

"The art of governing well has to be learned."—Walter Lippmann

Symposium: Democracy in the Electronic Era

Building the Electronic Commons

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On the West Side of St. Paul, Minnesota—a poor neighborhood with a large population of Hmong and Latino immigrants—young people are building an “information commons.” They call themselves the “Community Information Corps,” and as a first major project, they are constructing a database of their neighborhood’s “learning opportunities:” everything from formal classes at the high school to an elderly Mexican immigrant in a retirement home who is willing to teach traditional Indian medicine. Citizens will soon be able to enter a word that describes their interests and see the local learning resources displayed on a map. The Commons website also provides materials about neighborhood history, news articles, poetry, and streaming videos created by local teenagers.

Meanwhile, the Community Information Corps provides training for local residents. As a result of computer tutoring at the local library, residents from Latin America have been able to stay in contact with people from their places of birth; a new mother has learned how to surf the Internet to find resources and information for her newborn child; factory workers have improved their skills; and several other adults who have varying degrees of computer and language literacy have discovered what a computer can do for them.

Someone who has searched the Web for nonprofit sites devoted to “community” would probably not be overwhelmingly impressed by the content or prominence of the St. Paul Information Commons, which is just getting started. However, the work in St. Paul has the advantage of reflecting a comprehensive and distinctive *philosophy*. Some colleagues and I are working to create a national association dedicated to realizing this vision.¹ Our strategy is to create information commons projects in other communities, while working with existing national organizations to build partnerships and a broader movement.

One element of our philosophy is a commitment to local, geographical communities. A second ideal is “public work,” as

defended by University of Minnesota professor Harry Boyte in a past issue of *The Good Society*.² A third principle is the belief that we should focus on the assets, rather than the liabilities, of even the poorest communities, because progress can come from assembling existing, indigenous resources. However, my subject here is our fourth guiding ideal: a special conception of the Internet as a “commons.”

Law professors Yochai Benkler and Lawrence Lessig, among others, have developed an influential theory of the commons that has been embraced by think tanks and public interest organizations such as the New America Foundation, the Center for Digital Democracy, and Public Knowledge. This theory has merits, but also important limitations. I will describe the Benkler-Lessig theory, note some flaws, and then defend our alternative approach.

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The Anarchist Commons

According to Benkler and Lessig, a “commons” is something valuable that is not possessed or controlled by anyone: not by individuals, companies, or the government. It is un-owned, and therefore free for all to use, borrow, imitate, or alter. For example, basic scientific facts cannot be copyrighted or patented; they are “free” in the sense that no one possesses them. In other cases, the individual goods in a commons may be subject to ownership, but the commons itself is an un-owned and uncontrolled context, institution, home, or source of these valuable resources.³ The fishes in the deep blue sea swim in such a commons because anyone can pluck them out and eat them up. The fish are ownable, but the ocean is not.

A successful commons is appealing because it is a valuable good that is not controlled by bureaucrats, experts, or profit-seeking companies. These agents and institutions are useful for other purposes, but in their absence we can hope for a greater diversity of uses and more active participation by ordinary people. In a successful commons (unlike a state), participation and support are voluntary while the benefits are broadly dispersed. A commons must rely on cooperation and ethical norms if it is to survive, so it both reflects and generates “social capital” (habits and networks of reciprocity).⁴ Finally, according to Lessig, a commons is a superb platform for innovation, since anyone can experiment with it, and no incumbent interests—corporate or governmental—can stand in the way. One reason for the remarkable flourishing of Western science since the seventeenth century was an emerging norm that scientific techniques and discoveries belonged in a commons for all to use.

