MEASURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE GENUINE PROGRESS INDEX

IMPACT OF CAP SITES ON VOLUNTEERISM

Prepared by:
Ronald Colman, Ph.D
Executive Director, GPI Atlantic

Survey Administration: Karen Laine and Catherine Dextrase, B.A.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September-October, 2001, GPI Atlantic constructed a survey designed to assess the value of the voluntary work generated by British Columbia's rural CAP sites. In November, 2001, that survey was administered to 133 rural CAP sites in B.C.

1. Information beyond the Mandate of this Study

The survey process produced valuable and unanticipated information on a wide range of issues beyond the mandate of this project:

1) The survey researchers were able to update the rural CAP site database, to establish new contact information for CAP site coordinators, to record concerns about funding and communications issues, and to learn a lot about the strengths and weaknesses of current CAP site administration. Some of this information is recorded in chapter 2 of this report and in Appendix A, and will provide Industry Canada with practical tools for more efficient administration of the Community Access Program.

2) In addition, the survey results themselves provide important information beyond the mandate of this study – about the demographic profile of CAP site coordinators, the services and training offered at rural CAP sites, the clientele served, the profound and subtle impacts of CAP sites on communities, and more. In particular, detailed responses to the final open-ended question in the survey provide particularly revealing insights, and are reproduced verbatim in Appendix A.

   Although some of this information is briefly summarized in chapters 3, 4, and 6, the survey results constitute a rich and detailed databank on rural CAP sites, with considerable new information that warrants further analysis and investigation. GPI Atlantic strongly recommends that this particular study be viewed simply as a first step in that process. The full survey instrument is reproduced in Appendix B.

3) Thirdly, the researchers have recorded important lessons learned from the process of administering the survey itself (see Appendix A). For example, the electronic survey tool was found to have great strengths, but it also created considerable challenges, both in the administration of the survey and in the recording of data. In the end, all results were entered manually without benefit of a double entry process, and they therefore require checking before they are publicly released. It is hoped that the lessons learned will assist Industry Canada in any follow-up survey or study of the important and provocative issues raised in this survey.

GPI Atlantic suggests that all three forms of information mentioned above, though unanticipated and beyond the mandate of this particular project, are as valuable to Industry Canada as the results reported for this study.

2. Impact of CAP Sites on Volunteerism

Chapters 1 and 3 of this report provide the conceptual background for the study. In particular, it is noted that the true and full value of CAP sites is not recorded or accounted for in Canada's conventional measures of progress. On the contrary, CAP funding is conventionally considered as a cost in government ledgers (and thus subject to potential cuts in an era of fiscal restraint), rather than as an investment in social capital that produces a significant return to the market economy. The contribution of CAP volunteers, for example, remains invisible in the conventional accounts, and (until now) there has been no empirical information on the subject.

The Genuine Progress Index, by contrast, provides a more comprehensive and accurate method of assessment and evaluation, as it does account for the value of voluntary and other unpaid work, of equity and social inclusion, of educational attainment, of community strength, and of other aspects of human and social capital. These purposes and functions are seminal to the purpose and mandate of the Community Access Program.

It is believed that this study provides the first empirical information on the value of voluntary work generated by CAP sites in Canada. Although these results, detailed in chapter 5, are from rural CAP sites in British Columbia, Industry Canada may choose to extrapolate them for the country as a whole.

- CAP site coordinators and volunteers contribute about 630,000 volunteer hours each year to British Columbia's rural CAP sites, providing an estimated $9.5 million in services to the British Columbia economy.

- This includes more than 120,000 volunteer hours provided by CAP site coordinators, worth $1.8 million annually. On average, each CAP site coordinator provides 308 hours annually on a voluntary basis, worth $4,600 a year.[1] This contribution is not evenly distributed, as some coordinators are fully paid, and others work completely on a voluntary basis.

- Fully one-third of all coordinator hours at British Columbia's rural CAP sites are provided on a voluntary basis. These coordinators contribute an additional 65,000 volunteer hours annually to other causes, for a total voluntary work contribution of $2.8 million a year. They also pay out about $124,000 a year out of their own pockets for expenses directly connected with their CAP site work.

- Most CAP site coordinators are middle-aged women, many of whom carry a significant additional burden of paid and unpaid work and child-care. The survey results warn of a potential time crunch for many coordinators, particularly those with a high rate of volunteerism. Nearly 20% of respondents are overworked, time-stressed, or burned out often or most of the time, and an additional 36% feel that way occasionally. GPI Atlantic

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[1] Statistics Canada, *Households' Unpaid Work: Measurement and Valuation,* Studies in National Accounting, System of National Accounts, catalogue no. 13-603E, #3, Statistics Canada, December 1995, adjusted to 1997 constant dollars using the Consumer Price Index. The exact value in 1997 dollars is $13.68 for British Columbia, which is below the Canadian average for the same kind of work ($15.66).

recommends that Industry Canada explore flexible and family-friendly work hours for CAP site coordinators to accommodate these pressures.

- It is noteworthy that an overwhelming majority of CAP site coordinators are satisfied with their work (86%), regard it as one of the most important things they do (88%), and are motivated by a desire to help others (97%).

- CAP sites make an additional *indirect* contribution to the market economy by providing training in technical, computer and office skills, management and organization, communications, teaching, fundraising, and interpersonal skills; as well as work experience and specialized knowledge of particular subject areas. CAP volunteers acquire a wide range of skills that improves their future employment prospects. The multiple tasks performed, and skills acquired, by CAP site coordinators and volunteers are detailed in chapter 5.

- 40% of B.C.'s rural CAP sites employ youth paid through CAP Youth Initiative grants. Compared to older staff, these youth perform more tasks requiring high levels of computer skills.

- While 46% of CAP volunteers are 45 and older, 46% of CAP site users are 25 and younger. A remarkably high proportion of rural CAP site users are unemployed or underemployed, and there is a high rate of usage by First Nations communities. In all, the survey evidence shows that CAP sites promote access, equity, and inclusion.

- The survey results demonstrate that CAP sites are a significant investment in education, training, information technology dissemination, job access, and community-building. This investment not only provides a direct return to the market economy but may also produce considerable indirect savings to justice, health, and social service budgets.

The survey results provide considerable additional evidence on the impact of the Community Access Program not only on volunteerism, but on other components of social capital. It is hoped that they will provide a more comprehensive basis and approach for assessing the value of the program than has existed to date. In addition, the GPI method demonstrated in this study can be used to evaluate investments in future CAP funding from a full-benefit / full-cost accounting perspective, and thus to provide a more stable financial basis for a service that has clearly provided remarkable benefits for the Canadian economy and society.

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PART ONE:

CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 1

THE GENUINE PROGRESS INDEX AND ITS APPLICABILITY TO CAP

1. Limitations of Conventional Measures of Progress

The most commonly used basis for assessing economic and social well-being is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and related economic growth statistics. Yet, in recent years there has been increasingly widespread acknowledgement by leading economists of the shortcomings of the GDP, and of the accounting systems on which it is based, as comprehensive measures of progress. Indeed, as an aggregation of the market value of all goods and services, the GDP was not intended (even by its architects) as a measure of economic welfare and prosperity.

Using GDP levels and economic growth rates to measure progress takes no account of the value of natural, human and social capital, including environmental assets, unpaid work, and free time. It does not allow policy makers to distinguish the costs and benefits of different economic activities, and it masks changes in income distribution. Such fundamental omissions and limitations render our conventional accounting mechanisms inadequate measure of social and economic well-being.

It should be noted that these are not flaws of the GDP per se, but of its misuse as a benchmark of economic and social health, prosperity and welfare. Nobel Prize winner, Simon Kuznets, one of the principal architects of national income accounting and the Gross National Product, never endorsed its modern use as an overall measure of progress. As early as 1934, Kuznets warned the U.S. Congress:

> *"The welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measurement of national income"* (Cobb et. al.1995).

As the GNP and its successor, the GDP, began increasingly to be used as a measure of general social well-being and progress after the Second World War, Kuznets' reservations about the limitations of the system he helped create grew stronger and he argued that the whole system of national accounting needed to be fundamentally rethought. In 1962 he wrote:

> *"Distinctions must be kept in mind between quantity and quality of growth, between its costs and return and between the short and the long run. Goals for 'more' growth should specify more growth of what and for what."*[2]

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[2] Kuznets, Simon, *The New Republic,* Oct. 20, 1962, (cited in Cobb *et*. al., 1995)

When the GDP is misused as a measure of well-being and progress, it frequently sends misleading and inaccurate signals to policy makers that in turn result in the depletion of vital resources, and investment in economic activities that carry hidden social and environmental costs. What we count and measure is a sign of what we value. By focusing on quantitative material growth as our primary measure of progress, we under-value the human, community and social values and environmental quality which are the true basis of long-term well-being, prosperity and wealth.

The flaws inherent in the misuse of the GDP as a measure of progress include the following:

1.1 The Failure to Value Natural and Social Capital

The GDP is a current income approach that fails to value natural and human resources as capital assets subject to depletion and depreciation. As such, it cannot send early warning signals to policy makers indicating the need for reinvestment in natural and human capital. For example, the GDP of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia registered massive fish exports as economic growth, but the depletion of fish stocks appeared nowhere in the accounts. Similarly, the more trees we cut, and the more quickly we cut them, the faster the economy will grow.

Similarly, our conventional measures of progress do not account for social capital. CAP site funding appears in government ledgers as a "cost," and therefore as a drain on the treasury and the taxpayer. Conventional accounting mechanisms have no way of recording these expenditures as "investments in social capital." Here are typical, unsolicited comments received in the CAP site survey:

"Our CAP site has become an important hub for the small community it serves."
"This CAP site has helped establish a learning community."
"The Community Access Program provides an important link to the outside world and the wonderful range of possibilities. It also provides a vital communication tool."
"This service is so extremely important to isolated, rural communities like ours."
"This CAP site is very valuable to seniors in our area."
"Having an economical high speed Internet connection has had a positive impact on the social, educational, medical, economic, and recreational sectors of our remote way of life."
"This CAP site is the hub for skills upgrading and…job searches."
"The CAP program has helped our community A LOT…training youths, improving computer literacy, helping folks stay in touch with their families and friends, and helping us to build an infrastructure to bring our community together and represent it to the world."
"For rural communities, CAP sites offer opportunities in education, communication, and information…."
"…[G]ives people a window on the world, connects them with each other."
"This CAP site has become a focal point in our community."
"One significant impact I believe CAP sites have is by providing an opportunity for young people, volunteer or paid, to interact with seniors by helping them become computer literate. I can't say enough how rewarding our young trainers feel by helping seniors use the Internet."

"...[O]pened the world up to smaller communities, taking them into the new age and embracing knowledge."

All these statements, and many more, attest to an investment in social capital that is invisible in our conventional accounting mechanisms. Conversely, when governments cut program funding to reduce "costs," the consequent depreciation of this social capital appears nowhere in the ledgers. From the perspective of the Genuine Progress Index, the contribution of CAP sites cannot be properly and fully evaluated when social capital is ignored.

Paradoxically, the income generated through jobs is counted in our conventional accounting mechanisms, but the role of CAP sites in facilitating job searches is not counted as an investment in that outcome. A "cost-conscious" government may balance its books by cutting CAP site funding, while the longer-term impact of that decision on economic prosperity remains invisible.

1.2 The Failure to Make Qualitative Distinctions

Secondly, the GDP itself is a quantitative measure only, and fails to account for qualitative changes, both in the mix of economic activity and in the quality of our goods and services.[3] This failure can send perverse messages to policy makers, with crime, sickness, and pollution actually registering as contributions to economic prosperity.

The *Exxon Valdez*, for example, contributed far more to the Alaska GDP by spilling its oil than if it had delivered its oil safely to port, because all the clean-up costs, media activity, legal expenses, and salvage operations made a huge contribution to the state's economic growth statistics. The GDP blindly records all money spent as a contribution to the economy, without assessing whether this spending actually signifies an improvement in well-being or a decline.

This incongruity extends even to ordinary household purchases. There is no recorded relationship, for example, between the cost of consumer durables as capital investments on the one hand and the quality of services they provide on the other, leading to the paradox that the quicker things wear out and have to be replaced, the better for the GDP.

In sum, this failure to account for qualitative changes means that increases in crime, divorce, gambling, road accidents, natural disasters, disease, obesity, mental illness, toxic pollution, and natural resource depletion all make the GDP grow, simply because they produce additional economic activity. More prisons, security guards, burglar alarms, casinos, accident costs, storms, natural disasters, dieting pills, anti-depressants, lawyers, oil spill and pollution clean-ups, and the costs of setting up new households after family break-ups, all add to the GDP and are thus conventionally counted as "progress."

This anomaly led Robert Kennedy to remark 30 years ago:

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[3] The Canadian System of National Accounts (CSNA) as a whole does provide information on *quantitative* shifts in the mix of economic activity by sector, industry, commodity, and province. These remarks, therefore, apply only to the use of GDP as a measure of progress, since industry and commodity shifts registered in the CSNA are rarely invoked as signals of changes in societal well-being and prosperity.

"Too much and too long, we have surrendered community excellence and community values in the mere accumulation of material things....The (GDP) counts air pollution and cigarette advertising and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile."

In short, because GDP statistics make no qualitative distinctions, they do not reveal whether expenditures signify an improvement in well-being or a decline. This failure of our economic accounting process to make qualitative distinctions does not allow accurate assessments of the value of rural CAP site programs. Expenditures on prisons and CAP sites have equal weight in government ledgers, even though the former signifies a social liability (crime) and the latter a social asset that strengthens rural communities.

1.3 The Failure to Value Unpaid Work

While our conventional accounting mechanisms count many liabilities as signs of economic gain and progress simply because money is exchanged, they completely ignore the value of vital social assets that do not involve monetary exchanges. Thus voluntary work remains invisible in our conventional measures of progress, as does unpaid household work and childcare. The volunteers who staff CAP sites are therefore ignored in conventional assessments, and the impact of CAP sites in stimulating unpaid community service also remains uncounted, unmeasured, and therefore "devalued."

That which is not counted and measured also fails to make it onto the policy agenda. Thus the 9% nationwide decline in volunteer work in the last decade is almost unknown to policy makers, and has stimulated no debate in the House of Commons or in any provincial legislature. Had the economy declined by 9%, we would have a national emergency and declare a "depression." The Cabinet would meet around the clock to find ways of stimulating the economy. But a similar decline in voluntary work arouses almost no interest, largely because it is excluded from our conventional measures of progress and evaluation.

To its credit, Industry Canada has now recognized that "the backbone of the Community Access Program is its volunteer force," and that "empirical data about the impact of CAP on this valuable resource is not available."[4] That is the primary motivation behind this study.

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[4] Industry Canada, "Statement of Work," in Contract for Services with GPI Atlantic, contract no #5001613.

1.4 The Failure to Value Equity

There are other flaws in the conventional accounting systems and in the misuse of economic growth statistics to assess social well-being. For example, they measure the total quantity of income without regard to how that income is shared or distributed. Thus, the economy can grow even while poverty and inequality increase.

This, too, is relevant to assessments of the impact of Canada's Community Access Program, since the program is precisely aimed at reducing the potential inequity that might arise if lower income and disadvantaged groups have reduced opportunities for access to information technology. In our standard measures of progress based on economic growth measures and conventional accounting systems, equity has no value. So long as IT fuels aggregate economic growth, it is taken as demonstrating "success" and "progress," even if equality of access and opportunity diminish, and even if the gap between rich and poor grows as a result.

1.5 Other Failures of Conventional Assessment Mechanisms

The conventional measures also give no value to free time. In fact, the more hours we work for pay, the more the economy will grow, which in turn is interpreted as a sign of progress – that we are "better off." Thus the mass entry of women into the paid labour force in the last four decades has greatly stimulated economic growth. But there has been no parallel change in the division of labour at the household level. Women still do about two-thirds of unpaid household work just as they did 40 years ago, and have therefore experienced an absolute loss in free time and an increase in time stress.

Thus, Health Canada, Statistics Canada and the National Population Health Surveys all report significant increases in stress levels, particularly among women. But the implications of these changes for well-being and quality of life are barely discussed in the policy arena, because both household work and free time are invisible in our accounting mechanisms. Because 62% of CAP site coordinators are women, these trends do have important implications for the workload and stress levels of CAP staff.

There are other flaws in the misuse of conventional accounting mechanisms to assess social well-being and progress. But these few examples illustrate what is now widely acknowledged both by national statistical agencies like Statistics Canada, and by international bodies like the World Bank and the United Nations – that we urgently need new and better measures of progress.

2. Better Ways to Measure Progress

By accounting for the value of social capital and of voluntary work, this GPI report to Industry Canada is intended to help remedy some of the flaws outlined above, thus contribute to a more accurate and comprehensive assessment of the value and contribution of rural CAP sites.

The Genuine Progress Index provides a measure that accounts for natural, social, and human capital in addition to the manufactured capital that is counted in conventional measures. It therefore assesses investments in CAP sites as potential contributions to human and social capital, and it also sees funding cuts that force CAP site closures as a potential depreciation of that capital. This is a markedly different approach than conventional current-income accounting mechanisms that see CAP site funding as a cost and burden on the public treasury, and cuts to that funding as a saving to government.

Used as a macroeconomic tool to assess progress at the provincial or national level, the Genuine Progress Index (GPI) includes measures of the value of unpaid voluntary and household work, as well as natural resource accounts for both renewable and non-renewable resources. The GPI also values population health, educational attainment, free time, equity and other social and human assets. By the same token, it distinguishes these assets from liabilities, just as business balance sheets do. Thus, crime, road accidents, greenhouse gas emissions and other liabilities are counted as costs, not gains, to the economy. In these cases, and in sharp contrast to measures of progress based on the GDP in which "more" is always "better," "less" is actually "better" in the GPI.

