

HARNESSING THE POWER OF  
NETWORKS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

# CONNECTING TO CHANGE THE WORLD



PETER PLASTRIK  
MADELEINE TAYLOR  
JOHN CLEVELAND

## Advance praise for *Connecting to Change the World*

“The Millennial generation’s mission is to work together to change the world for the better. *Connecting to Change the World* is destined to become the guidebook for building the generative social networks they will use to accomplish their goal. Everyone interested in making global change happen at the local level will benefit from following the sage advice built on practical experience that permeates the pages of this book.”

– Morley Winograd, coauthor, *Millennial Momentum:  
How a New Generation is Remaking America*

“As government leaders steer more and row less, networks become an indispensable tool to solve complex problems and achieve critical public goals. This insightful book will tell you everything you need to know to create and use networks effectively. Beautifully written, with case studies woven throughout, it is as entertaining as it is useful. I wish I had read it twenty-five years ago!”

– David Osborne, coauthor of *Reinventing Government,  
Banishing Bureaucracy, The Reinventor’s Fieldbook, and  
The Price of Government*

“Whether you’re a social entrepreneur, a nonprofit executive, a funder, or a grassroots activist, you’ll find strategies, tools, and cases that you can use to power your vision as well as your everyday work. *Connecting to Change the World* is essential reading for anyone who’s passionate about using networks to advance social change.”

– Kathy Reich, Director of Organizational Effectiveness  
Grantmaking, David and Lucile Packard Foundation

“*Connecting to Change the World* provides social entrepreneurs with a powerful new tool for organizing change—the creation of generative networks that empower and unleash the complementary energies of large numbers of independent and interdependent actors. Incorporating lessons from dozens of networks in a host of fields—many of which they had a hand in improving—the authors advance the understanding and practice of an important emerging tool for social change, providing specific steps to success and important insights. I highly recommend this book to anyone serious about unleashing social change.”

– Bob Friedman, Founder and Chair, Corporation for  
Enterprise Development (CFED); Board Member,  
Family Independence Initiative, Child and Youth Finance  
International, the Rosenberg Foundation

“Inspiring, practical advice for the most powerful pathway for social impact—the authors bring decades of deep experience in the most dynamic organizing model for creating change. This is a guidebook for twenty-first-century social transformation.”

– Graham Richard, Chief Executive Officer,  
Advanced Energy Economy

“Is there a twenty-first-century blueprint for sustainable social change? If, like me, you’ve been working in the trenches to grow a new world only to be stumped by the very real barriers of weak tools—foolhardy business models, unimaginative value propositions, and the twentieth-century hangover of scale—then this is the book for you. *Connecting to Change the World* sheds light on why some organizations feel like heavy bricks, whereas others defy gravity. Read on to discover how to situate yourself to grow social change that lives on longer than we do and goes to places we hadn’t imagined. “

– Richard McCarthy, Executive Director for Slow Food USA

“The authors of *Connecting to Change the World* have rightly concluded that pooling talent and resources to address complex social and environmental problems is the only way to go. Their highly readable new book explains the art of creating collaborative solutions. Architecture 2030 is pleased to have worked with the authors when forming a national network of city-based 2030 Districts—local networks focused on carbon emissions, energy, and water reductions. We enthusiastically endorse their approach and recommend their new book to individuals and groups committed to solving problems and ensuring a positive impact.”

– Ed Mazria, Founder and Chief Executive Officer,  
Architecture 2030

“An important contribution to the growing literature on networks, *Connecting to Change the World* offers startlingly useful guidance to those who need to navigate a changing new world increasingly represented by links and nodes. Avoiding the hyperbole and conjecture that sometimes accompany claims on the potential of networks, the authors rely on their research and experience to pinpoint the benefits and limitations of networks. As a person who works with policy makers and is actively engaged in philanthropy, this will become a well-worn reference book.”

–Anita R. Brown-Graham, Director, Institute for  
Emerging Issues, NC State University

## About Island Press

Since 1984, the nonprofit organization Island Press has been stimulating, shaping, and communicating ideas that are essential for solving environmental problems worldwide. With more than 800 titles in print and some 40 new releases each year, we are the nation's leading publisher on environmental issues. We identify innovative thinkers and emerging trends in the environmental field. We work with world-renowned experts and authors to develop cross-disciplinary solutions to environmental challenges.

Island Press designs and executes educational campaigns in conjunction with our authors to communicate their critical messages in print, in person, and online using the latest technologies, innovative programs, and the media. Our goal is to reach targeted audiences—scientists, policymakers, environmental advocates, urban planners, the media, and concerned citizens—with information that can be used to create the framework for long-term ecological health and human well-being.

Island Press gratefully acknowledges major support of our work by The Agua Fund, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Betsy & Jesse Fink Foundation, The Bobolink Foundation, The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation, Forrest C. and Frances H. Lattner Foundation, G.O. Forward Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, New Mexico Water Initiative, a project of Hanuman Foundation, The Overbrook Foundation, The S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, The Summit Charitable Foundation, Inc., V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation, The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, and other generous supporters.

The opinions expressed in this book are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of our supporters.

# Connecting to Change the World

# CONNECTING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

---

Harnessing the Power of Networks for Social Impact

Peter Plastrik, Madeleine Taylor,  
and John Cleveland



Washington | Covelo | London

Copyright © 2014 Peter Plastrik

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the publisher: Island Press, 2000 M Street, NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20036

Island Press is a trademark of Island Press/The Center for Resource Economics.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Plastrik, Peter.

Connecting to change the world : harnessing the power of networks for social impact / Peter Plastrik, Madeleine Taylor and John Cleveland.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.


ISBN 978-1-61091-532-8 (hardback) — ISBN 1-61091-532-1 (cloth)

— ISBN 978-1-61091-533-5 (ebook) 1. Nonprofit organizations—Management—Technological innovations. 2. Online social networks—Political aspects. 3. Social change. I. Title.

HD62.6.P635 2014

658'.046--dc23

2014017541

Printed on recycled, acid-free paper 

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*Keywords:* networks, social impact networks, social change, network weaving, generative problems

---

# Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1. The Generative Network Difference	13
Chapter 2. Start Me Up: Designing a Network	39
• Purpose	43
• Membership	46
• Value Propositions	51
• Coordination, Facilitation, and Communication	54
• Resources	59
• Governance	65
• Assessment	69
• Operating Principles	70
Bonus Track—Advice for Funders and Other Network Engineers	75
Chapter 3. Connect the Dots: Weaving a Network’s Core	83
Chapter 4. Network Evolution	103
Chapter 5. Enable and Adapt: Managing a Network’s Development	119
• Member Engagement	124
• Network Infrastructure	129
• Provisional Planning	135
• Periphery Relationships	139
Chapter 6. Know Your Condition: Taking a Network’s Pulse	147



Chapter 7. Back to Basics: Resetting a Network's Design	167
Chapter 8. Three Rules to Build By	177
Afterword	187
 <i>Acknowledgments</i>	 189
<i>Notes</i>	191
<i>Resources for Network Builders</i>	201
<i>Appendices</i>	209
<i>About the Authors</i>	231
<i>Index</i>	233

For our children—

André, David, Emily, Josh, Lauren, Matheus,

Rachel, Sam, Steven—

and the world they are shaping

In memory of Marion Kane,

who helped us start down the network path



*If you want to go quickly, go alone.*

*If you want to go far, go together.*

— African proverb

*I must confess that I've never trusted the Web. I've always seen it as a coward's tool. Where does it live? How do you hold it personally responsible? Can you put a distributed network of fiber-optic cable "on notice"? And is it male or female? In other words, can I challenge it to a fight?*

— Stephen Colbert

*The atom is the icon of the twentieth century. The atom whirls alone. It is the metaphor for individuality. But the atom is the past. The symbol for the next century is the net. The net has no center, no orbits, no certainty. It is an indefinite web of causes. The net is the archetype displayed to represent all circuits, all intelligence, all interdependence, all things economic, social, or ecological, all communications, all democracy, all families, all large systems, almost all that we find interesting and important.*

*Whereas the atom represents clean simplicity, the net channels messy complexity.*

— Kevin Kelly



### Which Kind of Network?

Builders of social-impact networks must choose which of three kinds of networks to create: a connectivity, alignment, or production network. Each of these has a different capability and, therefore, can have different impacts.

A *connectivity* network links people to allow them to exchange information easily and, often, to learn as a result of the interchange. It doesn't try to do more than that. Such networks can be important to social-change agents concerned about the isolation of particular individuals or groups from other people. Schools in segregated urban or isolated rural areas, for example, might connect students with adults in workplaces who act as mentors and guide student projects—a way of exposing the kids to new information about how the world works. Foundations and other institutions provide resources to leaders from scores of communities in a geographic region to spend time with each other at retreats or summits and gain new information about what their neighbors are thinking and doing. In 2006, for instance, Je Hoon Lee, an associate research professor

at the University of Southern California, started the Network of Korean American Leaders, bringing together second-generation Korean American professionals to connect them to each other and to first-generation leaders in the Korean American community. The purpose: “to create a powerful pipeline of Korean American leaders that crosses political, economic, social, and cultural ‘silos.’”