But a commons is also highly imperfect. Individuals can abuse the forests or seas by taking excessive resources out of the common pool. Even those who want to act responsibly may not be willing to limit themselves if they think that others are abusing the commons. It can take just one selfish or foolish act to set off a disastrous chain reaction. In a famous article from 1968, Garrett Hardin called this scenario “The Tragedy of the Commons.”⁵

Overuse cannot ruin things like scientific facts, because employing knowledge does not *destroy* it. Nevertheless, even an intellectual commons has a serious flaw. No one is paid for giving knowledge away, so why should anyone contribute? Elinor Ostrom calls this the “provisioning problem:” the difficulty of persuading people to work on behalf of a commons.

Until recently, these problems led most theorists to believe

that we must either divide any valuable un-owned resource among private property-holders or else ask the government to manage it. Socialists and capitalists disagreed about which way to manage many valuable resources (by state or private ownership) but they agreed that a commons was not workable. Only anarchists dissented.

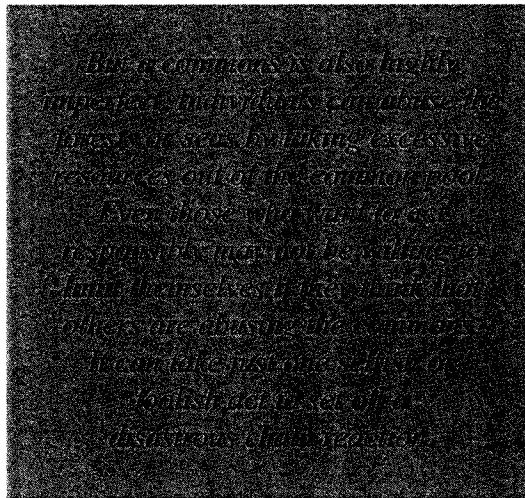
Then along came the Internet, which actually seemed to work as a serious, large-scale commons of enormous value. In fact, as Benkler, Lessig and others have argued, the early Internet was a functioning commons on multiple levels:

1. *At the content level*, the Internet was a commons because most webpages, email messages, and bulletin boards contained free material that could be forwarded to friends or copied merely

by clicking the right button of a mouse—which does not harm the original in the slightest. Some of this copied material was owned, in a legal sense. For example, *Playboy* held copyright to many of the pictures that circulated on the early Internet. But no one exercised effective control over the network, and thus property rights were mostly imaginary (for better or worse). Above all, people freely copied the styles and methods of other Internet users. As soon as somebody thought of a solution to a software problem involving email or the Web, everyone else could copy it. In addition, it was even easier to bor-

row non-technical innovations, such as putting a set of links at the bottom of one’s webpage, or using punctuation marks to create a smiley-face, or building a “shrine” to a supermodel. There were no proprietary business models on the early Internet.

2. *At the software level*, the Internet was a commons because most of the really important programs and languages were free, un-owned, and “open source” (meaning that people who had programming skills could borrow from such computer code and could profit from any manipulation of the code, as long as the original software remains common to all). For example, HTML is a language for writing webpages that no one owns and anyone can use. You can even *change* it, as long as you persuade other people to use software that understands your modifications. Likewise, HTTP is a set of rules for transferring information between computers. Tim Berners-Lee wrote the first versions of these rules, but he gave them away. And the majority of Internet server computers—the machines that store websites—use Apache, which is free, open source software written collaboratively by volunteer programmers, who began from an early version that the federal government developed and released without charge.



3. At the structural level, the Internet was a commons because no one owned or controlled access to the network as a whole, and no one ran it. Anyone had the right to receive a unique number for a computer or other machine that was attached to the Internet; this is called an “Internet Provider (IP) Address.” To join the Internet, you just needed an IP Address and the technical capacity to send and receive strings of numbers. You could then communicate anything—whether it was a photograph of the Mona Lisa, a bill, or a piece of hate mail—and the other machines on the network would help it get to its destination. No questions were asked and no fees were charged. The wires and circuits belonged to individual people or institutions, but the network itself was no one’s property. Most importantly, anyone could invent an entirely new use for the network and put it into use without asking permission. Those who designed the very simple structure of the Internet did not envision listservs and message boards, webpages and browsers, instant messaging and virtual worlds. But they left the commons open to innovation, and a million great (and some not so great) ideas were born.

