer protocol (http).

web-site

Web-site as mentioned in this book means a web-site created for tNN activity. These are created and maintained by work groups chartered by the NU's to provide for their database and communication needs. They likely use web software built and distributed by tNN web site WGs. Such web sites contain the information used by the NUs and information constituting the NIN.

well constructed items

I sometimes refer to issue-solutions that have been successfully processed into tentative 'policy directives' as 'well constructed items' of the public will. They are candidate policy mandates that are likely to be directed and delivered to public representatives and officials.

They are constructed through a rigorous process of suggestion, formulation, filtering, investigation, evaluation, and rework by the public which is organized into the tNN for the express purpose of creating them.

They are the life-blood of real democracy. They are the policies, which, when approved by the vast majority of the citizenry, the legislatures must convert into coherent law and which the executive departments must administer into public reality.

work groups

A set of people, who are members of NUs, assigned a specific task which is described in a charter. A work group is formed by a NU or cluster of NUs to investigate something or perform some specific function that the NU or cluster of NUs deems of considerable importance. Work groups can also be called: 'task forces.'

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