An *alignment* network links people for a different purpose: to help them to create and share a set of ideas, goals, and strategies. This allows them to more efficiently exchange information and coordinate with each other as a group. Alignment is the principle purpose of networks of organizations like RE-AMP and the Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo. Their members align around an overarching goal, such as reducing carbon emissions or improving the local education system’s results, and then coordinate or revise their activities to achieve that goal. Many of the growing number of “collective impact” community collaboratives are alignments of local organizations designed to improve a local system. In 2013, the Garfield Foundation focused on the power of alignment when it launched a new collaborative-networks program to emulate its experience building the RE-AMP Network. It circulated a request for Letters of Inquiry to see what might emerge from the field and to gauge interest in collaborative network approaches to solving complex problems. The foundation was looking for collaborators who “are inspired by opportunities to create collective impact” and would align around “shared insights and strategies.” More than 800 organizations responded, grouped in 64 submissions—another indication, says Garfield’s Jennie Curtis, that “there is huge interest in network approaches to solving complex problems.”

Builders of a *production* network foster collective action by members to produce innovative practices, public-policy proposals, and other outputs for social impact. Reboot is a production network; its members create movies, books, new cultural and religious organizations, and more. Members of the Fire Learning Network invent and test ways of using fire to support a landscape’s environmental health. In 2008, the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness established 10 regional networks of public and nonprofit organizations to test proven best practices and develop innovations for delivering services for homeless people. “Five Regional Networks tested innovations to prevent

individuals from becoming homeless,” reported a 2011 evaluation of the program. “Two Networks tested triage models to ensure appropriate rapid rehousing and stabilization services for individuals. In addition, eight Networks developed plans to pursue low-threshold housing strategies for unaccompanied chronically homeless adults in their region.” They were production networks.

These different types of social-impact networks accomplish different things, so deciding which kind you want to build depends in part on what you’re trying to do. But each kind poses different requirements, and this should be factored into your approach, too.

### Must Dos

Connectivity is the foundation of a successful social-impact network. Develop strong connections among members and, at a minimum, you’ll have a connectivity network. But if you want to construct an alignment network, you still have to start with connections and then build on them. And if you want to build a production network, here too you start by developing connections. Whatever the objective, the starting point is to forge connections, and this involves much more than introducing members to each other. Making connections is such an important topic that we devote chapter 3 to how it’s done.

Creating alignment and production networks requires members—organizations or individuals—to align around common goals; they must come to shared understandings about definitions, ideas, and even language. This usually takes facilitation, time, and patience, especially if the members have little experience working together or if they have been rivals for funding or other resources. For a network’s members to attain production, after they have been able to connect and then align, they must collaborate in and manage production processes that are rarely easy to pull off.

Many network builders want to create a production network. Given the complex nature of the social problems they tackle, they see a need for a network to produce more than just connections and alignment. But conducting joint production by network members takes collaboration to a new level of complexity, because it requires members to specify the product or service, assemble the right set of capacities to perform the



production, agree to responsibilities, and establish a production process with schedules, inputs, and coordination that have to be enforced. The network builder's challenge, then, is to navigate through a developmental sequence that builds connectivity, then alignment, and then production capabilities. We don't know if the connect-align-produce sequence is an iron law of network building, but it's definitely a pathway to success.

Some network organizers start with a connectivity network in mind, and then find that, as connections are made, the potential for members to align emerges, and after that members start to undertake collective projects. We saw this, for instance, in the West Michigan Manufacturers Council, which started by connecting company CEOs for peer-to-peer exchange, then aligned them around creating a framework for world-class manufacturing. After that, the members produced training programs for other manufacturing companies. Other networks aim for alignment, but shift into production when they find that coordinating their members' efforts isn't going to be enough to reach the goals they've set; they need more powerful impact. Some network builders find that, although they want to build a production network, their efforts get stuck at the connectivity or the alignment stage—and collaborative projects don't emerge. They can't get to the next level of network development. In chapter 4 we discuss how network builders take a network through the connectivity, alignment, and production stages.

Whatever type of social-impact network you're building, it won't automatically become generative and able to sustain a high level of member engagement, activity, and adaptation. How do you ensure that your network members continue to learn, grow, and take action together? You make a social-impact network generative by building on the basic human desire to connect, share, belong, and make a difference. Essentially, you add powerful social dynamics to the unique, decentralized network structure that unleashes the advantages we discussed earlier. In a network, two social forces are set into motion: the generosity with which members treat each other and the shared sense of identity they develop. A network's members give to each other. "The net rewards generosity," says former *Wired* executive editor Kevin Kelly; a network, he says, is "a gift economy." It's a splendid description. Members give away their knowledge, skills, connections, and resources. They give in the expectation that

giving to others will be rewarded by getting from others, that mutual exchange—reciprocity between members—will occur in the network. (Anthropologists call this phenomenon “generalized reciprocity.”) When this member-to-member exchange happens, the network’s structural advantages magnify the value of the gifts, efficiently spreading the benefit to other members who, in turn, enhance it and spread it even further. As a result, members don’t just bond with the members with whom they have engaged; they develop a feeling for, a loyalty toward, and a willingness to support the network as a whole. The network is a gift that keeps them giving. Being a “good citizen” of the network becomes highly personal and important.

When you successfully take a network down these developmental paths toward greater capability and generativity, what you get is what you saw in our earlier descriptions of networks: members who freely contribute their skills and talent to a unique capacity they own together; who efficiently reach whomever they need to reach in order to obtain the information and resources they need; who readily attract new members to add their value to the network; who act independently *and* in alignment, even though no one is in charge; and who, when their collective actions achieve impact, are eager to increase their contributions to and aspirations for the network—in a virtuous cycle that feeds the network’s momentum.

Initiating these developmental processes is the principal task of starting a generative social-impact network.

## Network Evolution

---

A generative network's capabilities, complexity, and potential for impact increase as the connectivity of its members deepens and the structure of their connectivity evolves.

---

*Begin with the end in mind.*

— Steven Covey

Social relationships evolve. Some friends become best friends, some become enemies. People drift apart from each other. Casual acquaintances become staunch allies. Clusters of people—think of your high school or college crowd—stick together for years or become separated by distance and experience. Sports and workplace teams meld into high performers, but they don't stay that way forever.

What's true in society is true in social-impact networks. They evolve, and network builders can and should be highly intentional about guiding their network's evolution. Recognizing a network's potential evolutionary patterns can help you to anticipate and manage opportunities and challenges likely to come your way. And comparing your network to an idealized model of network development can help you assess just how your network is doing and what you might want to do next. By "evolution" we mean that networks undergo a process of change in which they develop better capability, more complex structure, and greater impact. These changes don't happen automatically. Many networks stagnate and disband before their potential has been achieved. Networks aren't going to live forever, but they can become disabled or die prematurely. We're

not saying that networks have entirely predictable evolutionary patterns validated by scientific experimentation. But when we've closely examined how robust generative social-impact networks became successful and sustained, and when we've studied the research on social networks, two fairly consistent patterns were evident:

- The development of a network's capability, what its members are able to do together, progresses from connectivity to alignment to production.
- The development of a network's connectivity structure, which channels flows of information and resources among members, progresses toward greater intricacy and decentralization.

### The "C-A-P" Sequence

We briefly described the first evolutionary pattern in chapter 1, the connect-to-align-to-produce sequence that develops a network's capability for collective action and impact. In each phase the nature of member connectivity builds on and becomes more advanced than in the previous phase. In the connection phase, members exchange information and build trust. You can see this in the story of Kathy Moxon and the Networks United for a Rural Voice described in chapter 3. NURV's strangers started by sharing information, getting to know each other, at the Scottsdale encounter. In the connecting phase, a network builder's principal task is to weave members together.

In the alignment phase, members capitalize on their connections to discover, explore, and define goals, strategies, and opportunities that they share. As they do this, their connections deepen, and their appetite grows for taking collective action related to what they align around. As NURV's members became connected and built trust in each other, they developed a shared identity and agenda as a network. Other social-impact networks, such as RE-AMP and the Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo, aligned around ambitious goals. During alignment, the principal task of network builders is to facilitate members' efforts to reach common ground.

Alignment sets the stage for the production phase in which members organize to take joint action. Organizing production adds new

dimensions to members' relationships, since they must go through the process of agreeing on, designing, and implementing projects. This requires members to make decisions and commitments that are far more demanding and consequential than connecting and aligning. In NURV's evolution, as members developed a collective sense of who they were and what they wanted to do, they began to collaborate on policy-change projects to create impact. Similarly, Reboot members began to produce films, music CDs, publications, and other products for Jewish American audiences—processes that employed their talents, but required substantial effort and dedication. In this phase, the network builder focuses on helping members to organize and implement collective performance of projects.

Although we've presented this unfolding as an orderly sequence, in many networks it occurs in much messier fashion. Imagine a network in which some members are connecting, while others are aligning, and others are producing; some are engaged in clusters of members that are moving through the phases of the sequence; some have completed a production phase and are starting the sequence again by connecting with other members to align and then produce something else. This is the look of a generative social-impact network of evolving social relationships, a robust platform for sustained production and impact.