4. The deepest layer of all was the physical level: the copper wires, fiber-optic or cable lines, and airwaves over which Internet messages were transmitted. Most of us are familiar with hooking up a computer to a telephone line. The line is private property. However, communications companies have been required to allow anyone to connect to their networks and send any message to anyone for a fee that has nothing to do with the content of the message. Customers are charged only for the time and distance of the call. This structure is called “common carrier,” and it makes the telephone lines highly compatible with a commons. Users do not have to ask anyone’s permission to invent and deploy new hardware or software, or to communicate anything they like.⁶

The Internet Commons is Vanishing

The global Internet commons is now for the most part gone.⁷ For one thing, crowding problems have re-emerged in what was supposed to be a limitless environment. With billions of sites online, we need ways of finding the ones that interests us. The main mechanisms are private search engines. But none of these services has indexed more than 16 percent of the Web.⁸ Furthermore, we normally lack the time and patience to look at every result of a search, so the top ten or twenty “hits” occupy valuable and contested real estate that is in private hands. Most search engines now sell preferential treatment; and it is possible to manipulate even the ones that strive for complete impartiality.⁹ In particular, there are fierce legal battles over the right to

use trademarked words in any text that a search engine might emphasize, especially official website names, hyperlinks, and “metatext” (the hidden description of sites’ content).¹⁰

Meanwhile, instead of using free, open source software for sending email, browsing the Web, or designing our own home-pages, most of us now have to employ corporate products whose code is technically impossible to read and illegal to imitate. Instead of visiting websites that are easy to decode and copy, most of us now gravitate to high-tech, expensive, technically complicated sites whose “business methods” (e.g., Amazon’s “one-click” payment tool) have been patented.

These problems will worsen as companies expand their use of cable television lines and the broadcast spectrum to transmit moving images, sound, and data over the Internet. Unlike telephone companies, cable and broadcast companies have never been required to operate as “common carriers;” they can choose what material to transmit over their networks and can discriminate financially in favor of their own products.¹¹ Additionally, the broadcast spectrum can connect small, mobile devices such as cellular telephones to the Internet. Such devices are much less

powerful than computers, so the software they use is often stored on a mainframe computer. Since the same companies that provide the mobile devices also own these computers, they will be able to steer their customers to certain services and webpages.¹²

If these trends continue, the Internet that most people experience will no longer be a commons built by citizens and small groups for one another’s benefit. Instead, it will be a limited set of professional sites or portals, protected by patents and copyrights, that provide entertainment, shopping, and news for citizens. Visitors’ behavior within these “walled gardens” will be controlled, and it will be difficult for ordinary people to disseminate their own work or even to locate nonprofit material (which generates no revenue for the operator of a portal). Already, Microsoft complains that AOL Time Warner “has erected a walled garden of captive users, and their strategy is to feed them Time Warner content.” But AOL makes the same charge in return, predicting that “consumers will use Microsoft software to view Microsoft content on Microsoft networks.”¹³

Problems with an Anarchistic Commons Model

In *The Future of Ideas*, Lawrence Lessig argues that many wonderful products and services will never be produced because greedy incumbent corporations, such as Microsoft and AOL Time Warner, are fencing in the commons and blocking innovation. From an economist’s perspective, it is as if they were destroying

billions of dollars of wealth by forcing people to use their static and inferior products.

This “enclosure” or privatization of the Internet should provoke outrage. Lessig and several national organizations are trying to educate the public about the damage that is being done to consumers’ interests. These groups are doing good work, but I would suggest that there are some important limitations to the idea of a commons as un-owned property—the libertarian or anarchist model that is explicit in Lessig’s work.¹⁴ If this model is flawed, then defending the original Internet commons should not be our main goal. We should not try to return, as anarchists and libertarians would like, to the relatively free and open network of 1995. Instead, we need to move toward a different model.