At the micro-level, the GPI accounting methods are ways of evaluating policies and programs like the Community Access Program more accurately from a full-cost accounting perspective. By internalizing social and environmental benefits and costs, market mechanisms can also become more efficient and more reflective of the full range of impacts of production and consumption patterns on society.

Although this report focuses on only one hitherto neglected aspect of CAP evaluation – namely the impact of CAP on volunteerism – the GPI approach can be adopted more fully to assess the value of the Community Access Program altogether, and to assess the case for funding renewal. The data collected in the GPI CAP site survey allow for that more complete assessment, and GPI Atlantic urges Industry Canada to analyze the data carefully beyond the findings of this report.

For example, as noted above, equity is a core component of social capital, and a key goal of the Community Access Program. Similarly, other rural CAP goals such as the provision of skills training for youth and seniors, improving communications and reducing isolation in remote rural communities, assisting in job searches, and so on, are also components of human and social capital. As some respondent comments to the GPI survey indicate, CAP may enhance the very viability, capacity, and survival of some rural communities.

A full-benefit, full-cost accounting of the value of the Community Access Program from the GPI perspective, would take into account all these and other impacts of the program. As noted, this

study examines only one aspect of social capital – the impact of CAP on volunteerism. But it is our hope that the approach and method used here will be useful in extending this analysis to other benefits of the program.

In sum, the GPI is designed to provide a practical evaluation and policy tool, that can be used by policy makers and the general public on a regular basis both to assess whether we are making genuine progress as a society, and also to assess particular programs like CAP. At a time of funding cuts and financial pressures that may undermine and threaten carefully constructed cornerstones of social capital, such comprehensive evaluations are more essential than ever.

CHAPTER 2:
PROJECT GOALS AND UNANTICIPATED RESULTS

1. Project Goals and Further Analysis of Results

The specific goal of this project was to assess the impact of Canada's Community Access Program (CAP) on volunteerism. Industry Canada recognizes that "the backbone of the Community Access Program is its volunteer force," and that "empirical data about the impact of CAP on this valuable resource is not available."[5] Information on the subject was gathered through a specially designed survey of British Columbia's rural CAP site coordinators.

Recognizing that the voluntary work component of the CAP program does not exist in isolation from other aspects of the program, GPI Atlantic designed a comprehensive survey, consisting of three parts, to be completed by rural CAP site coordinators in British Columbia:
1) A personal profile of these CAP site coordinators.
2) Information on their actual work in coordinating these CAP sites.
3) Their assessment of the impact of their CAP sites on users and on their local communities.

This survey is attached as an appendix to this report, along with a detailed 19-page report by researchers, Karen Laine and Catherine Dextrase, on the administration of the survey itself. As that report indicates, the survey produced unanticipated information that can be highly useful to Industry Canada in its administration of the CAP program in British Columbia. In addition, because the survey was very wide-ranging, it contains very interesting and useful information above and beyond the mandate of this study, which focuses on volunteerism.

Therefore, although this report focuses on the contribution of the CAP program to the value of voluntary work in British Columbia, which has not previously been explored and documented, GPI Atlantic strongly recommends that Industry Canada analyze the survey results for the other important information they contain.

In addition, the researchers have been as direct and blunt as possible in identifying challenges encountered in the administration of the survey, and in making recommendations for future work in this field. It is our hope that this information will be useful to Industry Canada in designing assessments and evaluations of CAP site successes and needs in other provinces. Aside from its evaluation of information garnered on the voluntary work component of the CAP program, GPI Atlantic therefore wishes to present this CAP site survey, and its learning experience, to Industry Canada as a pilot and test both for future survey tools and for assessments of the CAP program.

In retrospect, the researchers concluded that it was limiting to entitle the survey according to the project title, viz., "The Impact of BC's CAP Sites on Volunteerism." Firstly, the survey produced far more wide-ranging results on a large number of issues. Secondly, many CAP sites are not run by volunteers, and the

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[5] Industry Canada, "Statement of Work," in Contract for Services with GPI Atlantic, contract no #5001613.

coordinators of these sites frequently assumed that the survey's focus on volunteerism did not apply to them.

This chapter summarizes a few of the unanticipated outcomes, recommendations, and areas for future research suggested by the survey results. Please see the researchers' own report for more details [Appendix A].

2. Unanticipated Information on Rural CAP Site Administration

The GPI survey uncovered unanticipated, but highly important, information on the administration of rural CAP sites in British Columbia. It is highly likely that these discoveries are equally applicable to rural CAP sites in other parts of Canada. Indeed, some of the most important findings from this project have less to do with the content of the survey results themselves than what we learned about the administration of the CAP program simply by making direct, individual contact with every rural CAP site coordinator in British Columbia.

In short, the *process* of administering the survey was as important as the survey content and results, and provided invaluable information on issues and concerns that require action if CAP site administration is to be improved. This information was gathered both through telephone and electronic communications between the researchers and the CAP site coordinators, and through responses to the final, open-ended question in the survey. That last question simply asked:

> *"Please note any additional comments you have either on your own CAP site work or on the impact of CAP sites on users and on your own community."*

The answers to that question, along with unsolicited comments on the survey, are listed in pages 8-16 of the researchers' report in Appendix A, and we recommend that they be studied carefully. These comments have the strong advantage of providing unfiltered, qualitative information that has not been screened through the (necessarily limiting) parameters of the researchers' own perceptions and survey questions.

Before listing some of the key unanticipated pieces of information garnered through the survey administration, an important caveat must be added. Our contacts with rural CAP site coordinators were *not* designed or structured for the purpose of gathering information about CAP site administration, but were intended simply to implement the administration of a survey on CAP sites and volunteerism. The following "conclusions" are therefore really *questions* that require more systematic exploration, attention, and consideration, rather than definitive answers. These issues and themes arose of their own accord, but with sufficient persistence and regularity that the GPI researchers feel impelled to bring them to Industry Canada's attention.

One more caveat must be added: Our recommendations necessarily focus on challenges, needed changes, and concerns that require attention. However, this should not be interpreted in a negative way. Overwhelmingly, the evidence indicates that the CAP program is enormously successful. Indeed, one unanticipated result of the GPI survey is the gathering of "testimonials" that can easily be used by Industry Canada to demonstrate the success of the program. In order to emphasize that the "problems" are to be viewed within the framework of what is a highly successful program, we have included a few of these testimonials in this section.

The information presented in the next section should be understood in the context of the project goal, which was to gather particular information by means of a survey. The survey was administered electronically, which itself presented interesting and important challenges, and which may in some ways influence results and outcomes [please see Appendix A, p.4, *Evaluation of survey tool*.]

2.1 Updating of Rural CAP Site Database and CAP Site Profile

One major unanticipated achievement of this project was the updating of the CAP Rural Sites Database. This will enable Industry Canada to maintain far better and more accurate records, contact information, and communications than previously possible.

The survey researchers had initially assumed that the official CAP Rural Sites Database contained an accurate record of rural CAP sites in British Columbia along with CAP site and network coordinators, and that they would simply contact these coordinators to administer the survey. In fact, this task presented a much greater challenge than anticipated. Meeting this challenge produced invaluable information.

As they attempted to make contact with each rural CAP site through the month of November, 2001, the researchers (Karen Laine and Catherine Dextrase) systematically updated the CAP Rural Sites Database. The researchers are confident that the updated database more accurately reflects the status of functioning CAP sites in B.C. Following is a summary of information gathered and changes made in the database:

2.1.1 Number of Rural CAP Sites

The researchers discovered:
* duplications in the database (8);
* sites listed in the database but in fact either closed or no longer CAP sites (10);
* new sites not listed in the database (2);
* urban sites mistakenly listed in the database (2).
In total, there are in fact 390 rural CAP sites in British Columbia, rather than the 408 originally listed in the database (Table 1.0, researchers' report, Appendix A).

2.1.2 CAP Site Coordinator Contact Information

Identifying functioning CAP sites accurately does not in itself ensure effective communications and information exchange between Industry Canada staff and individual CAP sites. In fact, the coordinator list required far more extensive revisions than the CAP site list. The researchers therefore updated the contact information for CAP site coordinators, contributing contacts for 60 additional sites (Appendix A, Table 1.1.)

Even this information required refinement, as there is not necessarily one coordinator per CAP site.
* In some cases, there is a single coordinator for several CAP sites.
* In other cases there is more than one contact for a single CAP site.
* In some cases there are *both* individual CAP site coordinators *and also* network coordinators responsible for several CAP sites. In other cases, the researchers found that network coordinators were the only contacts available for several CAP sites.

The researchers found that there are 280 rural CAP sites (72% of the total) that are coordinated through networks. Fifty-eight network coordinators are responsible for these 280 sites, an average of about five sites per network coordinator (Appendix A, Table 2.0.)

The researchers made every attempt to filter the individual contact list in the Rural CAP Site Database according to separate physical CAP sites, and they are confident that their current list reflects far more accurate and updated contact information for rural B.C. CAP sites than previously existed. For example, they located new contact information for individual sites where previously only a network coordinator had been listed, and they found that updated local information had not been transferred to the central database available from Industry Canada.

Again, it must be borne in mind that this database update was not an explicit project goal, and that further work on these lists is undoubtedly necessary. In fact, because of the tight schedule and timeline for this survey, less than one month of intensive work went into this major and unanticipated database update. At the same time, there is no doubt that the current list represents a significant improvement over earlier versions, and will have practical utility for Industry Canada staff.

2.1.3 Location of Rural CAP Sites

The survey results themselves may help identify CAP sites more accurately by location. According to the B.C. Rural CAP database, 18.5% of all rural CAP sites are located in schools, and another 13% are located in libraries (Appendix A, Table 2.0.)

Question 49 of the survey attempted to verify these data. The survey itself does have a relatively wide margin of error (7%, CI 95%, see below), and it is possible that school-based CAP sites may have a disproportionately high rate of representation in the survey. Nevertheless, there are some interesting data on location that are worthy of further exploration.

In total 28% of survey respondents reported their CAP site as part of a school and 16% as part of a library. Another 5% reported their CAP site as part of a community hall, and 12% of coordinators reported working in a stand-alone site not connected to another institution. Almost 40% of respondents answered the "Other" category that asked respondents to specify their CAP site location.

These "other" locations include youth centres, municipal offices, chambers of commerce, employment centres, non-profit organizations, and other institutions. The CAP site location types actually listed by respondents constitute a very useful compendium, providing more detailed information on the profile of rural CAP sites.

A careful analysis of the "other" list lends credence to the finding that the existing database underestimates the number of school and library-based CAP sites. Several respondents, for example, did not check that their CAP sites are "part of a school," and yet they provided answers such as "community school," "alternative school," and "premises supplied by school district" in their answers to the "other" category. When all such answers are added to the respondents who reported directly that their CAP sites are "part of a school," then school-based CAP sites climb to 35% of the total. When all school and library-based responses are culled from the "other" list, the survey findings indicate that more than half (51%) of rural CAP sites may be connected to schools and libraries.

Even accounting for a possible 7% margin of error, it is therefore possible that the existing database underestimates school and library-based CAP sites in rural areas by more than one-third. This may be partly the result of a rather narrow and conventional definition of schools, and it may also be due to the fact that schools in some rural areas may be located in multi-purpose and multi-function sites.

2.2 Funding Status of Rural CAP sites

Exactly one-half of British Columbia's 390 rural CAP sites came into existence before 1998 and no longer receive CAP funding. In the minds of many coordinators of CAP sites that no longer receive funding, this reality raises questions about the responsibility of Industry Canada for current CAP site functioning, and of their own relationship to Industry Canada. At the very least, non-funding creates an ambiguity in the relationship between Industry Canada and CAP sites; such ambiguity does not exist where direct funding supports CAP site operations.

Since the survey was conducted under the auspices of Industry Canada, many coordinators of CAP sites that do not currently receive funding had a difficult time understanding why they were being asked for information about their activities. CAP site coordinators who assumed their responsibilities only after funding ceased in particular have little sense of Industry Canada's relationship to their work. The survey researchers concluded that this ambiguity not only lowered the response rate among coordinators, but that it may impact Industry Canada's overall administrative role and the effectiveness of communications.

A different type of funding ambiguity was expressed by one coordinator who refused to complete the survey: "I have a CAP funded site, not CAP funded work hours."

Amongst both CAP sites no longer funded by Industry Canada, and those whose funding is soon to end, there appears to be a pervasive anxiety about future funding status. Indeed, this theme is so dominant in the open-ended responses to question 55 that we would be remiss not to draw special attention to it. GPI Atlantic strongly recommends that Industry Canada study carefully the individual responses on this theme. They are reproduced verbatim in Appendix A (App. 1).

Careful study of these responses indicates that this anxiety over finances and capacity to continue is a testimony to the perceived importance of CAP sites to rural communities. In the view of several respondents, CAP sites are essential to the well-being of the communities in which they are located, and therefore require sustainable long-term funding. Several coordinators also expressed concern that funding was not available for needed equipment repair or replacement, or for a shift from frustratingly slow Internet connections to high-speed Internet connection. Here is a sample of comments reflecting anxiety over sustainabilty funding:[6]

"Rural Community Access has a desperate need for high-speed Internet access that is affordable.... It is extremely hard to do my job effectively running the public access centre when I am always chasing funding, which takes a huge amount of time for short-term solutions . . .The Access Centre has become an essential service to this communit . . . Even though the access centre is an essential service with overwhelming community support, it cannot exist without long-term funding, as our users cannot pay a

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[6] Please note that here and elsewhere, simple spelling and grammatical errors in respondents' answers are corrected to facilitate comprehension. The focus here is on the content of the communication.

high price to use this service . . . [T]he success of this program is jeopardized by a lack of funding. Further investment in this program will help us continue to improve the lives of residents in our community."

"Unfortunately we struggle without the full resources needed. We need to update our equipment, and also need to be able to provide the consistency that only comes with paid staff. We do not have the resources to be able to provide that year-round at the moment. CAP funding has been extremely important in helping our community access this technology, and provide the training needed for our community to embrace it. Thank you."

"Our CAP computer/printer is quite old and although we have made small repairs to keep it going, we expect it will not last much longer. As we do not have funds available to replace the equipment we are concerned that we will have to close the site."

"...Industry Canada has treated the entire project as if there was some commitment and financing beyond those initial 3 years. We have kept in contact because Netcorp/YEP/YIP programs have been of assistance. If continued site operation was desired/is desired, Industry Canada should be looking at broader ways to support site needs than just the very restricted YEP Grants."

"In order to keep the CAP lab open this year, I had to work for four months with no pay. Stable funding for youth interns or lab attendants would make the job much easier."

It should be noted that the survey was conducted several weeks before the recent provincial government public service cuts. Even at that time, some respondents anticipated that those cuts would imperil the continued viability of their CAP sites. GPI Atlantic recommends that Industry Canada assess the degree to which these cuts will impact rural CAP site operation.

Particularly in communities where the rate of personal Internet access is low, GPI Atlantic recommends that Industry Canada (a) review the current three-year funding cut-off; and (b) work actively with local communities and municipal authorities to ensure sustainable long-term funding beyond the CAP funding period.

2.3 Qualitative Information on CAP Site Administration

Some of this new information about CAP site administration, that was gathered incidentally to the main survey objectives, was qualitative rather than quantitative. Although CAP site administration was not the focus of this project, the extensive contacts actually made with CAP site coordinators, and particularly their responses to the final open-ended survey question inviting comments on their work, proved very revealing. (See Appendix B, Survey, question 55).

Some of this qualitative information is worth studying for its potential value to Industry Canada. Although not part of the mandate of this project, we have taken the liberty of noting just two items that appear to flow from this information and that may be helpful. But GPI Atlantic urges Industry Canada to study the open-ended responses to question 55 carefully, as they contain very important qualitative information that can assist in improving the effectiveness of CAP site administration.

2.3.1 Decentralized vs. Centralized Coordination?

Just one example of this qualitative information will be provided here. It proved challenging to locate the most knowledgeable person to provide information about each particular CAP site. But the new information should assist Industry Canada staff in its own record-keeping and communications.

Even the comparative responsiveness of different groups can be revealing, as this example illustrates. Because of their more extensive and diffuse responsibilities, network coordinators were generally less available, knowledgeable, and helpful than coordinators whose responsibilities were confined to specific sites. It is noteworthy that network coordinators had a response rate of only 34.5%, considerably lower than the average of 56% for the survey as a whole. This may suggest that over-centralization of responsibilities at the expense of local authority may reduce the effectiveness of communications.

By contrast, school-based CAP sites had a much higher response rate (69%), indicating that locating CAP sites in schools may possibly improve accountability and communications. Interestingly, this high response rate came despite the fact that school staff in British Columbia were participating in a 'work-to-rule' strike at the time of our survey, which included non-participation in 'extra-curricular' duties not considered essential (such as CAP.)

In general, the more local and decentralized the locus of responsibility and authority, the higher the quality of communication between the researchers and the coordinators, and possibly the more accurate was the information received in this survey. Where it is possible to have *both* network coordinators *and* individual CAP site coordinators, this clearly seems desirable.

This is clearly a question worth investigating further, as it may indicate that network coordinators have less time and are more out of touch with local CAP site needs and requirements, possibly at the expense of quality service in cases where no local coordinator is present. Since this issue was not a specific object of investigation, but arose incidentally, field studies would be needed to test this hypothesis.