We've worked with networks that didn't start by investing intensely in building connections among members. They jumped right to alignment and collaboration. This is often the case with coalitions and alliances, whose members come together for a campaign or other action to achieve a particular public-policy change or other specific result. There's nothing wrong with that one-time approach—unless what you have in mind is to build a generative network with the staying power to tackle a generative problem. As we mentioned in chapter 1, some alliances realize that they want to keep working together and become generative. This happened in the Western Adaptation Alliance, which for two years successfully brought together eight communities spread across the western United States to learn how to plan their cities' adaptations to climate change, using similar methods and shared data. In the process, the group met twice, focusing almost exclusively on the content of their work and coached by outside experts. And the Alliance held a two-day "leadership academy" attended by teams from each community. The project was

going well, but in 2013 Vicki Bennett, Salt Lake City's director of the Office of Sustainability, and a few other members were concerned about the Alliance. Some founding members had changed jobs and left the network, and their replacements were still getting up to speed. So were the new members from four additional communities. Meanwhile, members had moved ahead with adaptation planning at different speeds; some were at a beginning stage, some were in the middle of planning, and some were implementing plans. "We've been so busy collaborating that now we have to look at how to keep this network going," Bennett explains. Conditions were changing, and the Alliance, once concentrated on getting its chosen work done, needed to become more generative. Our advice: start by strengthening the foundation of connections that a generative network must have.

Early in a social-impact network's life, thinking about the connect-align-produce sequence allows network builders to ask themselves this crucial question: are network members forging the quality of connections—building the extensive bandwidth of shared information and the sense of trust—that will lead them to be willing and able to undertake the more difficult work of aligning around specific goals and ideas or producing new products and services? If the answer is no, then you have to focus seriously on deepening member connectivity. If it's yes, then you can start to introduce into the network opportunities for alignment or production.

### **Aligning and Producing**

How does connectivity become alignment? How does alignment become production? What can a network builder do to push these development processes forward?

Alignment is a process in which members reach shared understandings. In RE-AMP, the Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo, or Strive in Greater Cincinnati, alignment was around shared goals and measurable indicators of success embraced by organizations in the networks. But you can't agree on goals and measures without first agreeing on definitions of words and ideas. In the West Michigan Manufacturers Council, the most crucial member alignment was around a framework of what they meant by "world-class manufacturing." It had nine categories of practice, including Planning, Systems Thinking, Core Business Processes, Measurement,

and Process Improvement. For USDN, one alignment the members pursued was around an agenda of federal government policies that could help cities advance their sustainability. Getting to agreements of this sort involves analyzing, comparing, and synthesizing the many differing points of view that members may have, and then having members formally endorse the result. This process involves managing group dynamics and almost always includes members having to make adjustments in their thinking, so it's usually best done with skilled facilitation that enables the process without having a stake in a particular point of view. The process typically takes much more of the members' time, and it may require research to learn more about the topic for which alignment's being sought. As a result, alignment requires more of members and involves more risk of disappointment than just connecting and exchanging information.

In many networks, the primary mechanism for alignment is the formation of working groups of members, usually set up around particular topics. Working groups often start out as settings in which members build connections with each other by sharing their experiences and knowledge. But once this has been done, they become settings in which to dive more deeply into a topic and explore the potential of alignment. "Collaboratives with a narrow focus also tend to have a few working groups," reports the Bridgespan Group, "but those tackling more than one issue (for instance 'cradle-to-career' collaboratives such as Strive Cincinnati) often maintain many separate subgroups or committees. Strive's 30-member executive committee oversees five strategy teams focused on the five core priorities of the partnership." Each year, USDN operates 15–20 working groups that reflect members' priority interests. The Kalamazoo learning network set up three working groups, called "action teams," to align organizations in the community around improving kindergarten readiness, college and career readiness, and adult learning.

Working groups can also serve as bridges to the production stage in a network, in which collaborating members develop and implement projects based on alignment they have achieved. USDN created an internal fund that provides grants of up to \$100,000 to collaborating members who are developing or spreading an innovative practice or policy for urban sustainability. The Innovation Fund is directed by a 15-member steering committee, and all projects must have at least four collaborating members,

although most have many more than that. The fund could not have been established in USDN's early years when members were connecting but hadn't yet aligned around any particular interest. But the idea of a fund that supported collaboration and innovation took hold, and the steering committee—a working group—became the setting in which agreements were reached about the fund's purpose, goals, and grant programs, such as periodic Requests for Proposals. The committee also scores all proposals and decides which ones to fund.

The working-group model was particularly important in the evolution of the Partnership Fund for New York. Once Henry Kravis had persuaded hundreds of corporate and financial-institution officials to volunteer to help the Fund invest millions of dollars in business start-ups to help diversify the New York City economy, the next step was to figure out how to organize the network's production. To provide guidance, Kravis says, "We invited a lot of creative thinkers, to see where the ball would land." It landed everywhere—one advisor focused on education, another on retailing, and yet another on health care. "We shook our heads," Kravis recalls. He had to cancel the Fund's first scheduled meeting because there was no course of action to recommend. Kravis turned to Kathryn Wylde, an expert in housing and neighborhood development, to organize the network, and she created "sector groups" to bring together people with expertise or interest in different economic sectors—Media and Entertainment, Health Care and Sciences, and others—to look for, develop, and vet possible investment deals for new or expanding businesses. The brainpower and experience amassed in just one sector group, Media and Entertainment, led one Wall Street veteran to call it "the best media investment bank in the world." The Fund's sector groups provided a way for some, but not necessarily all, network members to start to work together to achieve a particular aspect of the network's purpose.

In the Fund's case, working groups were based on economic sectors, since the Fund was looking for business investment opportunities. But the logic of what working groups work on depends on the purpose and nature of the network. In RE-AMP, the main working groups were based on the network's four strategies for achieving its climate-change goals. At Lawrence CommunityWorks, working groups formed around various programs the network offered, such as a sewing club, community



revitalization committees, a financial literacy course, and leadership development classes. USDN organizes working groups around the priority interests of members and their willingness to sign up for and engage in the groups. A working group has a focus—a topic or a task. It may be porous: network members can join and also may drop out as they choose. It has a champion, one or more network members who organize the group's efforts, setting meeting agendas and facilitating the sessions. USDN appoints cochairs for working groups, so if one chair is not available or leaves the network, the working group can continue without disruption. The working group may also have network staff that supports its work.

Shifting into production further ups the ante on members' commitment. It creates a level of member interdependence that is much deeper than connecting and aligning. It requires detailed agreements about who will do what when and coordination and management of production processes. The collaborating producers must have time together to make decisions and ways to hold each other accountable for delivering what they committed to do.

Because production can be so demanding for a network, it often makes sense to start with experiments or pilots. "Encourage initial collaborations to be 'small acts' or projects," recommends Holley, and then "help small projects move to scale." The USDN Innovation Fund started with \$100,000 to provide in grants; several years later, after members had demonstrated a strong interest in developing and implementing innovation projects, the Fund had more than \$800,000 to invest, and USDN had established several other grant funds for its members to access.

### Shape Shifting

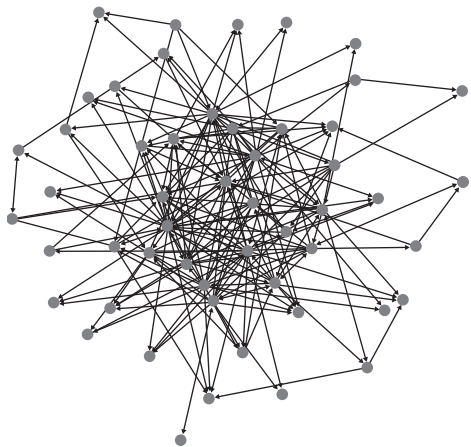
The second evolutionary process in network development involves the shape or structure of a network's connectivity. A core of members forms the initial shape of connectivity in a developing network. To explain where things go from there, we examine a case in which a network's shape has evolved substantially in a fairly short time.

In September 2013, USDN members in their fifth annual meeting viewed a slide of what looked like schematic drawings of the unfinished Death Star in *Star Wars* movies. Julia Parzen, USDN's managing director, announced that "connections among members are deepening and

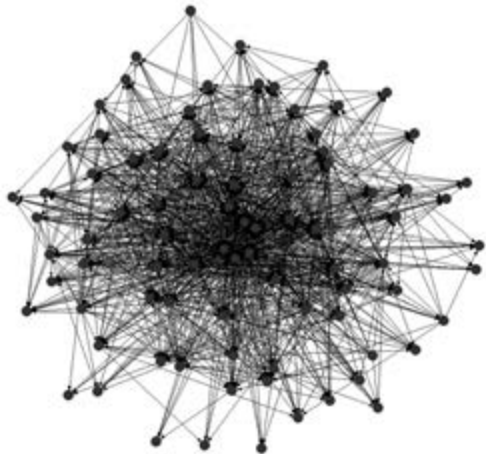
Three of the Annual Maps of All USDN Connections