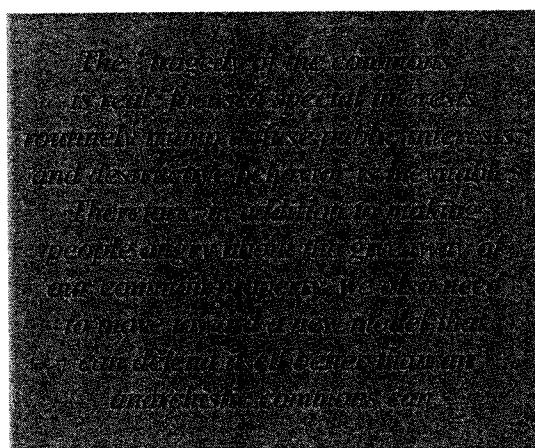
I believe that an anarchist (Lessig-like) commons is flawed for four main reasons:

First, it cannot defend itself. Companies and individuals will try to profit handsomely by destroying its open character. They will be able to replace free software with patented code, gain control of cable lines and broadcast channels, or create search engines and portals that everyone must use. If the government tries to block them, they will spend large amounts of money influencing Congress and regulators.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world will be slightly harmed as a result, but most will have more important things to worry about. Even those who really care about the cyber-commons may not want to carry a heavy burden for everyone else, without any prospect of reward. After all, a commons benefits *everybody*, so the few who try to protect it by lobbying Washington, suing Microsoft, or writing free software will get no payment, even if they succeed (an unlikely outcome). This is a version of the provisioning problem.

The weakness of a commons is well illustrated by the story of the broadcast spectrum, the airwaves over which radio messages, television signals, cell-phone calls, and even some emails are transmitted. The airwaves began as a classic commons: a valuable un-owned resource. Periodically, over the past hundred years, large new pieces of this resource have become useable, thanks to a variety of technical innovations. Each time, the government could have sold the newly available broadcast rights to the highest bidder and used the proceeds for public purposes, from tax cuts to children’s health care. Or it could have given the spectrum to local nonprofit groups; or kept it for itself. In recent years, the government even had the option of preserving the un-owned nature of the airwaves by supporting new technology that would allow individuals to share the broadcast spec-

trum without conflicting with one another; then radio would function like the Internet, with millions of broadcasters.¹⁵ Instead, every time a new range of spectrum has become available, the government has always decided to give it to already powerful incumbent broadcasters *at no cost* so that they can transmit programs of their choice for profit.¹⁶ The last episode in this sad story occurred between 1995 and 1997, when broadcasters who already had spectrum licenses were given huge new allocations of spectrum, valued at up to \$70 billion,¹⁷ in the expectation that they would switch from analog to digital television. They still have not made this switch, but they have kept the spectrum to themselves, thereby preventing anyone from competing with them.¹⁸



This history is outrageous, but also highly predictable. The “tragedy of the commons” is real; focused special interests routinely trump diffuse public interests; and destructive behavior is inevitable. Therefore, in addition to making people angry about the give-away of our common property, we also need to move toward a new model that can defend itself better than an anarchistic commons can. The system that Lawrence Lessig admires is wonderful, but doomed.

Second, an un-owned commons is not completely compatible with democratic values.¹⁹ In a democracy, great numbers of people have the capacity to influence the social world by talking, protesting, mobilizing fellow citizens, and—ultimately—voting. Although popular sovereignty should be restrained to protect minorities (and for other reasons), majority rule is a valuable feature of democratic regimes; it generates comparatively just and sensible policies, and it respects the worth and capacities of citizens. A commons, however, can be impervious to popular sentiment, even when citizens demand policies that are completely constitutional and justifiable.