2.3.2   Maintaining Personal Contact

It was apparent from both survey responses and initial contacts between the survey researchers and CAP site coordinators that the latter very much need and appreciate contacts with Industry Canada staff. Many coordinators appreciated the opportunity to communicate their experience, to transmit their particular CAP site needs, to discuss funding concerns and anxieties over sustainability, and to express their feelings. This was well expressed by one respondent who puzzled that the survey promised confidentiality and anonymity when it was precisely personal communication that was required. In sum, GPI Atlantic recommends that every effort be made, in the wake of this survey, to maintain the highest degree of ongoing personal contact with CAP site coordinators as is possible.

Please see page 7 of the researchers' comments in Appendix A on the importance of maintaining regular contact and a direct relationship with CAP sites and CAP coordinators. The researchers note, from their personal conversations with CAP site coordinators, that lack of contact reduced coordinator allegiance to CAP, and therefore diminished community understanding and appreciation of federal government and Industry Canada support for their community. GPI Atlantic recommends monthly personal check-ins and communications as an excellent investment that will bring mutual benefit both to Industry Canada and to CAP site coordinators and the communities they serve.

2.4 Industry Canada Public Relations -- Success of the CAP Program

It is striking that many of the comments offered in the open-ended responses to question 55 provide Industry Canada with excellent opportunities to publicize the success of the rural CAP program. Testimonials offered by respondents, for example, are very suitable for citation in Industry Canada materials. Because this survey was "confidential and anonymous," expert opinion would be required to assess the degree to which quotations could be used for this purpose. Here are just a few examples among many:

"The CAP Centre has been a wonderful addition to our rural community both in the services it provides and the job experience it gives to young people.... (Extensive list of CAP Centre services and projects follows).... *Without our CAP Centre none of these services or projects would be possible. We would like to express our appreciation to Industry Canada for the opportunities that they have initiated."*

"This CAP project is the most important community project we have undertaken."

"The CAP program has helped our community A LOT! Just some of the benefits are training youths, improving computer literacy, helping folks stay in touch with their families and friends and helping us to build an infrastructure to bring our community together and represent it to the world."

"The CAP site is extremely important for our communities as we provide services to the aboriginal population.... (List of services follows).... *The CAP sites provided assist the whole community and continue to be needed on a daily basis."*

"Thank you for the opportunity to serve our public and clientele within our community."

More specific information on CAP site functions follows below. But these few comments illustrate how readily many of these personal testimonials could be used by Industry Canada to publicize and gather further support for the CAP program.

CHAPTER 3
CAP AS SOCIAL CAPITAL

This chapter summarizes the main components of "social capital" created or enhanced by the Community Access Program, as revealed in the open-ended answers to question 55 of the GPI CAP site survey. As noted above, those responses, which are much more unconditioned by potential researcher bias than multiple choice questions framed by the researchers, provide extraordinarily valuable insights into the functioning of British Columbia's rural CAP sites. GPI Atlantic strongly recommends that Industry Canada study these responses carefully, and they have been reproduced verbatim in the appendix for this purpose.

1. Definitions of Social Capital

Definitions of social capital differ, and range from descriptions based on personal interactions to those based on more complex social organizations. However, all have in common the creation of mutual benefit through social cooperation or coordination.

Social capital has been defined by Michigan State University's Social Capital Initiative as follows:

> *"Social capital is a person's or group's sympathy or sense of obligation toward another person or group that may produce a potential benefit, advantage, and preferential treatment to that other person or group of persons beyond that which might be expected in a selfish exchange relationship."*[7]

In a presentation on "Social Capital and Civil Society" to the International Monetary Fund, Francis Fukuyama defined social capital as follows:

> *"Social capital is an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals. The norms that constitute social capital can range from a norm of reciprocity between two friends, all the way up to complex and elaborately articulated doctrines like Christianity or Confucianism."*[8]

Robert Putnam's definition is as follows:

> *"Social Capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit."*[9]

In the Genuine Progress Index, social capital also has economic value, and provides the essential infrastructure for wealth creation. Markets, for example, require certain basic rules of exchange and

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[7] Available at: http://www.ssc.msu.edu/~internat/soccap/definition.html
[8] Available at: http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/fukuyama.htm
[9] Available at: http://www.bsu.edu/classes/white2/honors/teaching/soc.html

conduct. An anarchic society based on self-interest alone, like Hobbes' state of nature, will therefore be "poor" as well as "brutish," "nasty," and "solitary." Conversely, enhancement of community cooperation and solidarity is literally an *investment* in social capital.

This may seem obvious. But government cost-cutting strategies more often define investments like CAP as "costs," and see their reduction as "savings" to the public purse, rather than as a potential depreciation of social capital. The most important issue here is to recognize that the functions performed by CAP sites are not simply services to individuals (although that too is important), but potential agents of a profound and far-reaching strengthening of rural communities. That deeper role in enhancing social capital is obvious from the responses to question 55 of the GPI CAP site survey. Here are some aspects of social capital investment revealed in the survey:

2. Strengthening Community

A pervasive theme in answers to question 55 is that a rural CAP sites "brings community together." One respondent describes the CAP site "an important hub for the small community it serves" and another describes it as "a focal point in our community." Another states that "this CAP site is a place to come not only to improve your future by improving skills but a place to hang out and meet people . . . for some people this is their social life . . . it is a place where people know your name!"

While such expressions may not be part of the official CAP mandate, they are vital expressions of social coherence, coordination, and mutual sympathy and benefit, all core elements of the definition of social capital. One respondent notes that, "there would be a noticeable void within the community if this service were not available." *How* something is said is often as important as the content of the statement. It is noteworthy that this respondent's description goes far beyond a conventional expression of functional service availability.

The capacity of CAP sites to build social capital appears to be a function of their availability to *all* community members. Survey respondents noted that CAP sites "assist the whole community," and provide "an important community service for all members of the community." One respondent noted that the CAP site itself constituted a contribution to social cohesion and cooperation in an otherwise divisive atmosphere:

> "This CAP project is the most important community project we have undertaken. Our community is easily polarized and I can safely say that we have 100% cooperation. Has benefited citizens of all ages and classes. Has brought us closer together and it has given us a fighting chance to be able to stay in our community . . ."

Other statements confirm this observation that CAP sites can strengthen communities and bring them together. Respondents noted that, "the access centre is an essential service with overwhelming community support," that "the CAP site has been a heaven-sent program for all," and that CAP is "helping us to build an infrastructure to bring our community together and represent it to the world."

The overall contribution of CAP sites to rural communities may well be greater than the sum of the individual services it provides. Beyond any particular function that the CAP site may perform in enhancing skills or increasing computer literacy, for example, is the fact that Internet access provides an almost limitless range of possibilities. In the words of one survey respondent:

Having an economical high speed Internet connection has had a positive impact on the social, educational, medical, economic, and recreational sectors of our remote way of life. We are convinced that high speed broadband connectivity in rural and remote areas will have a profoundly positive impact in strengthening rural and remote communities."

The simple intensity of use of many CAP sites (see answers to question 55, Appendix A, App.1) is also remarkable testimony to the degree of interaction within communities that is fostered by the program. Some respondents commented that their sites are "used continuously."

3. Enhancing Communication and Reducing Isolation

While conventional statements of purpose have often focussed on narrower goals like skills training, the respondents' unsolicited comments indicate that CAP plays a vital role in enhancing more subtle aspects of social capital and thereby strengthening the viability of rural communities. The communication function of CAP sites in isolated rural communities is important both at the personal level (providing a means for families and friends to stay in touch) and in reducing a community's perception of distance from the larger world.

In the words of one survey respondent:

> *"The Community Access Program provides an important link to the outside world and the wonderful range of possibilities. It also provides a vital communication tool and helps people keep connected to each other."*

Here are other typical comments in the same vein:

"Central place on a secluded island, gives people a window onto the world, connects them with each other."
"For rural communities, CAP sites offer opportunities in education, communication and information that are not physically accessible."
"It is imperative to have this site in isolated and rural areas for people to have access to information . . ."
" . . .[O]pened the world up to smaller communities, taking them into the new age and embracing knowledge."
"The CAP program has helped . . .folk stay in touch with their families and friends."
"This service is extremely important to isolated, rural communities like ours."
" . . .a great asset to this remote community."

In sum, CAP sites can help overcome one of the most challenging features of life in rural areas – the sense of isolation, distance and remoteness. Although the CAP program falls under the purview of Industry Canada, GPI Atlantic recommends that the federal Rural Secretariat, with its concern for rural quality of life in Canada, become a strong partner in the maintenance of rural CAP sites that may be under threat due to funding constraints. The statements cited above will be of direct interest to the Secretariat.

Finally, there is another communications function performed by CAP sites in rural areas. Several respondents noted that seasonal tourists frequented the sites in order to maintain contact with family and

friends in their home towns. It is possible that the presence of a CAP site may enhance the tourism appeal of isolated, remote communities by promising tourists this communication capacity. "Residents and tourists alike use the access centre to keep in touch with family and friends," noted one respondent.

4. Youth and Seniors

The integration of youth and seniors into the social fabric is a key component of social capital. Conversely, alienation among youth and isolation of seniors signify a weakening of the social fabric that may also have economic consequences and costs for both the justice and health care systems. Survey responses indicate that CAP sites not only provide vital services to both youth and seniors, but also facilitate positive interaction and respect among these two age groups. In the words of one respondent:

> *"One significant impact I believe CAP sites have is by providing an opportunity for young people, volunteer or paid, to interact with seniors by helping them become computer literate. I can't say enough how rewarding our young trainers feel by helping seniors learn to use the Internet."*

This remarkable learning experience in which the young teach the old may be quite unique to CAP sites. One respondent noted:

> *"This CAP site is very valuable to seniors in our area who are just getting used to the idea of coming to the Jr. Sec. School to learn about computers and to access the Internet . . . [W]e anticipate that even more seniors will access the site since many will want to support their grandchildren."*

Another respondent noted that the CAP site "opens up a new area of interest which has developed into seniors helping seniors, a social network and a link between senior and junior members of families." Again, it is obvious from such statements that the CAP sites perform a vital social function that goes well beyond the provision of skills that is generally used to justify the Community Access Program.

The utility of CAP sites for seniors is also related to the communication function described in (3) above. With young people frequently leaving small, rural communities to go to college or to seek work, many "CAP users are seniors keeping in touch with family."

The benefits clearly flow in both directions, with provision of Internet access proving to teenagers "that they are accepted into a community which is driven by adults." The CAP sites also provide rural youth with focussed, educational, and engaging activities, as well as direct training. One respondent remarked that, "our youth greatly benefited as well with regard to homework, setting up e-mails, and correspondence." As well, youth need a safe place to gather and interact:

> *"[T]he CAP site is increasingly used by local youth to chat on line and play interactive computer games, as well as do research and homework. It is becoming a gathering place for them, which is lacking in our community."*

5. Promoting Equity through Access to Disadvantaged Groups

Social exclusion and inequality can threaten the social fabric, and produce high health and justice costs. Inequality, for example, has been highly correlated with poor health. Analysts have noted the danger that increasing dependence on information technology may deepen existing social divisions and create a two-tier society, divided into those with IT access and skills and those without such access and skills. CAP sites not only make that access and skills training available to those who could otherwise not afford it, but they also provide concrete and practical information and access to services needed by disadvantaged groups.

One respondent noted that, "for women in or leaving abusive relationships, this is sometimes their only way of connecting with family and getting information about services and abuse." Another respondent also stressed the value of CAP sites as a lifeline in tough times:

> *"With terrible economic times here on the North Island, this CAP site is the hub of skills upgrading and local, national, and international job searches. With marital breakdowns and family financial collapses, this CAP site is often the first stop in information acquisition and exploration of assistance options."*

Another respondent noted that the CAP site has become "an essential service" for those with low incomes, on social assistance, or unemployed, both in job searches and in accessing government services. Others noted the importance of access for aboriginal communities: "First Nations feel very privileged to have the Community Access Program for one of our communities as it helped many members find employment…."

In short, a key goal of the Community Access Program is to enhance equity and to ensure Internet access and information technology training for all Canadians, regardless of income, race, gender, age, or social group. As a key component of social capital, this equity function may produce substantial economic benefits both directly through enhanced opportunities, and indirectly through the avoided costs of social alienation and disintegration. In the words of one respondent: "CAP sites have opened up the computer world to so many people who otherwise would never have had the opportunity."

6. Small Business and Marketing Opportunities

The survival of many rural communities depends in turn on the survival of local business opportunities. A function of some CAP sites is inexpensive or free Website hosting for community businesses, which can assist in marketing products and promoting local tourism. According to one respondent:

> *Five companies use this CAP site as their way of getting customers. A fishing lodge without phone lines now gets 90% of its customers booking over the Internet at this CAP site."*

Some CAP sites may also assist clients in the preparation of business plans and income tax returns. One respondent noted that CAP site information and assistance had helped set up a local landscaping business. One CAP site serving an aboriginal population reported that they "assisted our creative entrepreneurs in marketing their cultural skills."

In cases where local servers in rural communities are slow and prone to difficulties, the CAP site may provide the best and fastest Internet access in the area: "This makes our CAP site essential to business, and provides community access to the economic opportunities of the world," noted one respondent. Another noted that some small business operators first experienced using the Internet and e-mail at the CAP site.

7. Employment, Education, and Skills Training

Employment, education, and skills training are generally included in conventional assessments of CAP site benefits. However, assistance in obtaining stable employment is also a key component of social capital, while high unemployment rates may undermine the social fabric and produce high health and justice costs. Not surprisingly, survey respondents frequently reported on the importance of CAP sites in assisting with employment searches, in constructing résumés, and in providing online information about jobs and educational opportunities. Some CAP sites are affiliated with local employment agencies.

CAP sites themselves may provide summer employment opportunities, and job experience for local youth. They help residents improve computer literacy and they provide computer courses and opportunities for skills upgrading. Improvement of computer skills in turn makes local residents more employable. "This CAP site helps students, adults and youth pursue their career goals," noted one respondent in a CAP site serving an aboriginal population.

CAP sites can literally help communities make the (often difficult) transition to a knowledge-based economy:

> *In the new economy, people need supported access to technology to make the transition from resource-based economy to knowledge-based economy. It is very hard to survive in a small community, and the access centre has helped many residents along in their learning process."*

8. Local Learning and Non-Profit Use

This is not an exhaustive list of CAP site contributions to the social capital of rural communities. It could be argued that the range of benefits is potentially as great as the breadth of information on the Internet itself. Thus, survey respondents reported a wide range of unusual benefits that have come to local communities though the Community Access Program. Respondents noted computer use for research related to the local history and geography of their areas and genealogy of local residents, a contribution that can potentially strengthen local pride, knowledge, understanding, and commitment to their own region.

CAP sites have been used to assist non-profit organizations with bookkeeping functions, to create a local needs-assessment survey and directory, to create a template to set up a community centre, and to assist local residents with home computer problems. CAP site computer use is also often the first step to acquisition of a home computer. In short, it is literally impossible to catalogue the full range of CAP site benefits. This short list simply provides a sampling of the very wide range of contributions that the Community Access Program clearly makes to the life of rural communities. It is noteworthy that, with few exceptions, these wide-ranging benefits are invisible in standard evaluations and assessments based on conventional economic accounting procedures. The purpose of the GPI approach is to give these functions full value by recognizing the contribution of CAP to human and social capital.

PART TWO:
SURVEY RESULTS AND
CAP IMPACT ON VOLUNTEERISM

CHAPTER 4
PROFILE OF CAP SITE COORDINATORS

The first part of the GPI CAP site survey focussed on the demographic characteristics of the CAP site coordinators themselves. Because this was not the focus of this study, the summary of results for this section will be brief. However, there is important information in this section that is most certainly worthy of further analysis, and GPI Atlantic strongly recommends that Industry Canada investigate the results further.

The most typical profile of a rural British Columbia CAP site coordinator is that of a middle-aged, married woman in her late 40s, with one child having left home and one teenager still at home. Most are highly educated and employed full-time, with a spouse who is also employed. Several coordinators hold professional positions.

Here are some specific statistics of interest, with occasional recommendations:[10]

- 62% of coordinators are female; 80% of coordinators are married; and 73% have children.

- 38% of coordinators still have a child living at home, though less than 10% have a small child (5 or under).

- Two-thirds of coordinators are between the ages of 35 and 54; only 19% are under 35. It may be beneficial to train a larger proportion of younger residents to take positions of responsibility in CAP site administration, both to provide skills training and to keep talented youth in the community.

- Nearly 95% of coordinators have paid employment, including a few who are self-employed. Of those employed, about three-quarters are employed full-time and the remainder are employed part-time. It is noteworthy that a considerable number of CAP site coordinators are professionals, and nearly 20% hold executive positions (including school principals, chief librarians, managers, and executive directors.)

- Most CAP site coordinators are well educated, with fully 78% having some form of post-secondary education, including 39% with a university degree and another 29% with a community college diploma or certificate. 91% of coordinators have graduated from high school.

- 9% of CAP site coordinators are from First Nations communities.

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[10] Note: Due to software difficulties, the author entered the data for this analysis manually. As no double entry procedure was adopted, it is possible that there are some mistakes. It is therefore recommended that the statistics and calculations be checked before results are publicly released. As noted in the appendix, there were 133 valid and completed survey responses out of 226 CAP sites contacted. The results have a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of plus or minus 7%. This is a fairly wide margin of error, and the results should therefore be interpreted with caution. The researchers' appendix notes possible reasons for the relatively low response rate (56%) and makes recommendations for future CAP site surveys that could raise the response rate.