---

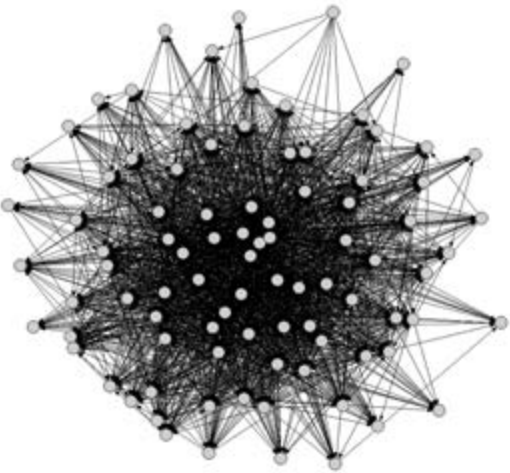
2009



2011



2013

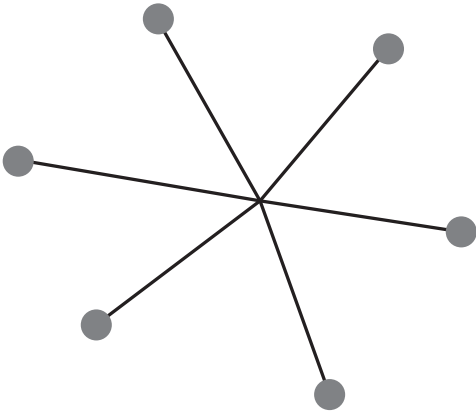


collaborations are increasing more than ever before.” Some of the evidence was in the pictures—circular masses with thick interiors and spiky exteriors. These were maps, produced by mapping software, of the connections among network members: each dot was a member, each line a link. They showed who was linked to whom, with what strength of relationship. These and other connectivity maps for each of the network’s five years showed how USDN’s connectivity had evolved. Every year members had answered a survey in which they identified their ties to other members. The strength of members’ connections was measured on a sliding scale that progressed from “exchange useful information with this person on a regular basis” to “work directly with this person on one or more projects” to “depend on this person regularly for important advice.” The aggregated data were used to produce the intriguing maps and a mathematical analysis of the network’s overall connectivity. Other color-coded maps that Parzen displayed depicted factors that might affect the number and strength of members’ ties: how long they’d been in the network; how active they were; how often they used UDSN’s website; the size of their city and the region it was in. Every year the maps and analyses were shared with USDN members and used to develop strategies for increasing members’ connectivity. (Chapter 6 explains the use of network maps.)

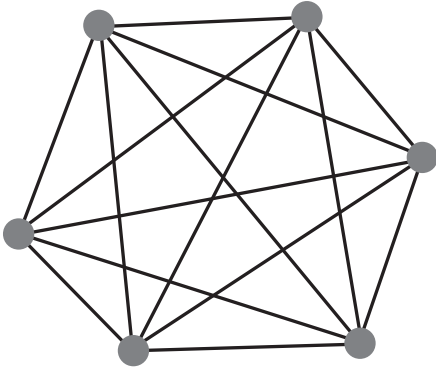
As a network’s members connect, align, and produce with each other over and over, new patterns of linkage appear; the network takes on different shapes. Perhaps the most familiar network structure is the Hub-and-Spoke, in which one node in the network connects to many other nodes unconnected to each other. That hub node becomes the network’s “connectivity center” through which information and value flow to the other nodes. But quite different shapes also commonly arise in networks:

- *Cluster*: Every node is connected to every other node; there is no hub that everyone goes through.
- *Multiple-Hubs*: Two or more hubs (with their many spokes) are connected to each other.
- *Many-Channels*: Many members connect directly with each other, typically in addition to their connections with hubs and in clusters.

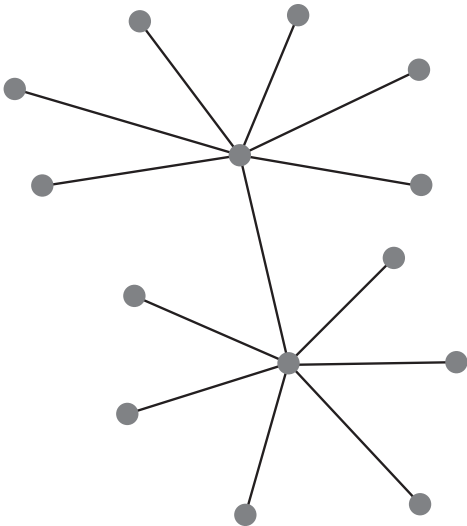
Hub and Spoke

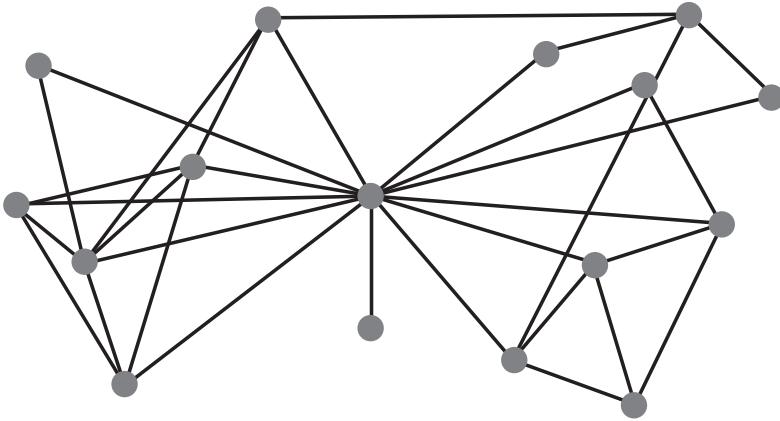


Cluster



Multiple-Hubs





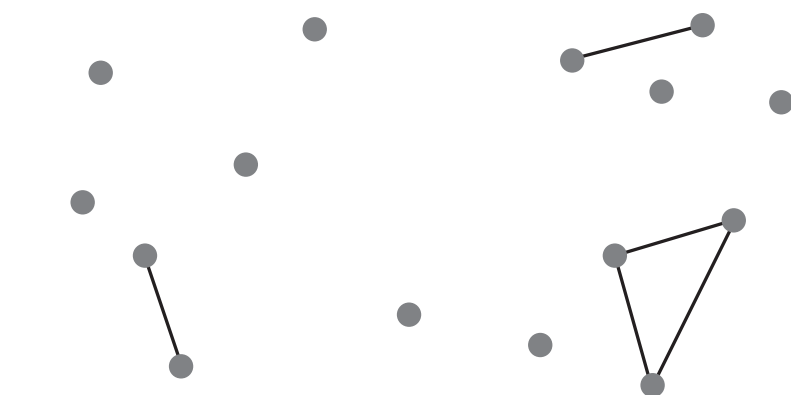
Many Channels

Each structure enables connectivity among nodes in different ways and affects the flows in a network. For instance, a hub-and-spoke structure may be a great starting structure for your network, since the hub can be a source of energy and coherent direction, but many network organizers find that a central hub can eventually become a bottleneck that slows down information flows and gets in the way of relationship building among the other network members. A cluster of tight relationships can do well at combining organizational competencies into a disciplined production process, but it's not necessarily the best structure for rapidly growing a network, since new members may find it difficult to break into a close-knit set of members. A multiple-hub structure can readily serve the task of mobilizing many people, because it takes only a relatively few nodes to connect to all nodes. And the many-channels shape tends to support rapid diffusion of information and responses through its numerous connections among members.

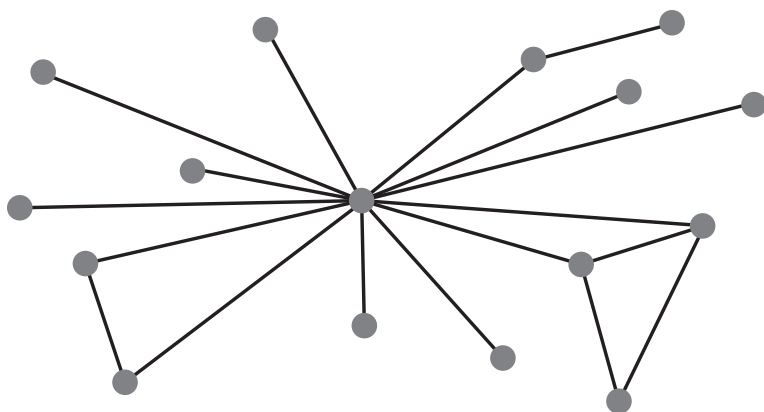
In 2004, Valdis Krebs, an expert network analyst, and June Holley, an avid network builder, depicted what a robust generative network's structural progression might look like, based on the evolution of the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet), a network of food, wood, and technology entrepreneurs in 29 counties in southeastern Ohio. Their multistage model, which we've revised slightly, is instructive because each connectivity structure in the evolution poses benefits and risks for the network's development.

The starting point, of course, is unconnected nodes, scattered people and organizations and their networks.