For example, according to the Pew Internet and Public Life Project, “American Internet users overwhelmingly want the presumption of privacy when they go online.”²⁰ However, privacy is less secure on today’s email system—a commons form—than it was on the old telephone network. Until 1984, the Bell System (composed of several linked companies, including AT&T) owned every central switching computer that connected telephones in the United States. Thus, Bell Systems companies had the technical capacity to eavesdrop on any conversation. In theory, they could also broadcast biased messages to their customers, refuse service to their political opponents, and otherwise threaten democratic values. In practice, however, “Ma Bell” was vulnerable to government regulation and to public opinion (a powerful force

in a democratic state). Thus telephone companies generally obeyed laws regarding privacy and non-discrimination. In contrast, no one is responsible for the privacy of today's email system, so no one can be ordered to safeguard it. If there is software that can overcome the technical protections on email privacy at any given time, that software will be used—as long as the Internet is a pure anarchist commons.

Third, (as the last example illustrates) an anarchist commons is not entirely beneficial. Lessig and his colleagues stress the many astonishing innovations that people have created on top of the simple, flexible, un-owned platform of the Internet: medical libraries, music-sharing networks, email love letters, and online bookstores, for example. But the cyber-commons also gave us viruses, cyber-predators, privacy violations, and hard-core pornography for twelve-year olds. I do not favor censorship, but it is hard to defend legal interventions that would create an economic commons *if* much of what we would get as a result would be harmful. Corporate control might be preferable to no control at all.

Fourth, the notion that the Internet was born as a free commons—as the product of individual, uncoordinated initiative; or as a gift of technology—is a myth. It was rather launched by Federal agencies working in close connection with professional organizations, universities, standard-setting bodies, and other disciplined (often exclusive) groups. Indeed, I can think of no successful historical example of a commons that arose under conditions of total individual freedom—or as a gift of nature. Even oceans only work as common fisheries if fishing communities are highly organized and self-regulated. Commons are made possible by demanding moral norms and/or enforceable agreements, hammered out in groups, and then reinforced by hard, collaborative work.²¹

The Commons as an Association

In place of the anarchist commons model, my colleagues and I propose an alternative. In the most general sense, a “commons” is something valuable (intrinsically or instrumentally) that a whole community jointly owns and controls. There are at least three ways to achieve such common possession. Lessig and his allies favor one approach: leaving whole systems uncontrolled so that everyone can use their components. Although this model seems to have some potential for the Internet, we believe that it is utopian even in the relatively favorable domain of cyberspace. Another way to achieve common possession is via state ownership, as in democratic socialism and communism. This strategy

is out of political favor (although Americans still use it successfully to manage state parks, public schools, and the U.S. Congress—all of which can be called “commons” without stretching traditional usage). A third way to establish a commons is to organize important institutions and resources as nonprofit, nongovernmental associations, or networks of associations.

The characteristic features of associations are: voluntary membership; considerable autonomy from other institutions; internal deliberation; rules or norms to govern membership and conduct; and common ownership.²² They differ from corporations because they do not sell shares, and they differ from states because they do not compel membership or claim sovereign powers.

Thus, for example, a house of worship may be a “commons,” belonging to the whole group that builds and uses it. Usually, new members are welcome, and the group sees itself as having a mission to the broader community. Whether individual congregants feel common ownership depends on various factors, including the degree to which distant church officials and/or major financial donors determine policies at the local level. (The question of who legally owns a church is often quite vexed.²³) But for many Americans, houses of worship are tangible and

meaningful examples of goods that belong to them, not as individuals but as nonprofit groups. Millions experience deliberation and collective self-government within religious congregations, and those who are most active in churches are most likely to volunteer, to vote, to follow politics, to consider public service careers, to trust the government, and to contribute to charity. These correlations apply even for young people and people with low education levels; indeed, religious membership is the *only* large-scale American phenomenon that imparts political skills and commitment to those who lack advanced formal education.²⁴ A form of the “commons” is a foundation of American democracy.