CHAPTER 5

CAP SITES AND THE VALUE OF VOLUNTARY WORK

1. Why Measure the Value of Voluntary Work?

As noted in chapter one, contributions to economic growth do not necessarily signify improvements in social well-being and quality of life. Indeed there are many activities that may well indicate a decline in well-being. Higher rates of crime and pollution, for example, generate significant economic activity but do not signal an improved quality of life. It is even questionable whether an increase in the number of lawyers, brokers, advertising executives, and other professionals indicates social progress, even though all their incomes make the economy grow.

By contrast, there is no doubt that voluntary activity is a direct contribution to social well-being. Indeed, since volunteers receive no monetary reward, they perform their activities with the specific purpose of contributing to the well-being and quality of life of their communities. Among 15 possible reasons for volunteering presented to 70,000 Canadian volunteers in the 1987 National Survey on Voluntary Activity, "helping others" was cited as the main motivation by the vast majority of respondents.[11] Yet, unlike work done for pay, voluntary work is invisible in our standard measures of progress, which are based on economic growth measures.

CAP site volunteers assist members of their communities in learning and upgrading skills, looking for work, accessing educational opportunities, acquiring information, facilitating communication, and a wide range of other activities. All these activities have economic as well as social value. If these activities were suddenly withdrawn, the well-being of rural communities would suffer or else government and the private sector would have to provide the lost services for pay. According to the architects of the original U.S. GPI:

> *"Work done [in the voluntary sector] is the nation's informal safety net, the invisible social matrix on which a healthy market economy depends…. Despite its crucial contribution, however, this work goes entirely untallied in the GDP. The GPI begins to correct this omission."[12]*

That which is not counted and measured is often insufficiently valued, taken for granted, and given second priority in policy planning. This can be potentially dangerous because critically important unpaid work (such as that of CAP volunteers) may not receive the necessary support, and because individuals under financial or time stress may first cut back on their voluntary commitments as "luxuries" they can no longer afford. By making the economic value of voluntary work explicit in the Genuine Progress Index,

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[11] Duchesne, Doreen, *Giving Freely: Volunteers in Canada,* Statistics Canada, Labour Analytic Report No. 4, catalogue no. 71-535 #4, Minister of Supply and Services, August, 1989.
[12] Cobb, Clifford, Ted Halstead, and Jonathan Rowe, *The Genuine Progress Indicator: Summary of Data and Methodology,* Redefining Progress, September 1995, page 15.

and thus more visible, we increase the likelihood that vital voluntary services will be supported and that participation rates will remain high.[13] According to one analyst:

> *"When recognized at all, volunteer work is most often seen as isolated individual acts of charity; consequently, it remains largely outside the framework of policy discussions on the Canadian economy. The lack of reliable statistics on volunteer activity at the national level has tended to reinforce this invisibility…. It is hoped that by illustrating the economic significance of voluntary activity…it will become more visible and valued, and that both the public and policy makers alike will give volunteerism the increased attention and assistance it deserves."[14]*

However, the value of volunteer work goes beyond the particular activities that volunteers perform. As noted in Part One of this report, the strength of the voluntary sector is also a key component of social capital. Indeed, the network of community and voluntary organizations is regarded by many analysts as the backbone of "civil society," and their active strength as a critical indicator of a healthy democracy. This "social economy" is the arena in which citizens participate most fully as citizens, freely choosing their interests and associations, and expressing their deepest aspirations to help others.[15]

Jeremy Rifkin decribes civil society as: *"…the millions of people in every country who give of themselves to contribute to the common weal. It's the ancient economics of gift-giving…. Each person giving of themselves to the community, maximizes their own self-interest."[16]*

The strength of society's commitment to voluntary work is, for many social scientists, a touchstone of social health, stability, and harmony. A weak civil society, by contrast, is more subject to social unrest, alienation, and disintegration. It is associated with higher rates of crime, drug abuse, and other dysfunctional activities, which eventually produce high social and economic costs. From this perspective, wise investments in community and voluntary associations can help strengthen the fabric of civil society, and produce long-term economic savings.

It is clear from the descriptions of survey respondents in chapter 3 that the country's rural CAP sites do perform these wider functions. CAP sites are gathering places for the community, the "hub" of activities for many small towns, and a force for social cohesion and inclusion. The functions of CAP volunteers therefore go well beyond computer training and technical skills upgrading, and contribute to the social fabric, social capital, and well-being of their communities in a larger sense.

The purpose of this study is to provide some basic information that allows that contribution to be quantified, valued, and thus rendered more visible. By explicitly valuing the work of CAP volunteers, the contributions of CAP sites to rural communities in Canada may also become more fully appreciated.

A Statistics Canada research paper has defined "work of civic value" quite explicitly, and also provided the fundamental rationale for its quantification. The following description quite clearly applies to the work of CAP volunteers:

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[13] Colman, Ronald, *The Economic Value of Civic and Voluntary Work in Nova Scotia,* GPI Atlantic, Halifax, July, 1998.

[14] David Ross, *Economic Dimensions of Volunteer Work in Canada,* Department of the Secretary of State, January 1990, page 7.

[15] See for example Bharti, Manisha, "Building on the Social Economy," in *Report of the Advisory Committee on the Changing Workplace,* Human Resources Development Canada, June 1997, pages 36-43; and the report of the *Working Group on the Social Economy* to the Quebec Social Economy Summit, October, 1996.

[16] Rifkin, Jeremy, "The End of Work," *New City Magazine,* volume 17 (4), Summer, 1997, pages 10-18.

[Work of civic value is] unpaid non-investment activity undertaken by an individual that, by its nature, is thought to yield more public, community or societal benefits than private or family benefits…. Such activities are thought to be essential to the promotion of peace, order and good government; effective and just local communities; more publicly sensitive schools, hospitals, businesses and other institutions; and civic minded and environmentally sensitive citizens. It is only by quantifying the civic contributions of citizens that the value of basic institutions such as the family, school, faith community and voluntary associations will be more fully appreciated."[17]

Clearly CAP sites belong in that list of institutions. What this analysis indicates is that quantifying and valuing the work of volunteers necessarily highlights the value and contribution of the institutions for which they work. Quantifying the voluntary work contribution of CAP volunteers therefore points to the contribution of the CAP sites themselves. Indeed, it is the focus of this study on volunteerism that allows us to point beyond the technical assistance provided by CAP site staff and volunteers to the deeper social functions performed by the CAP sites.

2. Work Hours of CAP Staff and Volunteers

In order to assess the voluntary work contribution of CAP site coordinators, and their capacity to serve in a voluntary capacity, these volunteer contributions must be seen in the context of total work hours. These include:

- paid CAP site work
- volunteer CAP site work
- other paid work
- other volunteer work
- unpaid housework and child care.

The following results are from the GPI CAP site coordinator survey conducted in November, 2001:

Fifty-eight percent of CAP-site coordinators reported working at least some of their hours for pay. These paid coordinators worked an average of 21 hours per week for pay.

Fifty-seven percent of coordinators reported working at least some of their hours on a voluntary basis. These coordinators contributed an average of 10 hours per week on a voluntary basis. Thus, fully **one-third of all CAP site coordinator hours are contributed on a voluntary basis.** We believe this to be new and important information that will be of interest to Industry Canada.

Extrapolated to all 390 rural CAP sites in British Columbia, it can be estimated that CAP site coordinators contribute about 2,313 volunteer hours per week, or 120,250 volunteer hours per year.

As noted above, if these CAP site coordinators were not contributing this voluntary work, there are only two alternatives. *Either* a significant portion of current CAP site services would no longer be offered to rural communities, resulting in a severe depreciation of social capital, as illustrated in chapter 3, and a

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[17] Jones, Frank, *Human Capital and the Use of Time,* Statistics Canada Research Paper Series No. 79, Analytic Studies Branch, 1995, page 15.

significant decline in the quality of life, *or* these volunteer hours would have to be replaced for pay. The second scenario is used to estimate the economic value of the volunteer hours offered by CAP site coordinators.

According to Statistics Canada, the "replacement cost (specialist)" value of volunteer hours in British Columbia is about $14 an hour (1997$).[18] This reflects the hourly wage rate that would be paid in B.C. to replace existing voluntary activities at market prices for the types of work that volunteers do. This wage rate is almost certainly an underestimate for CAP site coordinators given (a) the specialized nature of their work, and (b) the fact that most coordinators are highly educated. By contrast, the Statistics Canada estimates include voluntary work that requires lower skill levels, such as domestic services.

For the purposes of this study, therefore, a conservative replacement cost estimate of $15 an hour (current dollars) is used. According to this estimate, **CAP site coordinators contribute $1.8 million worth of volunteer services per year in British Columbia**. This is the equivalent of 63 full-time jobs.

Based on these survey results, Industry Canada can now extrapolate from the British Columbia data to estimate the total economic value of all volunteer hours offered by CAP site coordinators throughout Canada. Assuming the same rate of voluntary work throughout the country as in B.C., one can multiply the total number of Canadian CAP sites by 6.1 hours per week, or 318 hours per year, to estimate the total volunteer hours offered by CAP site coordinators. The resulting number can then be multiplied by $16 (the average hourly rate for volunteer work in Canada) to produce a conservative estimate for the economic value of this work.

Another way of describing the economic value of these volunteer hours is to note that every two hours of paid CAP site coordinator time leverages an additional hour of volunteer time by coordinators.

It should be noted that these economic valuations are conservative from another perspective as well. They measure only the value of labour inputs, and not the value of the actual work outputs (which includes the value of capital inputs). To be truly comparable to GDP statistics, output valuations would be necessary. Unfortunately, methodologies are not sufficiently developed to assess the value of unpaid work from an output perspective, although important new work by the United Nations Institute for Research and Training for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) is leading in this direction.[19]

In order to understand the voluntary contributions of CAP volunteers, it is necessary to see their CAP site work in the context of their total work hours. Without this broader understanding, it will not be possible to assess stresses on CAP volunteers, and potential threats to this voluntary work contribution that result from overwork.

In addition to the CAP site work, 54% of CAP coordinators reported doing other work for pay. Many CAP coordinators are also teachers, librarians, employment counsellors, school principals, non-profit

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[18] Statistics Canada, *Households' Unpaid Work: Measurement and Valuation,* Studies in National Accounting, System of National Accounts, catalogue no. 13-603E, #3, Statistics Canada, December 1995, adjusted to 1997 constant dollars using the Consumer Price Index. The exact value in 1997 dollars is $13.68 for British Columbia, which is below the Canadian average for the same kind of work ($15.66).

[19] Harvey, Andrew, and Arun K. Mukhopadhay, "The Role of Time Use Studies in Measuring Household Outputs," section 3B of "Accounting for Time," report on work carried out for INSTRAW, *Conference of the International Association for Research on Income and Wealth,* Lillihammer, Norway, August 18-24, 1996. See also Colman, Ronald, *The Economic Value of Household Work in Nova Scotia,* GPI Atlantic, Halifax, pages 94-95, for alternative valuation methodologies of unpaid work.

staff, and so on. These CAP site coordinators work an average of 27.5 hours per week at those other jobs, in addition to their CAP work. Nearly one-quarter of CAP site coordinators work 35 hours or more at their other jobs in addition to their CAP work. This points to likely stresses for many CAP site coordinators.

Statistics Canada has now conducted three national surveys of volunteer activity (1987, 1997, and 2000). All of them indicate that citizens who volunteer tend to volunteer for more than one organization. In other words, the most civic-minded citizens have multiple voluntary commitments. We found this to be true of CAP volunteers as well.

Forty-three percent of CAP site coordinators have other voluntary work commitments outside their CAP site work accounting for an additional 7.5 hours per week on average. Extrapolated to all 390 of British Columbia's rural CAP sites, we can estimate that CAP site coordinators contribute 1,248 additional voluntary work hours per week outside their CAP sites, or 64,896 hours per year. Added to the 120,250 hours of CAP site voluntary work, **CAP site coordinators make a total voluntary work contribution to the British Columbia economy of 185,146 hours per year, worth $2.8 million.**

However, even this does not complete the portrait of total work hours. The unpaid work of CAP site coordinators includes not only their voluntary contributions, but also their household work and child care. According to Statistics Canada, voluntary work is defined as unpaid work done outside one's own household. Work done in the household is separately classified and counted, even if it is identical in nature to voluntary work. Thus, caring for an elderly parent in one's own household is classified as household work, while caring for the same parent in his or her own home is classified as informal voluntary work. "Formal" voluntary work is work offered through an organization like a CAP site.

Fifty percent of CAP site coordinators reported doing unpaid household work and child care. Those reporting unpaid household work averaged 22 hours per week of this work.

3. Time Stresses on CAP Site Coordinators

It should be recalled, from the previous chapter, that most CAP site coordinators are women, that most CAP site coordinators are employed full-time, and that 38% of all CAP site coordinators still have a child living at home. A significant proportion of CAP site coordinators, therefore, are working mothers who carry a significant unpaid household work burden in addition to their regular jobs and CAP site contributions.

Statistics Canada's time use surveys indicate that, despite a doubling of their labour force participation, women still do nearly two-thirds of the unpaid household work and child care.[20] Not surprisingly, Statistics Canada also reports that working mothers are the most time-stressed demographic group in Canada, putting in an average 75 hours of work per week.[21]

When these realities are combined with the total work hours reported above, it is possible that many CAP site coordinators may be experiencing a serious time crunch that could threaten their voluntary work

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[20] Colman, op. cit., *The Economic Value of Unpaid Housework and Child Care,* page 66.
[21] Statistics Canada, *General Social Survey,* 1998.

contributions. Several questions in the GPI CAP site survey attempted to assess these potential time stresses.

Most respondents said that they would not have given more time to their CAP site activities if asked (57%), compared to 43% who would have given more time. Of ten reasons offered for not giving more time, the vast majority (82%) indicated that their main reason was that they had no more time to give because of family, work and other responsibilities.

Fifty-five percent of CAP site coordinators reported that they felt overworked, time-stressed, or burned out occasionally (36%), often (16%), or most of the time (3%). The remaining 45% stated that they rarely (28%) or never (17%) felt overworked or burned out. In other words, it appears that about one-fifth of CAP site coordinators are operating under severe time stresses that may affect their capacity to perform their work well.

The sample size of the survey was not sufficient to do statistically valid cross-tabulations to assess the degree of overwork and time stress by demographic characteristics. But, given the parallel Statistics Canada evidence, it is likely that those CAP site coordinators who are working mothers experience the highest rate of time stress. Statistics Canada's national volunteer surveys also indicate that married women have the highest rate of volunteer participation of any group when assessed by sex and marital status.[22]

Since working, married women constitute the dominant profile of CAP site coordinators, there is a danger that voluntary CAP site work may get squeezed between the combined pressures of work and household responsibilities carried by this demographic group.

Clearly these stresses derive from social circumstances, including long-term changes in the composition of the paid labour force, which are not within the purview of Industry Canada. However, they do argue for particular efforts to accommodate the needs of working women, including flexible hours and family-friendly work arrangements. Proactive measures in that direction may serve to protect the significant paid and voluntary contributions of CAP site coordinators.

The emphasis on time stress here also responds to individual comments made by respondents to the researchers in the course of conducting this survey. Some respondents indicated that the average 40-minute time span required to complete the survey was a daunting task for overworked volunteers. One warning comment was as follows: "Industry Canada's CAP program is precariously balanced on the backs of volunteers. Some of us are getting tired of so much work for no pay."

In short, while it is right and proper to celebrate the extraordinary contribution of CAP volunteers and to give public recognition to the economic and social value of that voluntary activity, it should also not be taken for granted or exploited. Balance is clearly the issue here. A reasonable financial investment will leverage more volunteer hours, but an over-reliance on volunteer efforts can also backfire in stress, burnout, alienation, and resentment.

Volunteer hours are more likely to be given freely and joyfully when volunteers feel that essential services are not being downloaded onto them, and when sufficient financial support is being provided to

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[22] Webber, Maryanne, Statistics Canada, Labour and Household Surveys Division, presentation to the 16th annual conference and general meeting of the Recreation Association of Nova Scotia, November 16-19, 1989.

enable the CAP site to function effectively. In light of the findings that a large proportion of CAP site coordinators are women with other work and family responsibilities, GPI Atlantic suggests that flexible and family-friendly work hours may be a helpful way to support the work and commitment of these coordinators.

4. Skills Training and Services Provided

The discussion above deals with the hours actually worked by CAP site coordinators without assessing the actual content of those work hours. As noted, there is a ratio, province-wide, of roughly two hours of paid work for every hour of volunteer work performed by CAP site coordinators. The following description therefore applies both to paid and unpaid tasks performed by CAP site coordinators.

We must examine the kinds of work actually performed by CAP site coordinators. This is important not only to evaluate the services provided by CAP site coordinators to rural communities, but also to assess the skills training available to the CAP site coordinators themselves. While many CAP site coordinators are professionals, there are also volunteers whose on-the-job CAP site training prepares them for skilled jobs in the paid labour force.

The economic valuation above refers to the services provided by CAP site coordinators. However, CAP sites make an additional *indirect* contribution to the market economy by providing training in technical, computer and office skills, management and organization, communications, fundraising and interpersonal skills; as well as work experience and specialized knowledge of particular subject areas. This indirect benefit also occurs when young local residents apprentice to more skilled coordinators, and when youth take on summer jobs at the local CAP site.

Statistics Canada's national volunteer surveys report that 70% of all volunteers learn new skills in their voluntary jobs. More than 10% of them directly transfer their newly acquired expertise from the voluntary sector to paid work, and another 44% state that these skills have improved their job prospects. About one-half of all volunteers with non-profit organizations report that they receive actual formal training provided by these organizations.