When someone weaves these nodes together, typically a single hub-and-spoke structure emerges, with the founder/weaver as the hub connected to a set of other nodes, most of which are not connected to each other. Where things go from there matters; a dominant hub is a network's friend—and can also be its enemy. Whoever organizes a network becomes, for a little while at least, its hub. Hubs can become very influential in a network, and they tend to get more powerful over time, because new members tend to prefer to link to more-connected members. As a network expands, network researchers say, the “rich get richer,” meaning the



Scattered Emergence



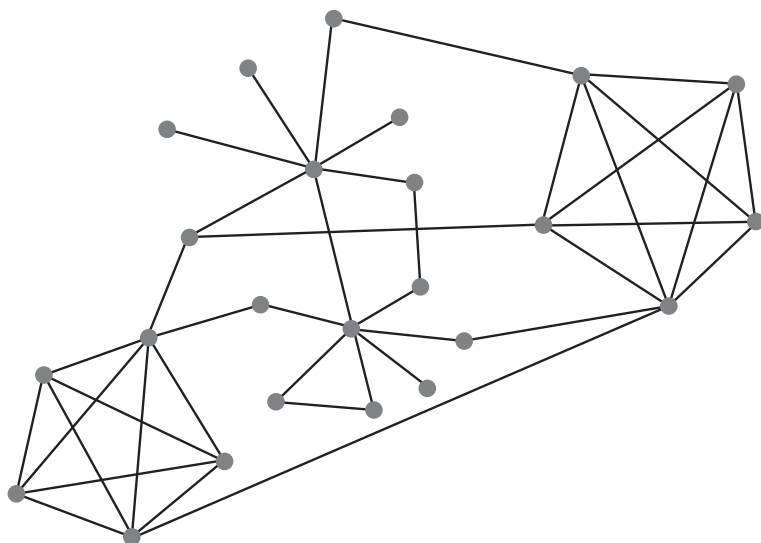
Hub-and-Spoke

more-connected nodes tend to attract more new connections. There's a point in a network's early life when a dominant hub-and-spoke structure is extremely useful, perhaps essential.

But, as noted earlier, the same structure can become a problem. Two networks started by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)—a Sustainable Development Communications Network and Trade Knowledge Network—started as hub-and-spoke structures with IISD serving as the hub for the network. IISD connected to all the network members, but the members did not connect much with each other, except through the IISD hub. Members had no real opportunities to exchange experiences and work with each other, and they were not accountable to each other for their work on projects the network undertook. The structure did not promote collaboration. “We realized,” write IISD’s Heather Creech and Terri Willard, “that more-collaborative models support sharing and creation of new knowledge, better linkages to policy processes and extended relationships, and capacity development across the network.” In short, if a network remains in a hub-and-spoke configuration, then its growth and development will probably be limited. And if a network’s dominant hub should “fail” for any reason, the network members could be left unconnected.

When a network’s early hubs promote evolution, instead of trying to extend their dominance, then more and more nodes become connected with each other, and a many-channels structure emerges in which nodes connect with each other directly, rather than just through hubs, to share information and resources. This can be an exciting development, as all of the connecting creates new opportunities for network members. But it also can be a confusing and frustrating time; if the flow of possibilities outpaces the network’s capacity for taking advantage of them, the network will be more chaotic than orderly. As this evolution occurs, a new order emerges structurally: as some nodes build stronger connections with each other and/or bring their connections into the network, a multiple-hubs and multiple-clusters structure develops.

In ACEnet, both of these changes happened. Several of the nodes—businesses and nonprofit organizations—began to build their own networks within the larger network. Eventually multiple hubs emerged: a Mexican restaurant became the hub of other restaurants, while a bakery



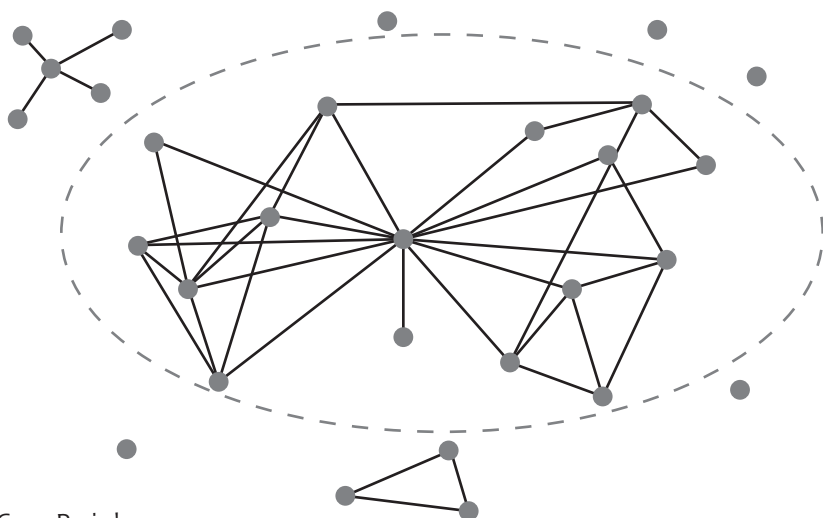
### Many Channels

became a hub that helped food entrepreneurs develop new recipes. A few years later, a farmers market brought together some 90 farmers and local food vendors—another ACEnet hub adding even more nodes to the network. Even as a network develops multiple hubs and clusters, it may also maintain a many-channels structure, through which nodes connect with each other outside of their hubs and clusters, and within which hubs connect to each other.

USDN's 2013 connectivity maps showed that it had become a many-channels network with a high level of connections among nearly all members, a large number of hubs connected with many other members, and an emerging set of clusters of tightly connected members who together were aligning and, in some cases, producing. Within this larger pattern, as we described earlier, a core of members had strongly connected with each other and taken active roles in developing the network. Quite a few of these core members served as “bridgers” between clusters. We also saw this bridging phenomenon when we mapped the Reboot network—identifying a set of members who connected across the network's three main geographic clusters of members in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco.

In a final evolutionary development, when a network has established a core structured of multiple hubs and clusters and many-channel





Core Periphery

connections, it can start to focus outside of its structure, on the potential of entering into mutually beneficial relationships with other organizations or individuals at its periphery. “The periphery allows us to reach ideas and information not currently prevalent in the network,” explain Krebs and Holley, “while the core allows us to act on those ideas and information.” When a network starts to engage with entities outside of its own membership, seeking to draw their energy into the network’s influence, then it has very likely developed a complex but relatively stable core.

### Using Foresight

The two paths of network evolution—the shift of capability from connecting to aligning and producing, and the shift of structure from single hub to many channels and multiple hubs and clusters—are entwined. Increasing connections among members requires a structure that enables much more connecting than a single hub will allow. Aligning members involves hubs that help to bring nodes together around ideas and goals. Organizing production—designing and implementing collective work—requires clusters, because nodes have to enter into and sustain close, disciplined interaction.

You can use these evolutionary models to anticipate what your network may need in the future and, therefore, what might be useful to do in the present.

At the start-up stage, for instance, you can anticipate the need to ensure that the initial organizing hub or hubs don't remain dominant and stifle the emergence of many-channels and multiple-hubs connectivity. That could mean helping the organizing hubs (perhaps including yourself) to shape evolution-friendly intentions, and, if necessary, helping them let go of their dominant position. It might also mean helping other nodes in the network develop into hubs. At the same time, you can anticipate that, as the network shifts from a single-hub shape into a many-channels or multiple-hubs shape, members' communications with each other will become more frequent and complicated, and therefore the network will need better communications tools to support connectivity.

As the network develops, clusters that want to align and produce will need different types of support than they did at the connectivity stage; for instance, facilitation of group processes and organization of collective work. At the same time, as clusters emerge in a network, there's some risk that the network could pull apart, if members feel their connections and work in clusters are much more valuable than their connections and work in the broader network. So you can anticipate the need to continue to revise the overall network's collective value proposition so it is different from the value created by clustering and still engages the interest of members.

Finally, network builders should recognize that the periphery can be useful as a source of connections that members don't have or as a partner in production. "The network should not work in a vacuum from other groups interested and involved in similar work," says one network researcher. But—and this shouldn't be ignored—it takes energy to engage organizations and individuals at the network's periphery, and unless the network's evolution has gotten far enough along, it may not be able to do a good job of managing periphery relationships.

In these ways, considering the implications of your network's potential evolutionary paths can allow you to prepare for the big challenges of managing an ongoing network.

---

## About the Authors

**Peter Plastrik** is a cofounder of the Innovation Network for Communities (INC), a nonprofit national network that develops and spreads scalable innovations that transform the performance of community systems. Before founding INC with John Cleveland, Peter served as a partner in Integral Assets Consulting, a firm that specialized in strategic planning, innovation development, and organizational development with nonprofits, foundations, networks, and social enterprises. He was also CEO of New Urban Learning, a nonprofit that started and managed innovative schools in Detroit. He served as a senior executive of the Michigan Partnership for New Education, a public-private partnership seeking reform of the state education system. Before that, he served in a number of public-service positions, including chief deputy director of the Michigan Department of Commerce, president of the Michigan Strategic Fund, and executive director of Michigan Governor James Blanchard's Jobs and Economic Development Cabinet Council. A prolific author, Peter wrote *Banishing Bureaucracy: The Five Strategies for Reinventing Government* and *The Reinventor's Fieldbook: Tools for Transforming Your Government* with co-author David Osborne. He is also a veteran newspaper reporter, having worked for Booth Newspapers in the State Capitol (Lansing, Michigan) Bureau and the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. Peter lives on Beaver Island in Lake Michigan. More information is available at [www.in4c.net](http://www.in4c.net).