Note that religious congregations are not anarchist commons; there are *rules* about who can use their buildings and other resources, and for what purposes. People have to ask permission to join and to participate in some of a congregation’s activities. They may be required to contribute in various ways, but control is exercised by officials who owe some kind of accountability to the congregation as a whole: that is, to the commons.

This kind of organized commons can defend itself. It has leadership. It has a bank account. It can hire a lawyer. It can require that its members contribute money or time—on pain of expulsion. And its members can decide (through a process that may or may not be democratic) how to address all kinds of moral

issues, such as which charities to support or whether to ordain gay ministers. Those who seek maximum individual liberty may not like formal associations, but they have many advantages (including practical ones) over anarchist commons.

Since the fifteenth century, monastic, collegiate, and municipal entities called “commons” have been electing officers, managing budgets, and even signing treaties.²⁵ My colleagues Lew Friedland and Harry Boyte have listed some other examples of associational commons: newspapers, schools, libraries, settlement houses, business centers, union hiring halls, community festivals and fairs, bands and sports teams, and local political parties. Indeed, most of what we call “civil society” can be analyzed as networks of associational commons, “in which people [have] participated, around which they [have] gathered, and through which they [have] developed a collective public signature for the larger world.”²⁶

An Associational Commons for the Internet

Similarly, the Internet now needs a voluntary, democratic organization that can demand something of its members and take collective action on their behalf. This association should articulate a clear definition of the “commons” and defend its evolving principles against anarchist and corporate alternatives. It should strengthen networks among people who are interested in the commons idea, by bringing activists from various communities into face-to-face contact, and by sponsoring interchanges among grassroots activists, software experts, leaders of major nonprofits, and public-interest lobbyists. A first meeting of this kind, held in June 2001, generated a focused debate about core principles and strategies.

This association (which we are calling the Public Telecommunications Service) should raise money from its own members, foundations, and local partners and use these funds to provide its affiliates with training and open source software. Already, our colleagues at Wisconsin are developing two important software products. One program will allow grassroots groups to map assets and networks within their community and to display the results in highly usable forms on the Internet. In particular, this software will address the challenge of depicting human, civic networks along with geospatial information in revealing ways. The other program will guide young people through the stages of researching and writing news stories according to the ideals of public journalism. At the last stage, this software will generate Web-ready articles.

The Public Telecommunications Service should encourage deliberation about national and international policies that might affect the Internet as a commons, and lobby in favor of the policies that its members favor. Thanks to its grassroots constituency and national reach, it may gain powerful influence over issues from antitrust to intellectual property. Meanwhile, the organi-

zation should encourage discussion of issues that arise for all webmasters and service-providers (such as privacy, hate speech, pornography, the cost of access, and commercial advertising), and develop guidelines for its own affiliated websites. It should not try to absorb the Internet as a whole, but it should become a major presence online, an incubator of new ideas, and a refuge from the seamy side of cyberspace.

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Endnotes

1. Harry Boyte, University of Minnesota; Lewis A. Friedland, University of Wisconsin; Robert Wachbroit, University of Maryland.
2. See “Symposium on Commonwealth, Civil Society, and Democratic Renewal,” *The Good Society*, Vol. 9 No. 2, 1999.
3. Yochai Benkler, “From Consumers to Users: Shifting the Deeper Structures of Regulation Toward Sustainable Commons and User Access,” 52 *Federal Communications Law Journal*; Lawrence Lessig, *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001), pp. 19–21. Cf. Elinor Ostrom, “Type of Good and Collective Action,” unpublished paper, 2002, p. 15: “Common-pool resources are composed of resource systems and a flow of resources or benefits from these systems.” Either the system or the benefits, or both, can be “free” (p. 31).
4. See Peter Levine “Civic Renewal and the Commons of Cyberspace,” *The National Civic Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3, Fall 2001, pp. 205–211; Elinor Ostrom, “Type of Good and Collective Action,” unpublished paper, 2002, p. 26.
5. Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science*, Vol. 62, 1968, pp. 1243–1248.
6. Lawrence Lessig *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001), p. 45.
7. This is the theme of Lessig’s *The Future of Ideas*. See also David Bollier, *Public Assets, Private Profits: Reclaiming the American Commons in an Age of Market Enclosure* (Washington, DC: The New America Foundation, 2001), pp. 49–60; and Levine “Civic Renewal and the Commons of Cyberspace.”
8. Lucas D. Introna and Helen Nissenbaum, “Shaping the Web: Why the Politics of Search Engines Matters,” *The Information Society*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2000, pp. 1–17.
9. For a time, the Church of Scientology manipulated Google into listing many pro-Scientology sites among its top search results, “despite [Scientology’s] egregious unpopularity and highly popular sites opposed to this cult.” The method was to operate many separate Scientology servers that linked to one another. See “The Church of Scientology’s Supremacy over the search term ‘Scientology’ on Google” (<http://www.operatingthetan.com/google/>).
10. Robert Wachbroit, “Reliance and Reliability: The Problem of Information on the Internet,” in Anton Vedder, ed., *Ethics and the Internet* (Oxford: Intersentia, 2001), p. 137. See also, Julie E.