Since these statistics apply to all volunteer organizations (including those providing unskilled services) it is reasonable to expect the percentages to be considerably higher at CAP sites whose raison d'être is to provide skills training. There is no doubt, therefore, that CAP sites, and the volunteer work that occurs there, provide a vital and "free" training ground for the market economy, providing valuable skills, knowledge, and expertise that are applicable to paid work.

Thus, even though the contribution of the voluntary sector is invisible in conventional measures of progress that consider only paid work, and even though CAP funding is a "cost" in government ledgers, there is no doubt that the market economy benefits greatly from the training that occurs in CAP sites. A brief examination of the work actually performed by CAP site coordinators indicates the very wide range of marketable skills and on-the-job training that occurs there.

Here are the responses offered by coordinators to the GPI CAP site survey, in which they describe their actual work. Responses are listed in order of frequency. Needless to say, CAP site coordinators perform several of these functions, and one respondent added a note that he performed *all* the following tasks. It is

particularly noteworthy that high proportions of volunteers undertake tasks that involve supervisory roles and financial and administrative oversight.

- General administration: 87%
- Supervise public access hours: 73%
- Provide technical advice and assistance: 68%
- Supervise other staff and volunteers: 65%
- Liaise with partner groups and other service providers: 57%
- Maintenance and repairs to equipment: 52%
- One-on-one training: 50%
- Marketing and advertising: 45%
- Financial administration: 43%
- Web page design and updates: 33%
- Design and delivery of courses: 24%

Several respondents also listed other tasks they perform, including equipment purchase, employment counselling, résumé writing, development and revision of instructional materials. Fundraising, legal referrals, tracking of statistics, and provision of Internet service to the community.

A separate question was asked in the survey about the kinds of courses offered by CAP site coordinators. Fully 71% had offered courses on Internet and e-mail use, 61% had offered courses on basic computer skills, 54% had taught word processing, 39% had taught Web page design, 30% had offered spreadsheet courses, and 26% had taught database design.

Smaller but still significant numbers of CAP site coordinators had also offered courses in more specialized topics, including E-business (22%), photo image editing (21%), computer maintenance (21%), graphic design (20%), on-line presentations (14%), programming (11%), and sound design (8%).

This range of offered courses is further testimony to the skills of CAP site coordinators, and the value of these skills to the market economy. Indeed 79% of CAP site coordinators stated that learning new skills was a very important (47%) or important (32%) motivation for them in their work.

Other survey questions asked CAP site coordinators for their own evaluation of the skills that they have gained through their work. Seventy-one percent stated that they have gained computer skills, and more than half stated that they have learned organizational and managerial skills (such as resource management, leadership, planning, and running an organization), interpersonal skills (such as conflict resolution, understanding people better, motivating people, and dealing with difficult situations), and specialized knowledge on subjects they read about on the Internet during their work time.

Nearly half of CAP site coordinators also stated that they have gained communications skills, such as public speaking, writing, public relations, or conducting meetings, as a result of their CAP site work experience, 40% said they learned technical or office skills such as accounting, cataloguing and filing, and nearly 30% said they gained fundraising skills. Other skills listed by coordinators included computer maintenance, technical and network skills, research skills, and community partnership building. One respondent reported learning "to connect community members with each other for mutual benefit," a description that corresponds directly with the definitions of social capital listed in chapter 3.

Not surprisingly, two-thirds of CAP site coordinators reported that their CAP site work had improved their employment prospects.

In assessing the economic value of the work that CAP site coordinators do, both for pay and on a volunteer basis, it is worth considering what the cost of comparable training might be to employers and formal educational institutions. It is apparent that on-the-job CAP site training is an extraordinarily cost-effective training ground for the market economy. From that perspective alone, CAP funding is an investment that may save employers and government significant sums of money later, and that may contribute substantially to Canada's competitiveness in an era where information technology skills are in high demand.

5. Out-of-pocket Expenses of CAP Site Coordinators

As noted by one analyst:

> *A little recognized economic dimension of volunteering is the non-reimbursed expenses volunteers bear while carrying out their volunteer activities. In reality, expenses borne by volunteers could be considered a form of dollar donation, since, without these covered expenses, the work of voluntary organizations would be curtailed. Out-of-pocket expenses include costs such as babysitting, transportation, meals away from home, special clothing and supplies, and equipment necessary for the performance of the volunteer activity.*[23]

CAP site coordinators reported putting out an average of $15 a week, or $784 a year, in usual non-reimbursed expenses in order to do their CAP site work. Some of them also had significant personal one-time expenses like computer equipment, which they needed to purchase in order to do their CAP site work. Averaged out over all CAP sites, these one-time expenses came to another $200 a year. For the province of British Columbia as a whole, this means that rural CAP site coordinators paid an estimated $384,000 out of their own pockets in the year 2001 in order to do their work.

If we assume that these expenses are apportioned in direct proportion to the ratio of volunteer to paid coordinator work hours, then we could estimate that volunteer CAP site coordinators in B.C. paid about $124,000 out of their own pockets in order to do their work. This sum, which *is* reflected in the GDP and economic growth statistics, should be added to the estimates of the value of CAP-related voluntary work in B.C.

6. Motivations and Work Satisfaction of CAP Site Coordinators

The emphasis above on the economic value of CAP site work in general, and volunteer work in particular, is necessary in an era where policy decisions are determined largely by budgetary considerations. However, this should not obscure the subjective and qualitative elements of CAP site work, which are so important in valuations of social capital. After all, volunteers do their work without expectation of material return, so immediate economic benefits are clearly not the motivating factor.

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[23] Ross, op. cit., page 16.

In fact, the GPI CAP site survey indicates that the vast majority of CAP site coordinators do not regard their work, including their voluntary hours, as a burden, but as a source of satisfaction that gives meaning to their lives.

Compared to all the things that CAP site coordinators do, 88% regard their CAP site activities as either important (44%) or very important (44%). Only 12% answered that their work was "not very important" to them, and not a single one responded that it was "not important at all."

As well, 86% of CAP site coordinators classify their work experience as either very satisfying (55%) or somewhat satisfying (32%). Another 14% said it was "neither satisfying nor dissatisfying", and not a single respondent answered that it was "somewhat dissatisfying" or "very dissatisfying."

These findings are reinforced by a detailed survey question assessing the motivations of CAP site coordinators. An extraordinary 97% of all respondents said that helping others was a very important (57%) or important (40%) motivation for them. Of the 12 reasons offered, no other reason garnered as many highly positive responses.

This is testimony to the altruistic motivations of the vast majority of CAP site coordinators and to their commitment to serve their communities, an attitude which must surely be reflected in the quality of interpersonal relations in the CAP sites themselves. While social capital is sometimes regarded as a "soft" concept, it is hard to argue that these motivations and attitudinal dimensions are less important in practice than monetary or financial considerations.

The vast majority of CAP site coordinators (84%) also stated that "doing something they like to do" and "feeling that they accomplished something" were very important or important motivations for them. Less than 5% of CAP site coordinators said they were working at the CAP site because they could not find other suitable work, thus indicating that almost all coordinators are in their positions by choice and are doing what they want to do.

In short, all the subjective evidence combined indicates that CAP site coordinators enjoy their work, see it as a very positive experience, and feel that it provides real benefit to their communities.

7. Other CAP Volunteers

The above statistics refer only to the work of CAP site coordinators, who were the subjects of this particular survey. In addition to the voluntary hours put in by these coordinators, as noted above, there are many other volunteers who contribute to the effective functioning of CAP sites throughout the country. Indeed, 61% of CAP site coordinators report that volunteers work with them or for them to help provide CAP site services.

Those reporting that they did have volunteers working with or for them have an average of 6 volunteers who support their work. Averaged over all rural CAP sites, including those that do and do not use volunteer support, this amounts to 3.5 volunteers per site. This means that there are an estimated 1,355 CAP volunteers serving British Columbia CAP sites, in addition to the CAP site coordinators.

CAP sites that have volunteers (about 60% of all CAP sites) rely on an average of 43.4 volunteer hours per week per site. Averaged over all rural CAP sites, including those that do not use volunteer help, this averages out to 25.1 hours per site. This means that these CAP volunteers contribute an estimated 9,800 hours per week, or more than half a million hours per year in support of rural CAP sites in British Columbia. Added to the 120,250 voluntary hours of CAP site coordinators, it is estimated that a total of 630,000 unpaid hours per year are contributed by volunteers to B.C.'s rural CAP sites.

At an estimated replacement value of $15 an hour, the voluntary work of these CAP volunteers is worth more than $7.6 million a year to the British Columbia economy. Added to the voluntary work hours of CAP site coordinators, the total economic value of volunteer hours contributed at British Columbia's CAP sites is estimated at $9.5 million annually.

Just like the CAP site coordinators themselves, these volunteers perform multiple tasks, including supervisory, executive, and financial functions, in addition to site staffing, teaching, and technical assistance.

Nearly three-quarters of these CAP volunteers supervise public access hours, 65% provide technical advice and assistance, and 53% provide one-on-one training. In addition nearly half of all volunteers serve on the CAP site board of directors and assist in general administration, while about 40% provide liaison with partner groups and other service providers, maintain and repair equipment, and design and update Web pages.

One-third of volunteers assist with marketing and advertising, and supervise other staff and volunteers. Other volunteers help with financial administration (27%), teaching or facilitating courses (24%), and designing or developing courses (17%). Other volunteers are engaged in particular projects, or tasks such as collecting local historical information, maintaining archives, providing security, or supervising young people.

It is remarkable that most CAP volunteers are older citizens. This may be a function of the age profile of many rural communities. However, this interesting finding merits further investigation. At first glance, there seems to be a case for increasing efforts to encourage young people to volunteer at their local CAP sites, and thus to secure valuable skills training as well as experience in serving their communities.

Nearly half of CAP volunteers are over 45 years of age, and more than two-thirds are over 35. Thirty-five percent of CAP volunteers are between 46 and 65, 21% are between 36 and 45, and another 11% are over 65. By contrast, just 15% of volunteers are 26-35 years old, 13% are aged 16-25, and only 2% are 15 or younger. There appears to be a training opportunity here for young people that could be more fully utilized.

This is confirmed by respondents' assessments that 95% of CAP volunteers have gained computer skills as a result of their CAP site work, while 72% improved their interpersonal skills, and nearly two-thirds learned communications skills and gained specialized knowledge on specific subjects through their work time Internet explorations. Sixty percent of CAP volunteers also gained organizational and managerial skills, more than half learned technical and office skills, and nearly one-third gained fundraising skills. Some volunteers also improved their research and instructional skills, and learned Web design and other specialized computer skills.

In a testimony to CAP site partnerships, nearly 30% of CAP site coordinators report that they receive volunteer or in-kind contributions from public sector occupations like teachers, nurses and government officials, and nearly one quarter report receiving such volunteer or in-kind contributions from private sector occupations and businesses.

8. CAP Youth

Nearly 40% of rural CAP sites surveyed in British Columbia have staff aged 15-30 who are paid by a CAP Youth Initiative grant. With very few exceptions, these sites have one CAP youth on staff, generally working half-time. As with the volunteers noted above, these youth perform multiple functions, including supervision of public access hours (80%), one-on-one training (75%), and provision of technical advice and assistance (69%).

However, the one function performed by youth that stands out in contrast to the older CAP site coordinators and volunteers is that of Web page design and updates. Fully 82% of CAP youth perform this function, by contrast to 33% of coordinators and 40% of CAP volunteers. Interestingly, a significantly higher proportion of CAP youth also teach or facilitate courses (58%, compared to just 39% of coordinators and 23% of CAP volunteers) and offer one-on-one training – 75%, compared to about half of coordinators and volunteers.

This evidence is testimony to the computer skills of young people, and indicates how much they have to offer to older people in their own communities.

Not surprisingly, CAP youth play a much smaller role in general and financial administration than do CAP site coordinators or CAP volunteers. As noted above, CAP site coordinators and volunteers tend to be considerably older; there appears to be a division of labour in many CAP sites, delegating computer skills work to CAP youth, while maintaining administrative functions in the hands of older staff and volunteers.

CHAPTER 6

IMPACT OF CAP SITES ON USERS AND COMMUNITIES

This last section of the GPI CAP survey is more tangential to the valuation of CAP-related voluntary work, which is the subject of this study. However, it contains information that can be very useful indeed to Industry Canada, and GPI Atlantic strongly recommends that the Department analyze the results of this section carefully. Here we shall simply summarize the principal results to illustrate potential uses of these data.

According to the estimates of CAP site coordinators, an average of more than 63 people use each rural CAP site in an average week. Province-wide, this means that 23,700 British Columbians are using rural CAP sites in any given week, with male and female usage corresponding to their proportions in the population.

What is most remarkable, however, is the evidence in this section that CAP sites are successfully reaching disadvantaged groups, and are being actively used by these groups. Thus, a fundamental goal of the Community Access Program is being achieved, equity is being fostered, and social capital is being enhanced.

The survey results indicate that nearly one-fourth of all CAP site users among the 133 surveyed sites are members of First Nations communities (23.4%). Indeed, more than 14% of the rural CAP sites surveyed serve mostly First Nations communities (more than 50% of users), and 8.3% serve First Nations communities exclusively.

A note of caution must be added here. The survey sample constitutes 56% of the 226 CAP sites contacted, and just 34% of all rural CAP sites in British Columbia. It is possible that the percentage of First Nations sites included in the survey sample is disproportionately high and unrepresentative of the province as a whole. The number of surveyed CAP sites mostly serving First Nations communities (19 in all) is, therefore, too small to allow a statistically valid extrapolation for the province as a whole.

CAP site coordinators estimate that nearly one-half of all CAP site users are unemployed or under-employed, with 13% of sites reporting that 90% or more of users are in this category. Ten sites (or 8% of those surveyed) also report that 20% or more of users have disabilities.

In sharp contrast to CAP coordinators and volunteers (who tend to be older), CAP users tend to be young. It was noted above that 46% of CAP volunteers are over 45. By contrast, 46% of CAP users are 25 or younger – 18% are 15 and under, and 28% are aged 16-25. Eight percent of CAP site users are also seniors over 65 years old.

In any given week, there are about 220 British Columbians taking post-secondary educational courses on-line at rural CAP sites; as well, there are an estimated 1,170 British Columbians taking on-line courses at rural CAP sites to complete their secondary school education. Another 920 are taking non-degree courses. In total, more than 2,300 British Columbians each week take on-line educational courses at the province's rural CAP sites.

In sum, British Columbia's rural CAP sites are actively serving First Nations communities, assisting the unemployed in job searches, providing computer access for the disabled, serving rural youth through skills training and Internet access, and enhancing educational opportunities, including secondary school completion.

The final survey question asked CAP site coordinators to assess the importance of their CAP site contribution to particular community goals, based on their best estimates of usual client activity. These answers are scaled from 1 to 10 according to importance (with 1 being "not important at all" and 10 being "extremely important"). These answers are worthy of more detailed analysis. Here we shall simply classify answers from 6-10 as "important."

- Two-thirds of respondents reported that their CAP site played an important role in helping users' job prospects.
- 82% said CAP sites played an important role in improving computer skills.
- 58% reported that CAP sites played an important role in improving literacy in their communities.
- 61% said their CAP sites played an important role in improving users' educational qualifications.
- 77% said the CAP sites played an important role in improving users' knowledge of the world.
- 67% said the CAP sites played an important role in giving youth something to do.
- 63% said the CAP sites played an important role in making seniors feel less isolated.
- 60% said the CAP sites played an important role in making citizens more engaged in their communities.
- 49% said the CAP sites played an important role in helping local businesses market their products and get information.
- 41% said the CAP sites played an important role in keeping local people from leaving.
- 65% said the CAP sites played an important role in helping build partnerships among local community groups.

Just as CAP site coordinators, volunteers, and CAP youth perform multiple tasks, so CAP sites clearly have a very wide range of impacts on local communities. Much more detailed investigation is necessary to assess the full range of these impacts accurately. However, it is clear from the list provided above, that CAP sites are a significant investment in education, training, and community building that not only provides a direct return to the market economy but may also produce considerable indirect savings to justice, health, and social services budgets.

Appendix A:

Researchers' Perspective
and
Open-ended survey responses

GPI *Atlantic*

Appendix A

Survey results and Researchers' Perspective on:
THE IMPACT of BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CAP SITES on VOLUNTEERISM

Prepared for:
Industry Canada

Prepared By:
Karen Laine and Catherine Dextrase

December, 2001

Summary

The survey, **THE IMPACT of BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CAP SITES on VOLUNTEERISM,** was divided into three sections: a personal profile of CAP site coordinators, their actual work coordinating the CAP site, and their assessment of the impact of the CAP site on users and on their local community.

The survey was based on the supposition that CAP sites have likely had a positive impact on:
· the employment potential, skills, literacy, education, and civic engagement of BC users.
· BC communities, business development, youth, seniors, volunteerism and community service.

Through studying CAP's impact on volunteerism we hoped to begin to illustrate the full impact of Rural CAP in the province. The above suppositions were confirmed, in part, and as well, many more important underlying issues with the administration and funding for the program were discovered through phone follow-up.

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[n.b.: for confidentiality reasons, Appendix 3 is not included in circulating copies of GPI Atlantic report]

Methodology

The CAP Rural Sites Database of 408 sites was divided into two, and each of the researchers then e-mailed the survey out to every contact e-mail on their list on Tuesday November 6[th,] 2001. These contacts often included more than one person per site, or one person for many sites (ie: Network Coordinators). Phone calls and follow-up e-mails were made to sites that had not responded from the 12th to the 30th. During this time researchers attempted to update their database CAP Site contacts to increase the number of survey participants. Follow-up e-mails and phone calls also addressed technical or process questions as they were identified. On November 16th, the survey deadline was extended to the 22nd. Survey responses were received as late as Dec 05th.

