Online Deliberation (52)

People working together to conduct business as a group are often plagued by the clash of personalities and shifting rivalries within the group. Also, without structure, a discussion can become random and rambling. And it can be dominated by powerful individuals. Other factors, such as distance to the meeting, inconvenient scheduling, or costs of getting to the meeting can obstruct effective and inclusive participation. To overcome the unpredictability of informal human interaction, systematic rules have been created to facilitate purposeful group meetings and encourage collective decisions. It's time to develop online applications that provide organizations with the technology they need to conduct effective deliberative meetings when members can't easily get together face-to-face. Ideally the tools would increase their effectiveness while requiring less time and money to conduct the meetings.

Written by Matt Powell and Douglas Schuler

Transparency (64)

The lack accountability of corporations, government, political processes, and the media provides irresistible opportunities for corruption. Unfortunately this often deprives whole societies and the world's poorest people of their right to well-being and opportunity. Although the degree of corruption varies from place to place, everybody at one time or another can be a victim, however indirectly. Journalists, business people, government officials, activists, educators as well as "ordinary" people are affected by corruption and can play a role in its prevention. "Transparency," when used in a social context means that the reality of how things actually work is not covered-up or inaccurately portrayed. Transparency helps shed light on corrupt practices that thrive on secrecy. Using traditional, as well as new forms of media and communication technology, we can raise public awareness about the importance of transparency initiatives and enforcement while exposing, protesting and defying corruption at all levels.

Written by John Adams and Douglas Schuler

Emergency Communication Systems (121)

Natural and manmade emergencies reveal the fragile nature of our social infrastructures, including our most advanced technologies, and require us to draw upon our own essential resourcefulness. Disasters require the attention of every level of society, including individuals, families, and neighborhoods as well as city, state, national, international agencies and organizations. The content and flow of information is critical at every stage, from policy development to preparation, search and rescue, recovery and the reconstruction of vital infrastructures. To some extent, everyone may be called upon to participate in various the aspects of this work, not only in the area of immediate impact but in the development of policies, procedures and systems to lessen the impact of the next emergency.

Written by Douglas Schuler

Follow the Money (135)

"Deep Throat" was the mysterious character who said 'Follow the money!' in All the Presidents Men, a movie about the Watergate scandal. Following the money is a valuable technique to trace corruption and is used by political parties, religions, the military, social activists, farmers, the health care industry, education, the federal government, local governments, science, corporations and just about everyone who wants to track what their opponents are doing. The trail of a corrupt operation can be determined by tracking the source and use of money.

Written by Burl Humana


Image from http://www.pkamalnathan.com/