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Cohen, "Information Rights and Intellectual Freedom," in Vedder, ed., pp. 18–23.

11. On March 14, 2002, the Federal Election Commission extended this freedom to telephone companies that provide Internet access; see FCC, "FCC Classifies Cable Modem Service as 'Information Service,'" http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Cable/News_Releases/2002/nrcb0201.html.

12. Dale Hatfield, "A Look at the Promise and Policy Implications of New Wireless Technologies," address at the Ford Foundation Digital Media Forum, May 30, 2001.

13. Alec Klein, "For AOL and Microsoft, It's High-Tech Noon," *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2001, p. A1.

14. Lawrence Lessig, *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001, p. 121: "In this domain, at least, our presumption should be libertarian."

15. Lawrence Lessig, *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001, pp. 76–84.

16. David Bollier, *Public Assets, Private Profits*, pp. 68–70.

17. See discussion of the Digital TV transition at the Now Foundation. Available at <http://www.nowfoundation.org/communications/tv/digital.html>.

18. Robert W. McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999), pp. 151–3.

19. See Peter Levine, "The Internet to the Rescue?" forthcoming in *Democracy's Moment: Reforming the American Political System for the 21st Century*, edited by Ron Hayduk and Kevin Mattson (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).

20. The Pew Internet & American Life Project, "Trust and Privacy Online: Why Americans Want to Rewrite the Rules," available on <http://www.pewinternet.org/>.

21. Elinor Ostrom, "Type of Good," p. 20: "Groups of individuals are considered to share communal property rights when they have formed an organization that exercises at least the collective-choice rights of management and exclusion to some defined resource system and the resource units produced by that system. In other words, all communal groups have established some means of governing themselves in relationship to a resource" (italics added).

22. This discussion of associations is indebted to Mark E. Warren, *Democracy and Association* (Princeton, 2001).

23. Even in hierarchical denominations, legal title often belongs to a local group, organized as a nonprofit corporation. This means that if a congregation or religious order chooses to deny the authority of the Church, it may keep its building. See "Civil Incorporation of Church Property," *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Available at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07719b.htm>. Compare the Canons of the Episcopal Church at <http://orders.anglican.org/osa/ canons.html>.

24. Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1995), pp. 18, 282–3, 327; Peter Levine, *The New Progressive Era: Toward a Fair and Deliberative Democracy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 78; and, on youth, the National Youth Survey conducted by CIRCLE and others in 2002. Available at www.civicyouth.org.

25. See definition 1.b of "commons" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "The burghers of a town; the body of free citizens, bearing common burdens, and exercising common rights."

26. Lew Friedland and Harry Boyte, "The New Information Commons: Community Information Partnerships and Civic Change," p. 6. Available at <http://www.publicwork.org/pdf/workingpapers/New%20information%20commons.pdf>.