Table 1.0

Database Profile	Karen	Cat	Totals
Original number of Sites in Rural CAP database	201	207	408
Duplications between the two databases	(2)	(2)	(4)
Duplications within the separate databases	(4)	(0)	(4)
Number of sites confirmed closed, or no longer a CAP site	(8)	(2)	(10)
New sites discovered	2	(0)	2
Urban Sites (not included in survey)		(2)	(2)
Total Rural CAP sites	189	201	390

Table 1.1

Surveys Sent	Karen	Cat	Totals
Surveys Sent to individual contacts (first mailing)	153	132	285
Re-sent survey due to technical error (recipient could not read, no response circles etc)	25	12	27
Sent Text version of Survey	9	21	30
Reminder e-mail/re-sent bulk survey	(153-no survey)	59	59
New Contacts made and sent surveys out	41	19	60
Total Surveys sent out	**228**	**243**	**471**
Delivery Failures	(27)	(11)	(38)
Total Individual E-mail Contacts	**201**	**232**	**433**

Table 1.2

Respondents	Karen	Cat	Totals
Total # of CAP SITES contacted (after filtering above "individual contacts" by separate physical CAP sites)	118	108	226
Individuals that refused to complete	(5)	(8)	(13)
Incomplete surveys	(3)	(1)	(4)
Total # of CAP SITES contacted that did not participate	(46)	(30)	(76)
Completed surveys	64	69	133

Evaluation of Response rate

Actual response rate of sites contacted, was 56%. Please see table 1.2.

Main reasons for low response rates:

- Contact information not available. (Often Network coordinators were only contact available, but survey was directed at CAP sites). Network coordinators were not always 'available' or helpful.
- CAP sites that do not currently receive funding had a difficult time understanding why they were being asked for information about their activities.
- Focus of the survey was 'Volunteerism,' and many CAP sites have now integrated their services within staff duties and did not consider a survey on volunteerism relevant to them at first glance.
- Length of the survey. An average 40 minutes to complete was a daunting task to overworked volunteers.
- Request for personal information offended some participants.
- Format of survey was e-mail/HTML. This was frustrating and sometimes overwhelming to those who are not comfortable with this technology.
- School staff are participating in a 'work to rule' strike, and refusing to complete 'extra curricular' duties not considered essential (ie, CAP site duties.)

Table 2.0

Rural CAP Profile	CAP database		Total	Respondents		Total
	Karen	**Cat**		**Karen**	**Cat**	
Number of sites coordinated through Networks	141	139	280	Not available		
How many Network Coordinators for above Networks	27	31	58	8	12	20
CAP sites located in Libraries	43	29	72	10	10	20
CAP sites located in Schools	19	32	51	15	20	35
CAP sites located in other locations	127	144	271	39	39	78
CAP sites that no longer received CAP funding (* application date before 1998)	130	66	196	Not Available		

Samples of Refusals and Complaints [XX **indicates confidential site identity**]

"The survey doesn't really apply to us. We are unionized and we have NO volunteers of any sort. It is also impossible to distinguish Internet/computer use between the following computers: those provided by CAP, those provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, those provided by the Province (Computers in Libraries Grant Program), those provided by partner CAP organizations, and those provided with our own funding. We just don't keep those stats."

"...all the CAP sites administered by *XX* are staffed by paid *XX* employees and they are not run or supported by volunteers."

"If you can fine-tune your survey questions, I will try to respond. Forty minutes and many pages does not fit into my day. I have a CAP funded site, not CAP funded work hours. Regrets..."

Additional Reasons for Low Response Rate

Volunteerism
Because this survey was couched in terms of volunteerism, many sites dismissed the relevance to them. For example, library sites are managed by library staff during regular library hours. Some library sites were comfortable translating volunteer contribution as their institution's in-kind contribution, and representing it that way. Many site coordinators were not themselves volunteers, though they had volunteers working with them. This sometimes led to

their confusion about who should fill the survey out, as the title inferred to some that it was only measuring volunteerism.

Web survey

You have to know who you're receiving the e-mail from, otherwise it is regarded as 'foreign', and at worst, a virus. Survey targets did receive an introduction letter mentioning the CAP Survey, as well as the names of the Survey Administrators; however, some recipients still did not recognize it. We're all luddites at heart. It is a leap to assume that everyone is on the information highway. Many CAP site coordinators had difficulty accessing the survey, competing the survey, and submitting the survey. In part, this is due to imperfections in the survey solutions program, however a much larger issue to address is the assumption we made that CAP Coordinators, in general, have the skills (technological ease), to fill out an online survey. Technology is an excellent tool for those who have been properly taught its uses; however, those most skilled at using technology are generally the younger generation who have been exposed to technology from a very early age. Over 81% of CAP Site Coordinators who responded to the survey were between the ages of 35 and 54.

Database Challenges

There was a serious oversight when it came to the distribution of the survey, and that was taking a closer look at our survey target. We had identified the survey target as all rural CAP sites in the province, and there was an assumption that we had all the current contact information for them. It had taken Clara Brounstein, Administrative Assistant for Industry Canada, from April 2001 to October 2001 to update 50% of the provincial database of all CAP Sites in the Province. We allowed only three weeks to update the contact list of 408 rural CAP sites, and solicit survey responses. The following are a few examples of updates and information we gathered:

- Contact information for individual sites where only a Network Coordinator was listed
- Update contacts that had not been updated
- Update contacts that sites claimed had been updated already, but were not in our version of the database
- Discovered sites had been shut down
- Found duplications
- Tried to identify sites in database that were Urban
- Discovered that 48% of the total sites applied for funding previous to 1998, and therefore do not receive funding from CAP anymore (see table 2.0).

Evaluation of survey tool "Survey Solutions"

The Program Survey Solutions was new to both researchers and survey administrators. The survey software arrived one week before the survey was sent out. In this week we were required to learn about this new program, re-build the survey within this software, and test for potential problems. Obviously this tight deadline did not leave time for 'double checks'.

The following outlines our major challenges and recommendations:

- There were some limitations in the validation field that did not allow the flexibility this survey required.
- 29 contacts were unable to read, open or submit the survey they received.
- Some respondents were only able to view in text based version (original HTML version unreadable)
- The survey had to be completed on-line. A client could not 'download' the survey, complete it, then send it back. This caused some confusion, since it was a long survey and required some research of their site's stats. A common complaint was," I filled out the survey, then I lost all my data, and had to fill it out again."
- Incompatibility between response data and Survey Solutions database arose because the survey was 'imported' from another format into the Survey Solutions,…and then re-formatted question by question.
- We experienced some difficulty importing some survey responses to the database.
- Software program is not set up to merge data from 2 or more different survey work stations.

Recommendations:
- Technical Support was invaluable. We HIGHLY recommend the purchase of annual tech support package. (The 30 day free tech support option has expired.)
- In future, we recommend the survey be created, from the very beginning, within the Survey Solutions program.

Themes and Highlights from survey respondents on the Value of the CAP program in BC

This is a sample of comments and ideas collected from the responses of survey participants. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a full presentation of comments collected.

The Impact of the Community Access Program on Rural Communities

"The high quality CAP training was free and provided everyone an opportunity to become computer/software experienced as well as to upgrade their skills. The effects are long-lasting and most of our trainees now have their own computers and Internet connections."

"CAP sites have opened up the computer world to so many people who otherwise would never have had the opportunity. Many have gone on to purchase their own computers. CAP sites provide a very important service – to make educational technology available to all."

"It is critical that our users are provided this service . . . for women in or leaving abusive relationships this is sometimes their only way of connecting with family and getting info. about services and abuse.
It is imperative to have this site in isolated and rural areas for people to have access to information and improve their computer/employability skills."

"Our youth greatly benefited as well with regard to homework, setting up e-mails, and correspondence. Thank-you for the opportunity to serve our public and clientele within our community."

"This CAP project is the most important community project we have undertaken. Our community is easily polarized and I can safely say that we have 100% cooperation. Has benefited citizens of all ages and classes. Has brought us closer together and it has given us a fighting chance to be able to stay in our community but gain financially in the global marketplace"

"This service is so extremely important to isolated, rural communities like ours. This site provides the best Internet access in a 6-hour radius. Our local server is painfully slow and prone to difficulties. This makes our CAP site essential to business and community access to the economic opportunities of the world"

"Having an economical high speed Internet connection has had a positive impact on the social, educational, medical, economic, and recreational sectors or our remote way of life. We are convinced that high speed broadband connectivity in rural and remote areas will have a profoundly positive impact in strengthening rural and remote communities."

"We would like to express our appreciation to Industry Canada for the opportunities that they have initiated. Without a CAP site and the corresponding funding (our community) would not have public Internet access nor would our community have a local dial-up connection, slow as it may be."

Concerns around Sustainability

" In order to keep the CAP lab open this year, I had to work for four months with no pay. Stable funding for youth interns or lab attendants would make the job much easier."

" We are very fortunate that our Community School and Service Society Board have chosen to fund this program on an ongoing basis, as it would not be possible to continue with strictly volunteer staffing. There are currently some concerns about the future funding due to our current government reviewing all public spending."

"...When this site was first set up with our library, I wasn't the librarian but worked as a volunteer and do know that it has inspired us to keep up with the times and to help reinforce this idea with our patrons. It has been most beneficial but as our library doesn't even have enough funding to pay me for the hours that I work, we DO have to rely on grants to fund a summer student to carry on additional services such as courses, Web pages etc."

"Rural Community Access has a desperate need for high-speed Internet access that is affordable. Small, isolated communities need this access. It is extremely hard to do my job effectively running the public access centre when I am always chasing funding, which takes a huge amount of time for short-term solutions. Our community has a high incidence of residents on social assistance, and a high population of people unemployed (over half of our community lives under the poverty line . . . the access centre is an essential service with overwhelming community support, it cannot exist without long-term funding, as our users cannot pay a high price to use this service. We have leaned heavily on the Community School support, offered by the Community Programs Office, but this funding has recently been threatened and is on the cutting block (thanks to the new Liberal government, which does not support any community-driven initiatives, especially if they have been successful.) This means that our users will have to pay more for a service that they already cannot afford, and so the success of this program is jeopardized by a lack of funding. Further investment in this program will help us continue to improve the lives of residents in our community.**"**

"We were one of the first CAP sites when the project first started. We had 3 year partnership start-up funding. In that application there was no commitment beyond that time. We fulfilled that partnership. As one partner we continued the public access site but because we made it self sustaining, linked it with recreational and educational programming and made it a valuable development program for YEP students. However, Industry Canada has treated the entire project as if there was some commitment and financing beyond those initial first 3 years. We have kept in contact because Netcorp/YEP/YIP programs have been of assistance. If continued site operation was desired/is desired Industry Canada show be looking at broader ways to support Site Needs than just the very restricted YEP Grants. Our project is still viable because we are financial supported through our municipality and community schools and we hope to continue but broader use grant applications should again be available if you want use to take steps forward or even maintain status . . ."

Suggested areas for further analysis

The survey questions were thorough, and offer a very clear platform for providing information important in assessing the Impact of British Columbia's CAP Sites on Volunteerism.
In addition to that, the following points may be areas the survey manager may consider as important to analyze:

- Filter to consider what site types provide the highest range of services (ie: courses)
- Filter to consider what site types have the highest traffic
- Filter to consider what site types stated their CAP position had "improved their job opportunities".
- Filter to compare age groups of CAP Coordinators and new skills gained.

Conclusions

With this survey we have only begun to illustrate the full impact of Rural CAP in the province. The CAP Coordinators who participated in the survey often mentioned that the program, as a whole, has had a very important, positive impact on communities. It has increased overall knowledge of technology, employment potential and skills of BC users, as well as provided a lifeline for the more isolated communities. Many sites mentioned lack of funding, and so sustainability is definitely an issue that must be addressed by the federal government, as some sites may be in danger of closing their doors to the public if some financial relief is not received.

This process has been enlightening, and we were often intrigued by the information uncovered through the survey. We notice that if CAP sites do not have a direct relationship with CAP, they feel no allegiance to the program. Many sites managed by network coordinators do not receive any communication from CAP, and some did not even know what CAP was. Often they felt that CAP played no role in the running of their public access centre. If CAP sites/coordinators do not have a relationship with CAP, then certainly the public does not, and therefore the political significance of Industry Canada and the Federal Government's support to their community is lost.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future database management

- Ensure that site contact information is required as part of contractual obligations (not just network coordinators.)
- Integrate with National Atlas and Industry Canada's Web page.
- Have an on-line update function that each site can manage themselves. (also part of a site's contractual obligations.)
- Ensure that all other sources are utilized for database updates: staff e-mail conversations, BCCNA d-base, Milestone reports, application forms, Youth Intern programs.
- Separate database by funding year, and consider removing sites that have not received funding in over 4 years

Recommendations for CAP Administration

- Regular communication to CAP sites (not just network coordinators) that helps develop a culture of inclusiveness and understanding of the scope and benefits of the CAP program.
- Contractual obligations that each SITE takes initiative in the two way communication process.

Recommendations for future surveys/lessons learned

- When possible, allow more time for survey process (including testing survey and survey tools, as well as survey follow-up)
- Continue to use local expertise when developing survey
- Use a combination of survey methods (not uniquely a Web-based survey)
- Take a broad sampling of all survey target to test survey, and interview all test respondents on relevance and format of questions asked.

Appendix 1:

Comments Section- Question #55 *[XX indicates confidential site identity]*

▶As a service we host non-profit Websites on our server for free and for sustainability we are now offer inexpensive hosting for community businesses. As such, the impact we have on our community at large is substantial. As more people get their own Internet access, the burning need for CAP sites decreases.

▶Before CAP sites in XX, there was a high percent of homes that used a computer to play games. The high quality CAP training was free and provided everyone an opportunity to become computer/software experienced as well as to upgrade their skills. The effects are long lasting and most of our trainees now have their own computers and Internet connections. As the CAP coordinator I provide continued one on one training and set-up assistance as needed. This community was extremely supportive - it received one IC grant and set up 4 full access sites - this community and district has greatly benefited from this. Websites developed through the CAP have proven beneficial in marketing businesses and the area as a tourist site. Initially our volunteers were many - they were Trojan workers for this program. The XX Improvement Society is grateful and appreciative to our partners (Museum, Library, City Hall) in this venture. Thank you.

▶Brings community together, especially within youth and older groups.

▶By having a CAP site in our office we also have provided Vol Net training for Industry Canada, therefore generating revenue for XX.

▶CAP in this community has had the largest impact in the development of a community based web site, which maintenance provides essential summer employment for youth, in the area of high technology. The public access site is used mainly for Internet exploration.

▶CAP sites have opened up the computer world to so many people who otherwise would never have had the opportunity. Many have gone on to purchase their own computers.

▶CAP sites provide a very important service- to make educational technology available to all.

▶Central place on a secluded island, gives people a window onto the world, connects them with each other. Few other places open in the evening on our island.

▶For Rural Communities CAP sites offer opportunities in education, communication and information that are not be physically accessible. In XX we still face the challenge of not having high speed Internet access.

▶Hi there, its great working with this program, I wouldn't have minded working for longer hours, it would have been good if there was something I could have shown the people other than what I have put down on your survey. such as, Web page making. But thank you for the Job.
I found the question about % of users to be somewhat inappropriate in your choice of categories. I have not included the student population as users of our CAP site. Our site is in the school and the community has access to the site during school hours and on Saturday. There have also been special workshops held using our CAP site including one recently on genealogy. Our Web page is including in the school site.

▶I am a Youth Intern so I couldn't fill in all the forms

▶In order to keep the CAP lab open this year, I had to work for four months with no pay. Stable funding for youth interns or lab attendants would make the job much easier.

It is critical that our users are provided this service.......for women in or leaving abusive

►relationships this is sometimes their only way of connecting with family and getting info. about services and abuse.

►It is imperative to have this site in isolated and rural areas for people to have access to information and improve their computer/employability skills.

►Need the 3rd station working Need a maintenance person

►One CAP site sometimes closed due to turn over in supervisors and school administration
One significant impact I believe CAP sites have is by providing an opportunity for young people, volunteer or paid, to interact with seniors by helping them become computer literate. I can say enough how rewarding our young trainers feel by helping seniors learn to use the Internet.
opened the world up to smaller communities . taking them into the new age and embracing knowledge.

►Our CAP site has become an important hub for the small community it serves (town of 250 people and surrounding rural area). We are very fortunate that the XX Community School and Service Society Board have chosen to fund this program on an ongoing basis, as it would not be possible to continue with strictly volunteer staffing. There are currently some concerns about the future funding due to our current government reviewing all public spending.

►Our cap site is part of a larger operation. We have 25 computers all hook up to a T1 line. This cap site is a place to come not only to improve your future by improving skills but a place to hang out and meet people. This cap site has help establish a learning community. This is a very small community of only 4,900 people yet we average 480 daily drop-ins monthly and they stay an average of an hour and half. This community has increased its potential to change with the times due to the way information is now being used by this community. Five companies use this CAP site as their way of getting customers. A fishing lodge without phone lines now get 90% of their customers booking over the Internet at this CAP site. Others without Internet access or computer access use this site on a weekly basis. For some people this is their social life. This is the place where people get a free coffee and go on line for 60 hours for only $20. It is a place where people know your name! e. For this tiny village this CAP site is important to its future well-being

►Our CAP site is part of our community's employment agency. The coordinator is an employment counsellor whose funding comes from a combination of federal and provincial funding and CAP site user fees. Our centre's IT Specialist maintains the network of computers. When CAP Youth, summer students and/or volunteers are unavailable, the staff scramble to try to fill in the gaps by teaching and supervising wherever possible.