**Madeleine Beaubien Taylor** is the CEO and a cofounder with Peter Plastrik of Network Impact, which provides social-change agents with strategies, tools, research, and consulting expertise to design and use networks for increased impact. Madeleine is also a cofounder and principal of Arbor Consulting Partners, a social science research and evaluation consultancy

located in Boston, Massachusetts. For more than 20 years, Madeleine has worked with public and nonprofit organizations and national foundations on strategy, program development, and assessment, most recently with a focus on social-impact networks. Over the last decade, she has contributed to the design, implementation, and evaluation of a wide range of network initiatives in the United States, including place-based efforts to increase civic engagement, cross-sector initiatives to promote immigrant integration, network organizing to support policies that benefit rural people and places, and regional collaborations to end homelessness. Madeleine has led the development of innovative tools and approaches for network assessment and works to provide grantmakers and others with practical up-to-date information about effective network evaluation. Madeleine received her PhD in anthropology from Brandeis University and spent her early professional career working in southern Africa. She currently consults in the United States, Brazil, and in her native Canada. More information is available at [www.networkimpact.org](http://www.networkimpact.org).

**John Cleveland** is a cofounder and president of the Innovation Network for Communities (INC), a national nonprofit that develops and spreads scalable innovations that transform the performance of community systems. John also serves on a part-time basis as the executive director for the Boston Green Ribbon Commission, a group of 33 business and civic leaders supporting the implementation of the City of Boston Climate Action Plan. John has more than 30 years' experience spanning the public, education, nonprofit, and private sectors. He has done extensive work across the country in sustainable development, green building design, organizational learning, socially responsible businesses, school reform, and economic development. Prior to founding INC, John served as vice president of IRN, Inc., a market intelligence firm located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, that provided strategic planning, market research, automotive forecasting, and merger-and-acquisition due diligence to midsized manufacturing companies. Prior to joining IRN, John worked as a private consultant; as director of continuous improvement for Grand Rapids Community College; and as director of the State of Michigan's industrial extension service. John graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a degree in City Planning from Yale University. More information is available at [www.in4c.net](http://www.in4c.net).

---

# Index

Note: page numbers followed by “n” refer to endnotes.

- ACEnet (Appalachian Center for Economic Networks), 113, 115–16, 197n7, 203
- adaptation planning, 105–6
- adaptive management: about, 120–21; communication challenges, 134–35; drivers of adaptation, 122–24; edge of chaos and the balance point, 121–22, 183; governance model and, 128–32; member engagement and, 124–28; periphery relationships, 139–44; provisional planning, 135–39; routines and, 144–45; staffing model and, 132–34
- adaptive problems, 193n16
- Advanced Energy Economy (AEE), 6–7, 69–70, 98
- affinity and membership, 47–48
- The Age of the Network* (Lipnack and Stamps), 2
- Agreeableness, 180–81, 224–25
- alignment networks, 35, 36
- alignment phase, 104, 106–7, 170–71
- alliances and coalitions, 29, 30–31, 105, 169
- Andors, Jessica, 72, 205
- Anklam, Patti, 155, 201–2
- Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet), 113, 115–16, 197n7, 203
- Aristotle, 26
- Armstrong, Michael, 177–79, 182, 184
- Arter, Mia, 95
- assessment. *See* evaluation and assessment of networks
- associations vs. networks, 29
- balance point, 119, 121–22, 183
- Barabasi, Albert-László, 1, 202
- Barr Foundation, 152, 157
- Bartsch, Laura, 69–70, 97–98
- Beckstrom, Rod, 33, 193n18
- Benkler, Yochai, 3–4
- Bennett, Roger, 16
- Bennett, Vicki, 106
- Block, Peter, 1–2
- board members and evaluation, 163–64
- Bolger, Joe, 58, 205
- Bornstein, David, 5
- Brafman, Ori, 33, 193n18
- Branding a network, 140–42
- bridgers, 96, 116
- Bridgespan Group, 67, 122, 140, 142
- Brown, John Seeley, 41, 203
- “Building Smart Communities by Network Weaving” (Holley and Krebs), 203
- Burt, Ron, 154
- business models, 59–65
- Butler, William Hale, 21
- C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, 17, 142
- Cascade Engineering, Inc., 15
- “Casebook” (Network Impact and Center for Evaluation Innovation), 204
- Central Appalachia Regional Network (CARN), 209–11
- centralization and decentralization, 1–2, 58, 134, 179
- chaos, edge of, 119, 121–22, 136, 183–84

- Chicago Jobs Council, 133  
 Chung, Patrick, 54  
 Climate Change Knowledge Network, 50  
 Clinton, Bill, 26  
 closed networks, 46  
 "closing the triangle," 95  
 clusters, 96, 116, 118  
 cluster structure, 111–13  
 coalitions and alliances, 29, 30–31, 105, 169  
 Colbert, Stephen, 2, 29  
 Colbert Nation, 29  
 collective action, 71  
 collective impact model, 45  
 communication costs, 60  
 communication infrastructure, 58–59. *See also* information and communications technology (ICT); information flows and exchange  
 communications, customized, 134–35  
 community decision making, 67–68  
 competencies value, 52–53  
 complex social problems, 27, 193n16  
 conference calls, 94, 213  
 connect-align-produce ("C-A-P")  
   sequence, 36, 104–09  
 connection phase, 104, 170–71  
 connection value, 52–53  
 connectivity: adaptive management  
   and, 121; assessment and mapping  
   of, 69–70, 149, 150–56; beyond  
   connected core, 101; core building,  
   87–89; customized weaving, 95–101;  
   importance of, 36; introductions, 83–  
   85; levels of intensity of, 85–86; mass  
   weaving, 92–94; shape or structure of,  
   109–17; value and, 71–72; weaving, art  
   of, 89–92  
 connectivity networks, 34–35, 37  
 "connectors," 8  
 Conscientiousness, 226–27  
 consensus governance, 67–68  
 consultation and openness, 77  
 convening costs, 60  
 coordination roles and design, 54–57  
 core-periphery structure, 116–17  
 costs, operational and project, 60  
 Covey, Steven, 103  
 "Cracking the Network Code" (Wei-Skillern, Silver, and Heitz), 13, 75–76, 79, 206  
 "Creation Nets" (Hagel and Brown), 41, 203  
 credit, sharing, 140–42  
 Creech, Heather, 41, 48, 50, 51, 58, 65, 80, 115, 120, 202–3  
 crowdfunding, 63  
 culture and operating principles, 70–73, 175  
 Curtis, Jennie, 19–20, 35, 76–82  
 Daley, Richard, 13–14  
 Dean, Howard, 2  
 decentralization and centralization, 1–2, 58, 134, 179  
 decision making: adaptive, 122;  
   governance models and, 65–69;  
   transparent, 72, 131  
 Decker, Lynn, 20–21, 23, 119–20, 121, 123, 142, 148, 182  
 democracy decision making, 68  
 De Pree, Max, 1–2  
 design of networks: assessment and, 69–70; as balancing act, 73; coordination, facilitation, and communication, 54–59; funding models, 59–65; governance models, 65–69; key elements and issues, 40–43; membership, 46–51; operating principles and network culture, 70–73; purpose, 43–46; value propositions, 51–54. *See also* resetting network design  
 directories, 93–94, 135  
 domination, 81–82, 115, 118, 174  
 dues, 48, 62  
 earned income, 63  
 edge of chaos, 119, 121–22, 136, 183–84  
 Eggers, William D., 203  
 Eichel, Amanda, 87  
 Einstein, Albert, 167  
 Eisenhower, Dwight D., 136  
 email, 94, 213  
 emergence decision making, 68  
 engineers and engineered networks, 43, 75–82, 98

- Ethen, Leslie, 168–69
- evaluation and assessment of networks:  
   connectivity and mapping, 69–70,  
   150–56; engineers and, 81; framework  
   for, 149–50; health assessment, 156–60;  
   impact assessment, 160–63; initial  
   assessment, 69–70; lessons about, 163–  
   65; organizations compared to, 148–49
- evolution of networks: adaptation  
   and, 120; C-A-P (connect-to-align-to-  
   produce) sequence, 104–9, 170–71;  
   connectivity structure and, 109–17;  
   core of connectivity and, 89; defined,  
   103–4; foresight and, 117–18; health  
   assessment and, 157–58; impact  
   sequence and, 162; intentional guiding  
   of, 103; mapping and, 153–54; staffing  
   and, 133
- exclusion as governance problem, 174
- Extroversion, 223–24
- Facebook, 28
- facilitation, 57–58
- feedback and planning, 138
- Fine, Allison, 3, 34, 63, 92, 126, 143, 174,  
 180
- Fire Learning Network: about, 7;  
   adaptation and, 119–20, 121, 123;  
   assessment and, 148, 182; beginnings,  
   20–21, 23; branding, 142; case study,  
   206; as generative social-impact  
   network, 25–28; information flows  
   and, 34; legal model, 64; as production  
   network, 35; value propositions, 54
- flexible capacity, 32–33
- focus groups, 158–59
- Friedman, Thomas, 2–3
- funders: advice for, 75–82; educating,  
   163–64; evaluation and, 162, 164;  
   as partners, 144; philanthropic, 62;  
   questions of, 63; value and, 61, 64
- Funders' Network for Smart Growth and  
 Livable Communities, 62
- funding models, 59–65
- fundraising, 61–65
- Garfield Foundation, 19–20, 22–23, 32,  
 35, 76–82
- generalized reciprocity, 38
- generative problems, 27–28, 193n16
- generative social-impact networks:  
   advantages of, 31–34; characteristics  
   of, 25–28; closed membership and, 46;  
   command-and-control and, 193n18;  
   defined, 5–6; distinctions, 28–29;  
   generosity and identity as forces  
   in, 37–38; starting, 13–24. *See also*  
   networks
- generosity, 37–38
- Gephi, 154–55
- “gift economy,” 37–38
- Gladwell, Malcolm, 2, 8, 83
- Gleichmann, Gabi, 187
- Global Warming Strategic Action Fund  
 (RE-AMP), 23
- Godin, Seth, 2
- Goldsmith, Stephen, 193n16, 203
- Goldstein, Bruce Evan, 21
- Gospel of the Network, 4
- Gotsch, Maria, 123
- governance structures: adaptation and,  
   122–23, 128–32; design of, 65–69;  
   engineers and, 80; resetting and, 174
- Governing by Network* (Goldsmith and  
 Eggers), 203
- government grants and contracts, 63
- Granovetter, Mark, 203
- Grant, Heather McLeod, 204–5
- Grantmakers for Effective Organizations,  
 80, 201
- grants, government, 63
- Greenleaf, Robert, 179–80
- Green Media Toolshed, 58
- Hagel, John III, 41, 203
- Hais, Michael D., 3
- Hazard, Bruce, 70–71
- health assessment, 149–50, 156–60
- Health Care Without Harm (HCWH),  
 30–31
- Heartland Local Government  
 Sustainability Network, 46–47
- Heifetz, Ronald, 193n16
- Heitz, Eric, 13, 206
- Hershey/Cause Communications, 59
- holes, structural, 154