►Our CAP site is primarily focused on assisting with employment searches and business information, and is used mainly by older people. It has been very helpful in improving skills. However, we have lost one of our local ISP's and will now have to start charging higher fees

►Our CAP site is well used by local residents and many visitors. There would be a noticeable void within the community if this service were not available.

►Our site was part of a project by the Public Library. We were able to use the site to train teachers and some parents on use of the Internet.

►Page 13 Quest#51 The breakdown of ethnic communities that access Cap Site addressed Asians. Our clientele are global. This did not address Europeans, South America, Central America, British Isles, Middle East. We are hooked up to a Telus server which is unfortunately very slow. However we appreciated the free hook up that was offered through Telus at the time.
The Cap site has been a great assistance to clients in their research and was excellent for self-help tutorials as well as assistance with workshops. Our youth greatly benefited as well with regard to

homework, setting up e-mails, and correspondence. Thank you for the opportunity to serve our public and clientele within our community.

►People in the community do use the CAP Site computers during school hours, as well as in the evenings. Our technical issues need to be resolved before we can look at offering any type of courses. We're almost there!

►preparation of business plans, income tax returns, resumes and job searches

►Rural Community Access has a desperate need for high-speed Internet access that is affordable. Small, isolated communities need this access. It is extremely hard to do my job effectively running the public access centre when I am always chasing funding, which takes a huge amount of time for short-term solutions. Our community has a high incidence of residents on social assistance, and a high population of people unemployed (over half of our community lives under the poverty line) The Access Centre has become an essential service to this community. Residents and tourists alike use the access centre to keep in touch with family and friends, to search the net, find information online about jobs and educational opportunities, and access certain services. In the new economy, people need supported access to technology to make the transition from resource-based economy to knowledge-based economy. It is very hard to survive in a small community, and the access centre has helped many residents along in their learning process. Even though the access centre is an essential service with overwhelming community support, it cannot exist without long-term funding, as our users cannot pay a high price to use this service. We have leaned heavily on the Community School support, offered by the Community Programs Office, but this funding has recently been threatened and is on the cutting block (thanks to the new Liberal government, which does not support any community-driven initiatives, especially if they have been successful) This means that our users will have to pay more for a service that they already cannot afford, and so the success of this program is jeopardized by a lack of funding. Further investment in this program will help us continue to improve the lives of residents in our community.

►site need to be upgraded very badly.

►The answers to Part C refer to the Public Library only. The other part of our CAP site is dial-up users from the community (55) and the students at the Secondary School (200)

►The CAP program has helped our community A LOT! Just some of the benefits are training youths, improving computer literacy, helping folks stay in touch with their families and friends and helping us to build an infrastructure to bring our community together and represent it to the world.

►The CAP site has been a heaven-send program for all.

►The CAP site in our community made it possible for the library to continue its job of keeping our rural community connected to the world of technology. When this site was first set up with our library, I wasn't the librarian but worked as a volunteer and do know that it has inspired us to keep up with the times and to help reinforce this idea with our patrons. It has been most beneficial but as our library doesn't even have enough funding to pay me for the hours that I work, we DO have to rely on grants to fund a summer student to carry on additional services such as courses, Web pages etc.

►The CAP site is extremely important for our communities as we provide services to the aboriginal population. People feel welcome and comfortable in using our computers and appreciate the assistance of our Youth Intern. The CAP site helps students, adults and adult and youth pursuing their career goals. It has assisted our creative entrepreneurs in marketing their cultural skills. It helps adults who do not have any computer knowledge to become familiar with computers to apply for Life skills training with other partnerships. The CAP sites provided assist the whole community and continue to be needed on a daily basis.

►The CAP site is in our Adult Learning Centre. Centre staff manage the site, so no volunteers are used. The 2 CAP machines were donated by the local Community Network. The only expenses so far for our

school are paper costs for the printer. Cartridges are provided by the Community Net organization, as is maintenance except for re-loading a cartridge etc.

►The Community Access Program provides an important link to the outside world and the wonderful range of possibilities. It also provides a vital communication tool and helps people keep connected to each other.

►The computers and the staffing given to the youth centre enabled us to prove more hours of operation for the teenagers of this community. It has been shown that this allows the teenagers to access the Internet. and to prove to them that they are accepted in to a community which is driven by adults.

►The equipment we were able to purchase with the CAP grant benefited for our students and, mainly, their parents. After witnessing their children's efforts and learning with technological tools, more and more parents are seeing the value of purchasing a computer for home.

►The only way that we were able to maintain our CAP site was to run the Internet under a franchise agreement is an Internet provider. The limiting factor that we have at this time is the speed of our Internet service. Due to financial constraints we are not able to provide for a faster Internet service. The CAP grant has enabled three small communities and the surrounding rural area to have Internet access. People using the Internet only wish that it would be faster.
The users and usage of our CAP site is ever changing. Initially, many community members came in to learn how to run a computer. They needed it for schoolwork or to use their home computer. Some small business operators also wanted to learn about Internet and email use. Many of these people continue to use the CAP site because they do not have their own computers and some can't get telephone service where they live. During the summers, we have many seasonal residents who are able to keep in touch with their families and continue to run their businesses during their stay. Over the past year or so the CAP site is increasingly used by local youth to chat on line and play interactive computer games, as well as do research and homework. It is becoming a gathering place for them, which is lacking in our community. There is a possibility that this CAP site isn't used as much as possible by community members because it is located in a school. (Some people may be reluctant to come to a school building)

►This CAP project is the most important community project we have undertaken. Our community is easily polarized and I can safely say that we have 100% cooperation. Has benefited citizens of all ages and classes. Has brought us closer together and it has given us a fighting chance to be able to stay in our community but gain financially in the global marketplace.

►This CAP site has become a focal point in our community where people come for help with everything from upgrading their computer skills to accessing the family maintenance schedule from the Attorney General's Web site. With the terrible economic times here on the North Island, this CAP site is the hub for skills upgrading and local, national, and international job searches. With marital breakdowns and family financial collapses, this CAP site is often the first stop in information acquisition and exploration of assistance options.

►This CAP site is very valuable to seniors in our area who are just getting used to the idea of coming to the Jr. Sec school to learn about computers and to access the Internet. In Sept 2002 our school will change to a middle school and we anticipate that even more seniors will access the site since many will want to support their grandchildren. We also anticipate that parents will be more engaged with school activities and therefore more aware of what CAP has to offer. Parents and Grandparents are more involved with their students in Grades 6, 7 and 8.

►This has been a very rewarding experience for all of us. We have a site that is used continuously and is very valuable for all.

►This is an important community service for all members of the community, in particular those who do not own a computer and may not be able to afford either the computer or the connectivity. The CAP site also affords the opportunity for "test driving" Internet access. For seniors this opens up a new area of interest

which has developed into seniors helping seniors, a social network and a link between senior and junior members of families.

►This service is so extremely important to isolated, rural communities like ours. This site provides the best Internet access in a 6 hour radius. Our local server is painfully slow and prone to difficulties. This makes our CAP site essential to business and provides community access to the economic opportunities of the world. Unfortunately, we struggle without the full resources needed. We need to update our equipment, and also need to be able to provide the consistency that only comes with paid staff. We do not have the resources to be able to provide that year round at the moment. CAP funding has been extremely important in helping our community access this technology, and provide the training needed for our community to embrace it. Thank you.

►This site has been warmly received and used. It is a great asset to this remote community. I certainly hope that it can remain in the community in the future because of the resources that it offers people. As we continue to grow into our second year and with our new youth with the Youth Options program I hope to show local people the many assets of this site.

►First Nations feels very privileged to have the Community Access Program for one of our communities as it helped many members find employment during the peak season here in XX, or our previous Youth Employment Program sponsored a student, she has helped many with the Internet access, and helped individual community members draw up resumes, and research for various programs. Noting that this is a very worthwhile program and stressing the need for a part-time supervisor. We have accessed some funding for another CAP Coordinator till the end of March. We are always looking for ways in helping our community, with this we are always trying to find ways to access some funding to help the process follow through, in closing we thank you Industry Canada for your contributions.

►Too few volunteers in a small town of under 800 people. 4 Cap sites in various locations make it easy for access points.

►We are a non-profit [disability] Society whose computers mean a lot to us and we find have helped the Clients totally. They love what they learn and the lessons and one-to-one teaching they get. Thanks for letting us be a part of this survey.

►We are a non-profit society providing Internet access for the local community. Our society has a large impact on our community as we are the service provider in the valley, supplying Internet access at a reasonable cost to our members. At present we have over 200+ members who rely on our service daily.

►We are a small local museum, open May to September 7 days a week, and by appointment the rest of the year. Most of the computer use was for research related to history and geography of the area.

►We are a small rural community. We have no bus service. The majority of CAP users are seniors keeping in touch with family or accessing info on Websites. We are adjacent to a public dock and in the summer we have many tourists who use the site to access their e-mail, enroll in classes online and research etc. Our CAP computer/printer is quite old and although we have made small repairs to keep it going, we expect it will not last much longer. As we do not have funds available to replace the equipment we are concerned that we will have to close the site.
We currently have several adults taking courses through Open Learning.

►We used our CAP grant to develop a self sustaining non-profit society that joint-ventured with Kermode Applied Research & Development and Lucent Technology to design and build a small scale pilot project that would provide high speed wireless Internet connectivity to a remote community that did not have an economical service available to it. Having an economical high speed Internet connection has had a positive impact on the social, educational, medical, economic, and recreational sectors or our remote way of life. We are convinced that high speed broadband connectivity in rural and remote areas will have a profoundly positive impact in strengthening rural and remote communities.

►We were one of the first CAP Sites when the project first started. We had 3 year partnership start-up funding. In that application there was no commitment beyond that time. We fulfilled that partnership. As one partner we continued the public access site but because we made it self-sustaining, linked it with recreational and educational programming and made it a valuable development program for YEP students. However, Industry Canada has treated the entire project as if there was some commitment and financing beyond those initial first 3 years. We have kept in contact because Netcorp/YEP/YIP programs have been of assistance. If continued site operation was desired/is desired Industry Canada show be looking at broader ways to support Site Needs than just the very restricted YEP Grants. Our project is still viable because we are financial supported through our municipality and community schools and we hope to continue but broader use grant applications should again be available if you want use to take steps forward or even maintain status. I wish you would ask us more specific questions about past and future sustainability needs instead of some of the above questions which didn't apply and therefore we have to estimate answers so broadly that the entire survey results are ineffective. Why would I want to remain anonymous. I wish we could have effective feedback and communication about the project.

►When we first opened we had a CAP site in the High School, but found that the public felt uncomfortable in the school and the teachers did not appreciate any interruptions. The school was too expensive to rent after school hours for the computer site, so we closed that site down and kept our remaining site in the Village Mall. That site was a small and rather dark room but was adequate till we found a better location. We now (December 1st) are moving into a community Centre, open to the public, and much more user friendly. Many people are looking forward to this new venue. The CAP Centre has been a wonderful addition to our rural community both in the services it provides and the job experience it gives to young people. Parents have come in who did not want the internet in their homes because of pornography, a landscaping business has been set up, genealogy has been a great favorite, book keeping for non profits has been a help, people have learned how to use computers, computer problems at home have been solved, and of course email has been widely used (both local and tourist). The B.C. Tuition Grant (Youth Community Action) has given students some help towards their University fees and has been a very good job experience in working with the public, a win-win situation. In the next 6 months the CAP site will be used by a community non-profit society to catalogue the history of our area and make it available to everyone, create a local needs assessment survey and Directory, formulate a template for setting up a community Centre, and create a business plan for the centre. Without our CAP Centre none of these services or projects would be possible. We would like to express our appreciation to Industry Canada for the opportunities that they have initiated.

►Without a CAP site and the corresponding funding XX would not have public Internet access nor would our community have a local dial-up connection, slow as it may be.
Without CAP site funding, I'm not sure our library would have the internet equipment we now have, being a small library the funding is not always there for computer equipment. The Internet is well used and very much appreciated.

Appendix 2:

Refusals and Complaints

▶All of the CAP sites that [our organization] oversees are run by paid staff and not volunteers. Please remove our name from the survey mail-out. Manager Information Systems & Networks, XX.

▶Unfortunately I won't be completing the survey. The survey doesn't really apply to us. We are unionized and we have NO volunteers of any sort. It is also impossible to distinguish internet/computer use between the following computers: those provided by CAP, those provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, those provided by the Province (Computers in Libraries Grant Program), those provided by partner CAP organizations, and those provided with our own funding. We just don't keep those stats. If you think I can help with some anecdotal information, feel free to email or phone me. I'll have some time for that. (Note: The questions regarding my children I wasn't going to answer at all. Why ask?)

▶As you probably know, Global Links initiated the application because the initial grant to BC libraries for Internet stations was not going to stretch to XX. Global Links worked with one of our Assistant Directors who is no longer with us. When Global Links folded, [name, phone number] took over the reporting process.
As I mentioned, we still operate the site (it's now one of 2 Internet sites in the library), although with updated equipment, and all assistance in its use is done by library branch staff (we're open 22 hours a week). It is well used....mostly for e-mail, but more recently also to access our library catalogue. The access is crucial, and the initial CAP grant was invaluable. If you have further questions, I'll try to respond. I'm sorry ...the surveys did not seem to apply to my role in this.

▶I am the Executive Director of the *Regional Library District. The Library has 10 rural CAP sites. We will not be asking our community librarians to respond to this survey, as our CAP sites are run as part of the library, not as separate CAP sites.

▶If you can fine-tune your survey questions, I will try to respond. Forty minutes and many pages does not fit into my day. I have a CAP funded site, not CAP funded work hours. Regrets,

▶We will not be responding due to job action currently underway.

▶Cannot respond due to staffing transition at this moment.

▶Listed as "DOES NOT WISH TO BE CONTACTED" in database

▶We only have a CAP site youth employed during the summer when grants provide. I REALLY don't like the age grouping of 46-65... hex on the computer... I'm 47 and DON'T want to answer to over 49!!!!! Rethink the age groups, please!!!

▶Just downloaded the survey - I understand your reasons for needing to acquire this information from some places offering CAP access, but the info. requested in profiling me is not relevant to my job with the school district. Even if our centre were to become a site- which it has never been, even at our old location, as the CAP site under [name's] direction, was housed right next door to the Continuing Education Centre - it would be offered as a courtesy on behalf of another agency, such as the Community Skills Centre, which [he] supervised. Thank you for your interest in our situation, but unless our centre is approached by another community agency that is empowered to offer CAP access - with the equipment, maintenance, and support of such an offering simply looking for a location - I doubt that we will be part of the CAP process in XX, as there are other community access services that already provide many of these services.

►Our situation in XX and YY appears to be somewhat different. Our organization houses two cap sites. One was in our office here in XX and the other was in our office in YY. The one in YY is still being used as a stand alone and appears to be well utilized by the community. It is maintained and supervised by the staff who also is hired under a contract to the government. The other cap site was in our XX office and because our computer lab was renovated this last year and networked, this computer was not able to be networked into our system because of its age and capacity. We didn't have the room to have it as a stand alone. There are other cap sites in the community that are being maintained by the organizations in which they are housed. One is in the Library. I took over as manager last October and became aware of the other sites somewhat later. In reading some of the files of my predecessor, I realize that they did hire someone to market and maintain the cap sites from the Youth Initiative Program a few years ago, but nothing has been done since then. In reading the survey, it doesn't really appear to be appropriate for me to answer for the reasons explained above.

►[our organization] has delivered the CAP site organizationally. As such, I am not sure how we can possibly answer the personal profile questions on your survey.
It's not that we don't want to help. I just find the level of personal information asked for to be intrusive and irrelevant to our organization. I am uncomfortable asking my new receptionist (who is doing most of our CAP work) to provide this kind of detailed information.

►I spoke with [name] yesterday about the survey you sent her for the XX Community School CAP site. Her comment was "I spend way too much time doing the bookkeeping for all the Regional Network CAP sites. I have no extra time to answer this survey."
[She] has a full time teaching position, she publishes the local newspaper and has many volunteer responsibilities. The reality of volunteerism in small communities is there are too few people to do the work.
I just got off the phone with [name] of the [network org]. His wife is doing similar work for the [network org]. [He] says she, also, is getting tired of endless thankless work. Industry Canada's CAP program is precariously balanced on the backs of volunteers. Some of us are getting tired of so much work for no pay.

►Good morning all,

I was recently contacted to fill out an Industry Canada survey, THE IMPACT of BRITISH COLUMBIA´S CAP SITES on VOLUNTEERISM. The survey raised a number of interesting questions. For instance: Section C. Impact of CAP Sites on Users and Communities,

50. In an average hour, how many people use the CAP site at your location?

51. What percentage of CAP site users at your location are: (check all that apply)

- Female (enter percentage)

- First Nations (enter percentage)

- Asian (enter percentage)

- Francophone (enter percentage)

- Unemployed or under-employed (enter percentage)

- People with disabilities (enter percentage)

53. Please estimate the number of CAP site users at your location in any given week who are taking educational courses on-line:

- Towards a post-secondary degree (enter number)

- To complete secondary school (enter number)

- Non-degree (enter number)

- Don't know

THE ISSUE IS: To my knowledge, CAP sites have never been asked by Industry Canada to keep track of this information, so there is absolutely no validity to our answers. They are at best a guess. If we are to collect this kind of information how will that be done and how will we submit it?   Is there a reason why Industry Canada needs to know the race of some people who use CAP sites as? Will Industry Canada want to know if Muslims use CAP sites in the future?