- Holley, June: ACEnet and, 113, 197n7; assessment and, 165; "Building Smart Communities by Network Weaving" (Holley and Krebs), 203; connectivity and, 87, 89, 90, 96, 99; design and, 71, 72; management and, 126, 127–28, 138, 143; network evolution and, 109, 117; resetting design and, 174; start-up and, 29; on uncertainty, 183
- hub-and-spoke structure, 111–16
- hubs, 95–96, 114–15, 118
- ice breakers, 94
- identity, shared, 37–38
- Imai, Masaaki, 147
- impact assessment, 150, 160–63
- imposition, decisions by, 68
- InFlow, 155
- information and communications technology (ICT), 58–59, 135, 213–15
- information flows and exchange: on activities, 130; alignment and, 35; connectivity networks and, 34–35; methods, variety of, 94; as network advantage, 33–34; news and updates, 94; online tools, 213–14; in person, 91; stock of information, 135; transparent, 72
- In Search of Excellence* (Peters and Waterman), 1–2
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), 48, 115, 149
- Internet, 58–59, 92, 213–14
- interviews of members, 158–59
- Jewish-American community. *See* Reboot
- Jim Joseph Foundation, 147–48
- Johnston, Sadhu, 13–14, 15, 17, 26–27, 66, 87
- Jolin, Michelle, 203–4
- Kahane, Adam, 27
- Kalamazoo Community Foundation, 24
- Kalamazoo Promise, 21–22, 24. *See also* Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo
- Kania, John, 5, 28, 32, 45, 135–37, 193n16
- Kanter, Beth, 3, 34, 63, 92, 126, 143, 174, 180, 202
- Karliner, Josh, 30–31
- Kasper, Gabriel, 3, 204–5
- Kearns, Marty, 58
- Keller, Fred, 14–19
- Kellogg, Foundation, 22, 24, 33, 92–93
- Kelly, Kevin, 2, 37, 73, 204
- "Knowledge Networks" (Creech and Ramji), 202
- knowledge value, 52–53
- Kramer, Mark, 5, 28, 32, 45, 135–37, 193n16
- Kravis, Henry, 6, 32–33, 52, 108
- Krebs, Valdis, 113, 117, 155, 203
- Lao Tzu, 177
- Law of Increasing Returns, 33
- Lawrence CommunityWorks (LCW): about, 7; assessment and, 156–57; beginnings, 39–40; case studies, 206; connectivity and, 90; flexible planning and, 72; governance, 66; leadership development, 131; legal model, 64; membership and sizing, 46, 49; online information, 135; planning, 136; purpose, 44; value propositions, 51, 52, 71–72; working groups, 108–9
- leadership: network-centric, 181, 221–22; personality traits for, 180–81; servant, 179–80; serving but not waiting, 182–83; steering committees, 50, 66, 80; trusting the network, 182; vertigo, embracing, 183–84; walking the talk and balancing acts, 184–85
- "Leading Between" (Skidmore), 205
- learning members, 50
- Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo: about, 7; alignment and, 35, 106; beginnings, 21–22, 24; branding, 141; capacity building and, 32; connectivity and, 88; governance adjustments, 122–23, 183; leadership and, 180; staff decentralization, 134
- Lee, Je Hoon, 34–35, 51–52
- legal entity models, 64
- "The Less Visible Leader" (Robinson), 204



- Levin, Rachel, 14, 16, 18, 32, 121  
*Linked: The New Science of Networks* (Barabasi), 3, 202  
 links, in networks, 26  
 Lipnack, Jessica, 2  
 logistics coordination, 55  
 Lowell, Stephanie, 152
- management. *See* adaptive management; evaluation and assessment of networks
- Mandell, Myrna, 88, 205–6  
 many-channels structure, 111–13, 115–17  
 mapping of connectivity, 150–56  
 market test, 48  
 Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH), 7, 35–36, 159, 163  
 Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance, 65–68, 195n20  
 Mead, Margaret, 4  
 measurement, shared, 45  
 meetings, 91, 97–101  
 membership: balance of core and non-core, 170–71; benefits of, 51–54; CARN model, 209–11; design, 42, 46–51; directories of, 93–94, 135; disconnection and resetting, 171–72; documentation and observation, 159–60; dues, 48, 62; enabling of, 122; engagement, variation in, 124–28; interviews of, 158–59; natural expansion of, 79–80; news and updates for, 94. *See also* connectivity
- Memphis Fast Forward, 141–42  
 Millennial Generation, 3  
 Miller, Jed, 41, 204  
 mission statements, 44–45  
 modesty, 180–81, 182, 225  
 MomsRising.org, 142–43  
 monitoring. *See* evaluation and assessment of networks
- Monitor Institute, 201  
 morphing, 29, 30–31  
 Moxon, Kathy, 83–85, 89, 92–93, 104  
 multiple-hubs and multiple-clusters structures, 111–13, 115–17
- National Day of Unplugging, 18  
 National Fire Roundtable, 21  
 National Rural Assembly, 142  
 The Nature Conservancy, 20, 23, 64, 142, 148. *See also* Fire Learning Network
- “Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives” (Jolin, Schmitz, and Seldon), 203–4
- net-centric approach: birth of, 2–4; leadership and, 181, 221–22; staff and, 133
- NetKAL (Network for Korean American Leaders), 7, 51–52, 54, 152–53
- network builders. *See specific topics and networks*
- “Network-Centric Thinking” (Miller and Stuart), 41, 204
- network design. *See* design of networks; resetting network design
- network evolution: capabilities, 104–09; structure, 109–17
- The Networked Nonprofit* (Kanter and Fine), 3, 126, 143
- Network for Korean American Leaders (NetKAL), 7, 51–52, 54, 152–53
- Network Health Scorecard, 157, 158–59, 163, 164, 202, 219–20
- Network Impact website, 202
- network maps, 152–56
- “Network Organizing” (Traynor and Andors), 205
- “Network Power for Philanthropy and Nonprofits” (Plastrik and Taylor), 204
- network readiness, 41
- networks: advantages of, 31–34; distinctions, 28–29; history of social-impact networks, 4–5; nodes and links in, 26; serving but not waiting for, 182–83; serving the network, 179–81; trusting, 182; types of, 34–36. *See also* generative social-impact networks; *specific networks*
- “Networks and Capacity” (Taschereau and Bolger), 205
- Networks That Work* (Vandeventer and Mandell), 205–6
- Networks United for a Rural Voice

- (NURV), 84–85, 89, 92–93, 101, 104–5  
*Network Weaver Handbook* (Holley), 29, 126, 203  
 network work plans, 217–18  
 Neuroticism, 227–28  
 New England Municipal Sustainability Network, 47  
*New Rules for the New Economy* (Kelly), 2, 204  
 news updates, 94  
 New York City Investment Fund. *See* Partnership Fund for New York  
 nodes, 26  
 NodeXL, 154  
 Noveck, Beth, 4  
 NURV (Networks United for a Rural Voice), 84–85, 89, 92–93, 101, 104–5  
  
 Olivarez, Juan, 21–22, 24  
 online conferencing, 213  
 online tools. *See* information and communications technology (ICT)  
 “open innovation” networks, 203  
 Openness to Experience, 181, 228–29  
 open networks, 46  
 operating principles for network culture, 70–73, 175  
 operational costs, 60  
 Operation Ceasefire, 140–41  
 operations coordination, 55  
 Opportunity Chicago, 133  
 organization-centric view, 1–2, 5, 41, 133  
 orientation, 127, 131–32  
  
 participation standards, 128  
 Partnership Fund for New York: about, 6; case study, 206; evolution of, 108; FinTech Innovation Lab, 123–24; flexible capacity and, 32–33; value propositions, 52  
 partnerships, 62, 132–33, 142–44  
 Parzen, Julia: assessment and, 147–52, 165; connectivity and, 87, 89, 94, 95, 97–100; design and, 56, 57, 71, 72; management and, 125, 131, 132–33, 140; on network-building roles, 182–83; network evolution and, 109, 111; search for replacement for, 180; start-up and, 15  
 patience, 82  
 performance measurement, shared, 45.  
*See also* evaluation and assessment of networks  
 periphery and core, 116–17  
 periphery relationships, 138–44  
 personality traits, 180–81, 223–29  
 Peters, Tom, 1–2  
 Petit, Philippe, 185  
 philanthropic funders, 62. *See also* funders  
 Pickett-Erway, Carrie, 24, 88, 123, 134–35, 141, 180, 183  
 pilots, 169–70  
 planning, flexible, 72  
 planning, provisional, 135–39  
 Plastrik, Peter, 204  
 political campaigns, 2  
 practice, network building as a, 8–9  
 production networks, 35–37  
 production phase, 104–5, 107–9, 170–71  
 project costs, 60  
 project management tools, online, 214  
 purpose, 43–46, 76–77, 120, 169–71  
 “pyramid” of engagement, 125–26  
  
 Ramji, Aly, 202  
 RE-AMP (Renewable Energy Alignment Mapping Project): about, 7; alignment and, 35, 106; assessment and, 159–60, 161; beginnings, 19–20, 22–23; capacity building and, 32; case study, 207; connectivity and, 88; engineers and, 76–82; funds, internal, 144; as generative social-impact network, 25–28; Global Warming Strategic Action Fund, 23; legal model, 64; membership and sizing, 49, 50; orientation to networks, 132; partnerships, 142, 143; shared measurement and, 45; staff decentralization, 134; Steering Committee, 50, 80, 129–30; strategic management, 56–57; working groups, 108  
 Reboot: about, 7; adaptive management and, 121; affinity and, 47–48;

- assessment and, 147–48, 150, 151, 155, 161–62, 163–64; beginnings, 14, 16, 17–18; branding, 140; bridging and, 116; capacity building and, 32; case study, 207; connectivity mapping, 153; as generative social-impact network, 25; legal model, 64; membership, 42, 49; as production network, 35; production phase and, 105; staffing, 133
- reciprocity, 92
- Redwood Coastal Rural Action, 83
- Reed, Rick, 71, 88, 132, 138
- relationship building. *See* connectivity
- Renewable Energy Alignment Mapping Project. *See* RE-AMP
- resetting network design: governance issues, 174; membership issues, 171–72; network builders and, 167–69; operating principles and, 175; purpose issues, 169–71; value proposition issues, 172–74
- resources value, 52–53
- The Right Place, 64
- rightsizing, 48–49, 122
- Robinson, Andy, 204
- Ronchi, Don, 154
- Rural People, Rural Policy, 7, 33, 83, 142
- Sacks, Adene, 147, 148, 151, 163–64
- Savage, Lois, 80
- scattered emergence structure, 114
- Scearce, Diana, 3, 204–5
- Schmitz, Paul, 203–4
- Scott, John, 205
- Seldon, Willa, 203–4
- self-discipline, 184–85, 226
- Senger, Peter, 179
- servant leadership, 179–81
- Shape Up Somerville, 128
- Shepard, Bonnie, 50, 91, 141
- Silver, Nora, 13, 206
- Six Degrees* (Watts), 3, 206
- sizing, 48–49, 122
- Skidmore, Paul, 205
- small-world reach, 33
- social-impact networks, history of, 4–5. *See also* generative social-impact networks; networks
- social media, 3, 28–29, 214
- social movements vs. networks, 29
- social network analysis (SNA), 152, 205
- Social Network Analysis* (Scott), 205
- software for collaboration, 213–15
- Southeast Sustainability Directors Network, 40, 45–46, 47
- Southwest Rural Policy Network, 158, 164
- Speirn, Sterling, 22
- SPIN (State Policy Innovation Network), 97–98
- sponsorships, 62
- staff decentralization, 58
- staffing costs, 60
- staffing models, 132–34
- Stamps, Jeffrey, 2
- Stang, Spencer, 180–81
- Stang Decision Systems, 223–29
- The Starfish and the Spider* (Brafman and Beckstrom), 33, 73
- start-ups: engineered, 43, 75–82; managed, 19–24; mash-up, 13–19; morphing, 29, 30–31; types of networks, 34–36. *See also* design of networks
- “The State of Network Evaluation” (Network Impact and Center for Evaluation Innovation), 204
- steering committees, 50, 66, 80
- Stevenson, Karen, 92
- steward leadership, 179–80
- Steyer, Tom, 6–7
- “Strategic Intentions” (Creech and Willard), 202–3
- strategic management, 55–57
- “The Strength of Weak Ties” (Granovetter), 203
- Strive, 45, 106
- Stuart, Rob, 41, 204
- success as driver of adaptation, 123–24
- succession, lack of, 174
- “Sukkah City” design competition, 18
- Surfrider Foundation, 126
- Surowiecki, James, 2, 205
- surprises, 78, 138–39

- surveys, 158–59
- Sustainable Development Communications Network (SDCN), 80, 115
- Sutherland, Susanna, 45–46, 47
- Talent 2025, 19
- Tamarack Institute, 144
- Taschereau, Suzanne, 58, 205
- Taylor, Blair, 141–42
- Taylor, Madeleine, 204
- term limits, 130–31
- The World Is Flat* (Friedman), 2–3
- The Tipping Point* (Gladwell), 2
- Trade Knowledge Network, 115
- transparency, 72
- Traynor, William J. (Bill), 39–40, 51, 52, 72, 90, 131, 136, 182, 183–84, 205
- triads, 95
- Trippi, Joe, 2, 4
- trust, 86, 90–92, 143–44, 182, 224–25
- Ullman, Maggie, 40, 45–46, 47
- Unleashing the Ideavirus* (Godin), 2
- Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN): about, 6; Armstrong and, 177–79; assessment and, 147–48, 155, 157, 160–62, 164; beginnings, 13–14, 17; branding, 140; case study, 207; connectivity and, 87, 89, 93–101, 110, 111, 116; connectivity mapping, 153; dues, 62; funds, internal, 144; as generative social-impact network, 25–28; governance, 66; Innovation Fund, 45, 89, 107–8, 109, 143; leadership and, 180–81; legal model, 64; membership, 42, 46–47, 49–50; membership dues, 48; mission statement, 44–45; network advantage and, 33, 34; participation options, 126; partnerships, 142; planning, yearly, 136; Planning Committee, 17, 56, 66, 89, 96–97, 130–31, 137, 178; purpose, 78; regional networks, 40, 46–47; staff and, 132–33; strategic manager roles, 56, 57; value propositions, 52–53, 54, 72, 173; working groups, 107–9, 125
- value propositions: adaptation and, 122; assessment of, 69; connections flowing to value, 71–72; design of, 51–54; engineers and, 77–78; network weaving and, 88; resetting and, 172–74
- Vandeventer, Paul, 88, 205–6
- vertigo, embracing, 183–84
- Vibrant Communities, 136–37, 144
- video conferencing, 213
- volunteer efforts, valuation of, 64
- voting, 68
- Waldrop, Mitchell, 119, 121–22
- Watts, Duncan, 3, 4, 206
- The Wealth of Networks* (Benkler), 3–4
- weaving. *See* connectivity
- Wei-Skillern, Jane, 13, 206
- Western Adaptation Alliance (WAA), 105–6, 168–69
- West Michigan Manufacturer's Council: about, 7; alignment and, 106–7; beginnings, 14–19; legal model, 64; member engagement, 125; membership, 42; network type and, 37; planning, 136; value propositions, 53
- Wikipedia*, 4
- Wikis, 214
- Willard, Terri, 115, 120, 202–3
- Winograd, Morley, 3
- The Wisdom of Crowds* (Surowiecki), 2, 205
- working groups, 71, 107–9, 125
- “Working Wikily” (Searce, Kasper, and Grant), 204–5
- workshops, 94
- Wylde, Kathryn, 108
- Zero Mercury Working Group, 30
- Zuckerberg, Randi, 28

# Island Press | Board of Directors

**Katie Dolan**

*(Chair)*

Conservationist

**Merloyd Ludington Lawrence**

*(Secretary)*

Merloyd Lawrence, Inc.  
and Perseus Books

**Pamela B. Murphy**

*(Vice-Chair)*

**William H. Meadows**

*(Treasurer)*

Counselor and Past President  
The Wilderness Society

---

**Decker Anstrom**

Board of Directors

Discovery Communications

**Mary James**

Prime Group, LLC

**Stephen Badger**

Board Member

Mars, Inc.

**Charles C. Savitt**

President

Island Press

**Terry Gamble Boyer**

Author

**Alison Sant**

Cofounder and Partner

Studio for Urban Projects

**Melissa Shackleton Dann**

Managing Director

Endurance Consulting

**Ron Sims**

Former Deputy Secretary

US Department of Housing  
and Urban Development

**Margot Paul Ernst**

**Anthony Everett**

Principle and Owner

HTE Marketing

**Sarah Slusser**

Executive Vice President

GeoGlobal Energy LLC

**Russell Faucett**

General Partner

Barrington Partners

**Deborah Wiley**

Chair

Wiley Foundation, Inc.

**Lisa A. Hook**

President and CEO

Neustar Inc.