ANOTHER ISSUE: When I compare the CAP activity log, which is part of CAP site milestone reports, to the data collection requirements of the CAP Youth Interns (entered into the virtual office) there is no overlap except the number of CAP site visitors.   Why is it necessary to collect two different sets of data?

I have no problem with evaluation. My concern is that as volunteers we are being asked to collect data, to what end? I seek assurance that Industry Canada has given adequate consideration to what the data will be used for. With the exception of CAP Youth Interns, CAP sites are run by volunteers. Administering a CAP intern takes time, as do all the other chores required to keep a CAP site open and running. Out of respect for volunteers I believe Industry Canada must look carefully at what and how and why it is collecting data.

E N D of Appendix A

Appendix B: CAP Site Survey Tool

Appendix B: Web Survey

Industry Canada Community Access Program

THE IMPACT of BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CAP SITES on VOLUNTEERISM

Dear CAP Site Coordinator,

As you know, CAP sites were established in 1995 to provide public access to Internet. Without access to these CAP sites, many Canadians would be disadvantaged.

CAP sites have likely had a positive impact on:

· the employment potential, skills, literacy, education, and civic engagement of BC users.

· BC communities, business development, youth, seniors, volunteerism and community service.

In other words, CAP sites may help make our communities better places to live, and may help people to improve their own lives in many ways.

Studying CAP's impact on volunteerism will begin to illustrate the full impact of CAP and in the process assist senior management as they deliberate on the future of the Program.

As CAP site coordinator, you play a vital role in all this. So we are asking you to help us begin assessing the impact of CAP sites by answering the questions in this survey. Your answers will help us improve our services and meet the needs of British Columbians more effectively. In particular, we need to understand your own needs as CAP site coordinators in order to support you more effectively. Therefore the first 22 questions help us find out who you are. All information is strictly confidential and anonymous.

Thank you for giving your time, and thank you for your outstanding work on behalf of all British Columbians

Yours sincerely,

Rose Sirois
Manager, Regional & Community Liaison

The first section of this survey is a personal profile of CAP site coordinators

The second section of this survey asks about your actual work coordinating the CAP site.

The third section asks you to assess the impact of the CAP site on users and on your local community.

Note, when answering a fill in the blank question, please remember to check the circle to the left as well.

A. General Questions about You (Please check the appropriate circle)
1. *Sex:*

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

2. *Age:*

- ○ 15-17
- ○ 18-19
- ○ 20-24
- ○ 25-34
- ○ 35-44
- ○ 45-54
- ○ 55-64
- ○ 65+

3. *Marital Status:*

- ☐ Never Married
- ☐ Married or common law (includes same-sex partnerships)
- ☐ Separated or Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

4. *Do you have children?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [Go to question 8]

5. *Please specify the age of each child*

	<FONT SIZE="1"> 0-5	6-14	15-17	18+
Child 1	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child 2	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child 3	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child 4	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child 5	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child 6	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. *Are there children under 18 years old <u>usually living with you in your home</u>?*
("Usually" means more than half the time. Include here any children under 18 that you already listed in the last question <u>IF</u> they are living with you. If you are under 18, don't include yourself, but do count all others under 18 living in the same household.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [Go to question 8]

7. *Please specify the age of each child under 18 who is living with you in your home:*

	<FONT SIZE="1"> 0-5	6-14	15-17
Child 1	☐	☐	☐
Child 2	☐	☐	☐
Child 3	☐	☐	☐
Child 4	☐	☐	☐

Child 5	☐	☐	☐
Child 6	☐	☐	☐

8. *Who else lives with you in your household, and what is the main activity of each household member?(if you live alone, go to question 9)*

	Employed	**Unemployed**	**Student**	**Home Maker**	**Retired**	**Other**
Spouse/partner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mother	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Father	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Room-mate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. *Please check your own <u>main</u> activity:*

☐ Employed

☐ Unemployed

☐ Student

☐ Home maker

☐ Retired

☐ Other (please specify) _____

10. *What is your occupation?*

☐ Management Occupations

☐ Business, Finance and Administrative Occupations (Examples: accountants, finance advisors, secretaries, receptionists, etc.)

☐ Natural and Applied Sciences and Related Occupations (Examples: computer programmers, engineers, etc)

☐ Health Occupations (Examples: doctors, nurses, etc.)

☐ Occupations in Social Science, Education, Government Service and Religion (Examples: teachers/professors, counsellors, lawyers, social workers, etc.)

☐ Occupations in Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport (Examples: artists, actors, graphic designers, coaches, journalists, etc.)

☐ Sales and Service Occupations (Examples: insurance and real estate sales, buyers, salespersons, cashiers, supervisors, cooks, food & beverage service, childcare and home support workers, etc.)

☐ Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators and Related Occupations (Examples: contractors and supervisors, construction trades, transport and equipment operators, trades helpers, construction and transportation labourers, etc.)

☐ Occupations Unique to Primary Industry (Examples: occupations unique to fishing, farming and mining, etc.)

☐ Occupations Unique to Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities (Examples: machine operators, assemblers, supervisors, processing labourers, etc.)

☐ Other (please specify) [   ]

11. *Do you have any kind of paid employment?*

☐ Yes

☐ No [Go to question 16]

12. *If you are employed, how would you classify your work?*

☐ Paid worker

☐ Self-employed without employees

☐ Self-employed with employees

☐ Unpaid work for family business

☐ Other (please specify) [   ]

13. *What is the title of your main job?*

(please specify) [   ]

14. *If you are employed, is your <u>main job.....</u>? (check all that apply)*

☐ Full-time (30 or more hours) (go to question 16)

☐ Part time (less than 30 hours)

☐ Casual, on-call or short-term contract

☐ Seasonal

☐ Working for others

☐ Self employed

☐ Other (please specify) [_____]

15. *If you are employed <u>part time</u> in your <u>main job</u> (less than 30 hours) is it because you:*

☐ Could not find full-time work?

☐ Did not want full-time work?

☐ Other (please specify) [_____]

16. *Have you graduated from high school?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

17. *Please indicate your highest grade of education completed (check one only).*

☐ Primary to grade 8

☐ Grade 9 to 12 (or 13)

☐ Community college diploma or certificate

☐ University degree

☐ Other (please specify) [_____]

18. *Are you currently enrolled in a school or degree program?*

☐ Yes

☐ No [Go to question 21]

19. *Are you enrolled full-time or part-time?*

☐ Full-time?

☐ Part-time?

20. *At what level or grade are you currently enrolled?*

☐ Primary to grade 8

☐ Grade 9 to 12 (or 13)

☐ Community college diploma or certificate program

☐ University degree program

☐ Other (please specify) [_____]

21. *Are you a member of any ethnic or racial minority?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [Go to question 23]

22. *If yes, please indicate which community?*

- ☐ First Nations
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Other (please specify) [_____]

B. Your Work as a CAP Site Coordinator

23. *How many hours per week do you <u>usually</u> work at: (check all that apply)*

Your CAP Site(s)-Paid Hours? (please enter number of hours) [_____]

Your CAP Site(s)-Volunteer Hours? (please enter number of hours) [_____]

Other Jobs-Paid? (please enter number of hours) [_____]

Other Voluntary Work? (please enter number of hours) [_____]

Unpaid Housework and Child Care (please enter number of hours) [_____]

24. *Do you supervise other CAP site coordinators? (That is, are you a <u>network</u> coordinator?)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

25. *Please describe the kinds of work you do as a CAP site coordinator* (Check all that apply:)

- ☐ General Administration
- ☐ Provide technical advice and assistance
- ☐ Liaison with partner groups/other service providers
- ☐ Marketing/Advertising
- ☐ Financial Administration
- ☐ Supervise other staff/volunteers
- ☐ Maintenance and repairs to equipment
- ☐ Supervise public access hours
- ☐ One on one training
- ☐ Web page design/updates
- ☐ Design/Develop Courses

☐ Teaching/Facilitating Courses

☐ Other (please specify) _____

26. *If you have offered courses, please specify which ones: (check all that apply)(a check in Advanced will assume there are also Introductory and Intermediate courses available)*

	<FONT SIZE="1"> Introductory	Intermediate	Advanced
Internet and email course	☐	☐	☐
Spreadsheets	☐	☐	☐
Database design	☐	☐	☐
Basic computer skills	☐	☐	☐
Word processing	☐	☐	☐
Web page design	☐	☐	☐
Graphic design	☐	☐	☐
Photo image editor	☐	☐	☐
E-business	☐	☐	☐
On-line presentations	☐	☐	☐
Computer maintenance	☐	☐	☐
Programming	☐	☐	☐
Sound design	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)_____	☐	☐	☐

27. *Of all the things you did in the <u>past year</u>, how important were your CAP site activities to you?*

☐ Very important

☐ Important

☐ Not very important

☐ Not important at all

28. *How important to your CAP site work are the following motivations? (please check one for each reason listed)*

	<FONT SIZE="1"> Very important	Important	Not important	Not at all important	Not applicabl
Meeting people and/or companionship	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Learning new skills	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Helping others	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Feeling that you accomplished something	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Doing something you like to do	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Having influence in your community	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Improving your job opportunities	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Feeling obligated to help out	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Using your skills and experience	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Benefiting your children, family or yourself	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Feeling you owe something to your community	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Doing something with your spare time	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙

29. *Is your main reason for working at the CAP site that you cannot find other suitable work?*

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

30. *Have you gained any of the following skills or knowledge while working at the CAP site?*
(check all that apply)

   ☐ Computer skills

   ☐ Fundraising skills

   ☐ Technical or office skills (eg. accounting, cataloguing, filing, etc.)

   ☐ Organizational, managerial skills (eg. resource management, leadership, planning, running organization etc.)

   ☐ Knowledge (eg. about community issues, health, political issues, the environment, or other subjects that you have read about on the Internet during your work time)

   ☐ Communication skills (eg. public speaking, writing, public relations, conducting meetings, etc.)

   ☐ Interpersonal skills (eg. conflict resolution, understanding people better, motivating people, dealing with difficult situations, etc.)

   ☐ Other skills or knowledge (please specify) [＿＿＿＿＿]

31. *Do you think your CAP site work has improved your employment prospects?*

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

32. *Overall, how satisfying has your experience as a CAP site coordinator been?*

   ☐ Very Satisfying

   ☐ Somewhat satisfying

   ☐ Neither satisfying or dissatisfying

   ☐ Somewhat dissatisfying

   ☐ Very dissatisfying

33. *If asked, would you have given more time to your CAP site activity over the past year?*

☐ Yes [Go to question 35]

☐ No

34. Please check the <u>most important reason</u> you would not have given more time to your CAP site work over the past year: (please check only one)

☐ I had no more time to give (because of family responsibilities, work, etc.)

☐ I had health problems

☐ I had transportation problems

☐ I could not afford the expenses involved

☐ I could not have coped emotionally with more

☐ I had already given the hours I wanted to give and done my share

☐ I was not interested in doing more

☐ I did not like the way the organization I work for did things

☐ I did not like the other staff

☐ Other (please specify) [_____]

35. Do you feel you have less time to give your CAP site work than you used to?

☐ Yes

☐ No

36. As a CAP site coordinator, did you feel overworked, time-stressed, or burned out?

☐ Most of the time

☐ Often

☐ Occasionally

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

37. What are your usual, weekly out-of-pocket expenses that you have to put out in order to do your CAP site work? (include transportation, child-care, meals, supplies, etc., but do not include expenses for which you were reimbursed)

$ [_____]

38. ***In the past year, have you had any significant personal one-time expenses like computer equipment that you needed to purchase in order to do your CAP site work?*** Please give the amount you spent, but do not count expenses for which you were reimbursed, and do not include usual weekly expenses you already counted in question 37.

$ [   ]

39. ***Do you have volunteers working for or with you, to help with your CAP site services?*** (please include contribution from community board or directors)

- ⊙ Yes
- ⊙ No [Go to question 46]

40. How many volunteers work with you or in support of your CAP site, and how many hours do they work in a week? (please include community board of directors and the hours they contribute)

Number of Volunteers (please enter number) [   ]

Hours (please enter your best estimate of the total number of hours contributed by all volunteers) [   ]

41. ***Please describe the kinds of work these volunteers do (check all that apply)***

- ☐ General Administration
- ☐ Board of Directors
- ☐ Provide technical advice and assistance
- ☐ Liaison with partner groups/other service providers
- ☐ Marketing/Advertising
- ☐ Financial Administration
- ☐ Supervise other staff/volunteers
- ☐ Maintenance and repairs to equipment
- ☐ Supervise public access hours
- ☐ One on one training
- ☐ Web page design/updates
- ☐ Design/Develop Courses
- ☐ Teaching or facilitating courses
- ☐ Other (please specify) [   ]

42. ***Please state the number of volunteers in each of the following age groups:***

0-15 (enter number) [   ]

16-25 (enter number) [   ]

26-35 (enter number) [   ]

36-45 (enter number) [   ]

46-65 (enter number) [   ]

65+ (enter number) [   ]

43. *Please assess whether the volunteers who work at or support the CAP site have gained any of the following skills or knowledge as a result of their work for the CAP site?* (check all that apply)

☐ Computer skills

☐ Fundraising skills

☐ Technical or office skills (eg. accounting, cataloguing, filing, etc.)

☐ Organizational, managerial skills (eg. resource management, leadership, planning, running organization, etc.)

☐ Knowledge (eg. about community issues, health, political issues, the environment, or other subjects that volunteers have read about on the Internet during their work time)

☐ Communication skills (eg. public speaking, writing, public relations, conducting meetings, etc.)

☐ Interpersonal skills (eg. conflict resolution, understanding people better, motivating people, dealing with difficult situations, etc.)

☐ Other skills or knowledge (please specify) [   ]

44. *Compared to one year ago, please estimate whether the number of volunteers at your CAP site has:* (check only one)

○ Increased

○ Decreased

○ Stayed the same

○ CAP site was not open a year ago

○ Don't know

45. *Does your CAP site have volunteer or in-kind contributions from:*

☐ public sector occupations (eg. teachers, nurses, bureaucrats)

☐ private sector occupations (eg. business)

46. *Do you have staff aged 15-30 working with you who are paid by a CAP Youth Initiative grant (CAP Youth)?*

☐ Yes

☐ No [Go to question 49]

47. *How many CAP youth work with you, and how many hours do they work in a week?*

Number of CAP Youth (please enter number) ⬜

Hours per week (please enter total number of hours contributed by all CAP youth working with you) ⬜

48. *Please describe the kinds of work these CAP youth do (check all that apply)*

☐ General Administration

☐ Provide technical advice and assistance

☐ Liaison with partner groups/other service providers

☐ Marketing/Advertising

☐ Financial Administration

☐ Supervise other staff/volunteers

☐ Maintenance and repairs to equipment

☐ Supervise public access hours

☐ One on one training

☐ Web page design/updates

☐ Design/Develop courses

☐ Teaching or facilitating courses

☐ Other (please specify) ⬜

49. *Is your CAP site:*

☐ Part of a school?

☐ Part of a library?

☐ Part of a community hall?

☐ A stand-alone site, not connected to another institution?

☐ Other (please specify) ⬜

C. Impact of CAP Sites on Users and Communities

In order to answer questions 50, 51, 52, 53, you may use the statistical data sheets used on each shift.

50. *In an average week, how many people use the CAP site at your location?*

(best estimate, please enter number) ⬜

51. *What percentage of CAP site users at your location are: (check all that apply)*

Female (enter percentage) ⬜

First Nations (enter percentage) ⬜

Asian (enter percentage) ⬜

Francophone (enter percentage) ⬜

Unemployed or under-employed (enter percentage) ⬜

People with disabilities (enter percentage) ⬜

52. *Please estimate the percentage of CAP site users in each of the following age groups.*
(note: Your total should add up to 100%)

0-15 (enter percentage) ⬜

16-25 (enter percentage) ⬜

26-35 (enter percentage) ⬜

36-45 (enter percentage) ⬜

46-65 (enter percentage) ⬜

65+ (enter percentage) ⬜

53. *Please estimate the number of CAP site users at your location in any given week who are taking educational courses on-line:* (if none, write 0)

Towards a post-secondary degree (enter number) ⬜

To complete secondary school (enter number) ⬜

Non-degree (enter number) ⬜

Don't know ⬜

54. *On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is not important at all, and 10 is extremely important), please assess the contribution your CAP site makes to the following:* (please give your best estimates based on your usual client activity)

	1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely import
Help users' job prospects	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜
Improve computer skills	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜
Improve literacy	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜
Improve	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜	⬜

educational qualifications											
Improve knowledge of the world	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give youth something to do	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Make seniors less isolated	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Make citizens more engaged in their communities	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Help local business market products and get information	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Keep local people from leaving	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Help build partnerships among local community groups	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

55. Please note any additional comments you have either on your own CAP site work or on the impact of CAP sites on users and on your own community. (feel free to add more space if needed. And remember that your answers will remain confidential and anonymous. No names are attached to any answers.

56. This survey software ensures anonymity in the resulting statistical analysis. In order for us to avoid duplication, and to determine which sites have not yet participated we require you to enter the name and location of your CAP site. This information will not be included in the survey results.
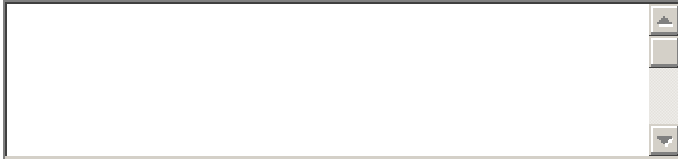
Thank you for your participation in this survey and for your dedicated work!

Submit Survey